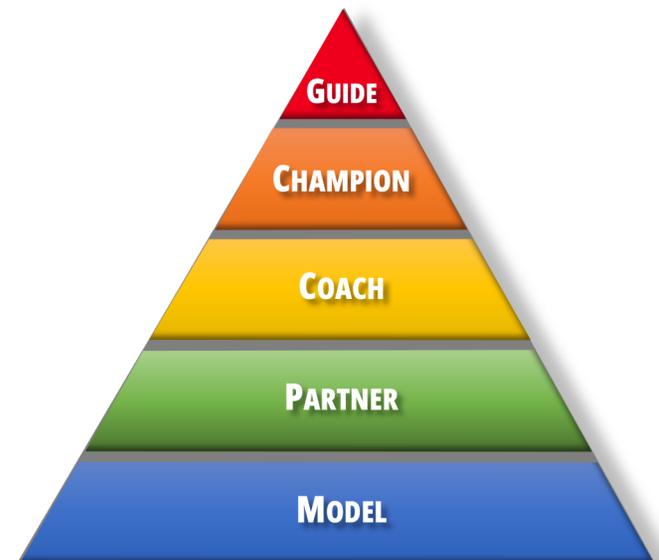


# THE CHALLENGES OF LEADING

*AN INTRODUCTION TO PATHS TO LEADERSHIP*



# Leadership Matters!

## **Results matter...**

The pressure is on. Work is fast paced and changeable. Execution is essential. Things must get done and timelines are tight, with little tolerance for missed milestones. High performance is expected. To survive and thrive in any business today, you must deliver results reliably.

## **People matter too...**

Whether private business, public service, or not for profit agency, people deliver the most valuable results generated by an organization. The things of an organization—systems, structures, or strategies—don't work unless people make them work, and won't change until people change them. No organization can afford to waste the efforts of good people on low value activities, or have performers working at less than their best. Nor can they allow them to fail in response to challenging business realities, or afford to lose talented people needlessly.

## **And, people need leadership...**

Not all the time. But when people work together on any but the simplest undertakings, there are times when some are not prepared on their own to do what needs doing. They need the guidance of someone who sees what they don't, points the way, takes the first step, shows them how to do their part, and supports them as they try.

## **They need someone like you to lead!**

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Relationships</b>
Becoming a functional leader is within the reach of anyone willing to do two things well.		Leaders <i>pathfind</i> . From a clear view of the current reality, they envision a better future, see a path toward it, then make the right things happen to move themselves, others, and their business forward.		Leaders <i>engage</i> followers, knowing that as challenges grow in scope, velocity, or complexity, there comes a point where a leader must extend their reach beyond what they can do alone.

*"You manage things;  
you lead people."*

Rear Admiral  
Grace Murray Hopper

*"Leader must transition from being  
responsible for the job, to being  
responsible for the people who are  
responsible for the job."*

Simon Sinek



# Choose to Lead

Every day, each of us has opportunities to lead, moments when something that matters is at risk, we see a way forward, but need the cooperation and help of others to bring about change.

Some leadership moments are subtle, the choices to be made relatively easy. Many are more challenging, with choices that seem difficult or demanding, and other, easier ways to go. In those more challenging “moments of truth”, while most people remain bystanders, leaders step up.

*They choose to lead.*

The choices you make in your leadership moments signal your willingness to lead, revealing the results you pursue and who you are as a leader. Others watch your choices, then make their own: to go along with you, following your lead, or not. If they fall in with you, then you are leading. If you look around and no one is there taking next steps with you, then you are not.

Ultimately, organizations don't choose their leaders by promoting them. Leaders promote themselves by stepping up so followers can get in step with them. You don't need a fancy title, position of authority, special traits, exotic techniques, or unique talents to function as a leader. Anyone can lead if you learn what to look for in your leadership moments, accept that you have free will to choose your response, then choose to lead.

There is no one “best” way to lead. You and your opportunities to lead are unique. You must find the habits of thinking and action that suit your situation and the followers you seek, then adapt them appropriately to your unique set of strengths, weaknesses, and preferences.

The defining challenges you face along the way though are predictable. For each there are paths others like you have followed to lead more effectively.



# 5 Leadership Challenges

## *CHALLENGE 1: SELF—CREDIBLE MODEL*

Leaders reveal themselves by what they do. Your actions over time tell followers who you truly are. If you don't step up or won't let go of beliefs, attitudes, and habits that limit your performance, you can't really expect others to do so.

## *CHALLENGE 2: OTHERS—INFLUENTIAL PARTNER*

Strong connections with performers and stakeholders extend your capacity and capability. The most reliable source of power in relationships is influence hard earned with others, rather than authority wielded over them.

