

DAVE ROBSON

# LEADERSHIP AGILITY



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THE PRIMARY INGREDIENT FOR  
NEXT GENERATION LEADERS!

# LEADERSHIP AGILITY

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## PREFACE

"Success today requires the agility and drive to constantly rethink, reinvigorate, react, and reinvent" *Bill Gates*



AGILITY is often defined in regard to sports: “a rapid whole body movement with change of velocity or direction in response to a stimulus.” Its important to note that **agility can be coached** so that an athlete can grow and develop in their field to excellence and competitively prevail. Agility can also be coached and applied beyond sports to leadership, whether in business, education, government or the social sector.

### AGILITY: The Primary Ingredient for Next Generation Leadership:

I like the way [Forbe’s contributor Karl Moore](#) describes Leadership Agility:

Today’s organizational leaders are facing accelerating rates of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, all of which are showing no signs of slowing down. Whether it is the continuing digital revolution or expanding global markets, our current environment requires a constant state of innovation. For companies to continue succeeding, next generation leaders must be able to handle any curve ball thrown their way. Leading through this new business environment requires the capability to sense and respond to changes in the business environment with actions that are focused, fast and flexible. The best way to put it: **next generation leaders have to be agile.**”

In the following pages, I will share not only my story, but more especially my “learning” from my context as a profession leadership coach, along with that of other leadership experts on this topic of **Leadership Agility**, and maybe more specifically **Learning Agility**. The old axiom holds true today maybe more than any previous generation – LEADERS ARE LEARNERS!

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." *John F. Kennedy*

“Successful leaders are learners. And the learning process is ongoing, a result of self-discipline and perseverance." *Leadership 101 by John C Maxwell*

I hope your engagement and embodiment of this training will develop the self-discipline and perseverance needed to Escape whatever Gravity hinders your learning so you might transformationally Launch Your Leadership Agility to new heights. My hope and prayer is that your personal calling and leadership impact would bring about the greatest good in you as well as your sphere of influence!

## INTRODUCTION

### Leadership Agility: My Story Begins



One of my first learning experiences about agility began when my 5<sup>th</sup> grade P.E. coach discovered that **I had above average physical agility**. That day back in 1973, our instructor was teaching the class forward and backward rolls, hand stands and cartwheels. It was probably pretty humorous to watch most of these boys and girls flailing about with arms and legs flying in different directions, bodies crashing on the floor mats. I cautiously moved to the back of the line to watch because little league baseball and little guy football were the extent of my