## *CHALLENGE 3: WORK—CHALLENGING COACH*

A leader can't “control” performance today. The best you can hope for is “remote control”, everyone doing their best work because they know what's expected, have capability and capacity to do it, and are free to do it well.

## *CHALLENGE 4: CULTURE—SUPPORTIVE CHAMPION*

High performance is a collective pursuit—everyone must do their best together. The energy and focus of even the most capable performer or team drains away if they feel their efforts don't matter or needs are unlikely to be met.

## *CHALLENGE 5: ENVIRONMENT—INSPIRING GUIDE*

Hard work alone is not enough today. Work is complicated and changeable. Situations are often ambiguous. Simply putting your head down, butt up, and getting on with it might just get a lot of the wrong things done. Clear direction and discipline to stay the course are critical.

# MODEL



Be a credible example of what it takes to succeed and what you expect of others.

*“No longer can you look upward and blame the idiots at the top of the company for what is wrong. You’re now one of them.”*

Roger Enrico

*“The definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over again, expecting different results.”*

Rita Mae Brown

Path 01

## Responsibility



### “No Excuses, No Blame”

Leaders choose to do what it takes to move toward important results while sustaining influential relationships with key stakeholders. You must step up when others step back, say what needs to be said when others remain silent, and get things done even in the face of difficulty and resistance. Show others you care more about delivering results and working effectively with them, than keeping yourself comfortable and safe.

- Do what you believe is “right”, even when it is difficult, unpopular.
- Focus your effort, attention, and time on things that matter most, rather than being distracted by less important activities and demands.
- Act where you can, rather than worrying or complaining about things beyond your control and influence.
- Do what you say you will do, keeping your promises, both explicit and implied.

Path 02

## Learning



### “Learn, Then Lead”

Leaders go first in situations that can be complex, changing, and ambiguous. They work with followers who bring with them a broad range of needs, beliefs, and preferences. You can’t trust static mental maps, fixate only on details, or count on doing just what you’ve always done. If you won’t learn, letting go of beliefs, attitudes, or habits that limit your potential, you can’t really expect others to do so.

- Be inquisitive, asking questions rather than making unfounded assumptions or jumping to conclusions.
- Push beyond your “comfort zone”, taking reasonable risks to explore different possibilities, perspectives, and practices.
- Learn from experience, capturing the lessons success or failure teach, constantly improving, and seeking to never repeat past mistakes.
- Invest routinely in your own growth and development.



# PARTNER



Nurture a network of influential relationships with performers & stakeholders.

*“Trust is earned, respect is given, and loyalty is demonstrated. Betrayal of any one of those is to lose all three.”*

Ziad K. Abdelnour

*“We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be.”*

May Sarton

## Path 03 Consideration



### “Invest in Influence”

Followers are people first, ahead of how they can perform. When they feel anonymous, disrespected, or ignored they develop little connection with you or what you hope to achieve. Every one has a unique set of needs, wants, and preferences. Appreciating those differences and attending to their interests and well-being is a surer path to securing their cooperation than using whatever authority you have to demand it.

- Take a genuine interest in others, who they are, what they want, and how they are doing.
- Treat everyone with courtesy, respect, and fairness, no matter who they are.
- Listen carefully, making a sincere effort to understand not just what others say but what they really mean.
- Use any formal power or authority you have sparingly, only as a last resort when important results are at risk and other efforts to move things forward have failed.

## Path 04 Authenticity



### “Be Your “Best” Self”

Trying to be someone you are not is a guise others see through too easily, damaging your credibility. You can't “play” leader; you need to “be” one, your way. Gain influence by being true to your needs and wants, genuine and honest in every interaction, aware of your limits and staying within them. Authenticity is not license to be inconsiderate. Adapt to others' needs and preferences while remaining true to yourself.

- Know yourself well, especially the ambitions, strengths, weaknesses, and preferences you bring to your work and relationships.
- Speak up clearly and confidently when something needs to be said, sharing what you know, offering what you believe, and asking for what you need.
- Act with humility, acknowledging shortcomings, seeking help when you need it, and following the lead of others when they have more to offer.
- Confront problems with others openly, honestly, and in a timely manner, rather than avoiding them or speaking behind their backs.



# COACH



Challenge capable followers to do their best work free of needless oversight.

*“Leaders become great not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others.”*

John Maxwell

*“The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave, is not training them and having them stay.”*

Henry Ford

Path 05

## Empowerment



### “Release Capability”

In our modern workplaces, you don’t have to “give” performers power. They already have it in work situations that are dynamic, demanding, and often distant from you. Many will also have education and experience that is at least more current, if not greater, than your own. Free capable performers of unnecessary supervision and controls, giving them space to use their wisdom and talents fully to get things done their way.

- Negotiate clear performance commitments, ensuring everyone knows what is expected of them and promises to play their part in pursuit of shared goals.
- Carefully assess the capability others have to do what is expected of them, both their competence (ability) and commitment (willingness) to do it.
- Create conditions for success, ensuring everyone has the time, resources, support, and structure needed to do their best work.
- Trust capable performers to do their work their way, free of unnecessary supervision or controls, so long as performance expectations are met.

Path 06

## Development



### “Challenge Everyone”

Change is relentless, demanding constant improvement and innovation. People are key—if they don’t improve and grow, an organization can’t. Challenge everyone to stretch beyond the limits and barriers they have become accustomed to, toward their full potential, even if they can’t see it themselves. That stretch maintains a needed edge, supplying the energy that drives both high performance and change.

- Challenge others to stretch beyond their comfort zone, taking reasonable risks to realize their full potential, individually and together as a team.
- Play to others' strengths, creating opportunities for them to do what they do best and enjoy most.
- Allow others the opportunity to learn from their experience, even if that means they sometimes struggle or make mistakes.
- Offer timely, constructive feedback on performance so others know where they stand and what they can do to improve that standing.



# CHAMPION



Create a work culture where performers get what they need and results matter.

*“Accept the fact that we have to treat almost anybody as a volunteer.”*

Peter Drucker

*“In life you can have results or reasons. If you are not getting the results you want, your reasons are the lies you keep telling yourself.”*

Harald Anderson

## Path 07 Engagement

### *“Their Needs = Your Mission”*

The forces that drive or inhibit results are largely rooted in people. Until they choose to contribute, little else changes. The link between people and their work is not just rational, a simple transaction where they do what’s required to get extrinsic “rewards”. There is potential for a stronger connection, an emotional one that happens when they feel their deeper, intrinsic needs can be satisfied by doing their best work.

- Find out what performers really need or want from their work, then help them get it.
- Speak openly and honestly about the realities of work, the potential rewards of doing it well, and the consequences of performing poorly.
- Advocate for the needs, interests, and ideas of team members, ensuring they are heard and treated fairly.
- Be as patient as circumstances permit, but address barriers to progress before they derail the best efforts of those working to bring about intended results.

## Path 08 Accountability



### *“Hold Everyone Response-Able”*

To sustain high performance, everyone should see themselves “owning” a critical part in success. Simply “doing your job” is not enough—no one’s job is done until intended results are delivered. When everyone is expected to keep their promises, speak up when success is in doubt, and work collaboratively to resolve breakdowns, individuals and teams will step up to control what and how things get done, not just leaders.

- Identify measures, metrics, and milestones so all involved can assess progress toward shared goals.
- Make performance matter, recognizing effort, reinforcing progress, and rewarding achievement.
- Make it safe for everyone to speak openly and honestly about performance, to say what must be said to whomever must hear it to keep things on track toward shared goals.
- Confront performance breakdowns in a timely, constructive manner, collaborating with others involved to find creative, mutually satisfying ways to move forward together.



# GUIDE



**Share a compelling path forward from the current reality to a desired future.**

*“A leader is one who sees more than others see, sees farther than others see, and sees before others do.”*

Leroy Elms

*“When in doubt, check if your actions are aligned with your purpose.”*

Azim Jamal & Brian Tracy

## Path 09 Vision



### “Choose Your Path”

You are not a leader unless you are moving toward a better future with followers who choose to get there with you. Vision is rooted in an informed understanding of what’s happening, expressed as a clear picture of what’s possible, and accompanied by commitment to a reasonable path between the two. Share your vision in a clear, compelling way to inspire others to take purposeful, passionate action with you.

- Always act in alignment with the values and strategic intentions of your organization, and in the best interests of its stakeholders.
- Keep your head up, alert to opportunities or threats, and attentive to the capability and capacity available to you to respond effectively.
- Whatever the undertaking, present a compelling case for action including the realities of the current circumstances, the results intended, and a reasonable path to success.
- Express passion for the future and commitment to needed change in everything you do.

## Path 10 Alignment



### “Let Results Arbitrate”

Hard work alone does not guarantee success. In a challenging, changing environment, working without direction and discipline wastes time and talent, and even more is lost to conflict if people working together find themselves at cross purposes. Keep results upfront in peoples’ minds, propelling action, determining what’s wanted versus needed, what’s nice versus necessary, and what to do now versus what can wait.

- Create a line of sight, a clear, compelling connection from anything asked of others to the larger purpose and results you intend to deliver.
- Constantly set priorities for action, aligning effort and resources with the next steps essential to achieving intended results.
- Support other leaders in pursuit of shared goals, following their lead appropriately and challenging them constructively when their actions put results at risk.
- Capture lessons learned along the way toward results, making corrections, re-setting priorities, and adjusting plans appropriately.





*"Your brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room."*

Jeff Bezos

#### TO PREVENT DERAILMENT

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- 1) Constantly seek out feedback, especially from those you hope to lead.
- 2) Take advantage of development opportunities.
- 3) Deploy your strengths to balance or better manage a weakness.
- 4) Beware a change in role or circumstances with new requirements can expose new derailers.
- 5) Care for yourself as much as you do for achieving results and caring for others.

## Beware 10 Common Leadership Derailers

A “derailer” is a behaviour or set of behaviours that interferes with a leader’s effectiveness. These behaviours undo good work you have done, or distract others from your better qualities as leader. They can be habitual, but are more likely to appear or become exaggerated in stressful situations.

The impact of derailers is amplified by a feature of human perception: negative experiences tend to be more affecting and remembered longer than positive ones. In other words, even infrequent or what seem minor slips on your part can be disproportionately important in the eyes of followers.

Some derailers are rooted in flaws of character, a disposition toward dishonesty for example, and can be fatal to a career. Others arise out of weakness—skills not fully developed or applied infrequently. Often though, derailers are strengths over-done, too much of a good thing. Your greatest assets as leader can create blind spots for you, leaving you vulnerable to the bad intentions or poor behaviour of others.

Here are 10 common leadership derailers to watch for in your own behaviour...

**REACTIVE**—*Followers see:* irresponsible; rash; unprepared; inconsistent; blaming; making excuses; worrying rather than acting; procrastinating.

**INCONSIDERATE**—*Followers see:* unfriendly; lacking empathy; insensitive; a poor listener; unreliable; playing favourites; untrustworthy; tactless; bullying.

**MICRO-MANAGING**—*Followers see:* untrusting; interfering; nit-picky; “my way or the highway”; meddlesome; perfectionist; intrusive; poor delegator.

**DETACHED**—*Followers see:* unhelpful; disconnected; uninvolved; “one size fits all”; aloof; bureaucratic; rulebound; passing the buck; unavailable.

**COMPETITIVE**—*Followers see:* aggressive; cutthroat; commanding; antagonistic; uncooperative; selfish; undermining; taking undue credit.

**CLOSE-MINDED**—*Followers see:* stubborn; jumping to conclusions; defensive; repeated mistakes; over-confidence; inflexibility; resistance to change.

**INSINCERE**—*Followers see:* two-faced; dishonest; underhanded; sneaky; manipulative; hypocritical; fake; exaggerating; political.

**UNINSPIRING**—*Followers see:* lackluster; passive; complacent; stuck; apathetic; dull; unenthusiastic; bored; pressuring others to change; pushy.

**LENIENT**—*Followers see:* soft; indulgent; easy; soft-hearted; permissive; appeasing; accepting of mediocrity; tolerating poor performance.

**MYOPIC**—*Followers see:* short-sighted; blinkered; vague about the future; unfocused; unsure where to go next; indecisive.



# Learn While You Lead

## “FLIP THE SCRIPT” ON LEARNING

It’s time to take leadership development out of the classroom and put it where it belongs—on the job.

Paths to Leadership Coaching brings learning to leaders, where they need and can use it right away.

### **Anywhere**

No time away travelling to training



### **Anytime**

Available when you have time and need



### **On Target**

Personalized process and content



### **Active**

Immediate on-the-job application



New leaders need to develop capability quite different from what made them stand out as individual contributors. In fact, their past success can be their biggest barrier to doing what’s needed now as leader. More experienced leaders need to improve and develop constantly. The workplace evolves. People are diverse, sometimes weirdly so. What worked yesterday often doesn’t work today.

Learning to lead doesn’t happen in a workshop, or by reading a book. Most of what any leader learns about leading is learned through experience. You find what works for you and those you work with through trial and, all too often, error. Every leader must find their own path to leadership by walking it.

This kind of experiential learning requires a willingness to...

- *See yourself honestly*—strengths, weaknesses, ambitions, and the impact you have on others.
- *Challenge your thinking*—letting go of beliefs or habits that hold you back, and open to new possibilities.
- *Set meaningful goals*—focused on worthwhile change to benefit you, your team, and organization.
- *Develop in a disciplined way*—changing habits over time by trying, reflecting, then trying again.

### **We Can Help!**

Paths to Leadership has grown out of 30+ years of working with leaders, in a variety of organizations, and at all levels. Our approach brings learning right to you, on the job, where and when you need it.

**Ask us how we can help you!**



#### **360 FEEDBACK**

Thorough, direct observations from those who know you best



#### **COACHING PARTNER**

To listen, speak honestly, offer practical advice, & hold you accountable



#### **VALUABLE INSIGHTS**

Practical, proven ideas fitted to your style & on-the-job situation



#### **HELPFUL PRACTICES**

Ready for use tips, tools, and checklists to guide application

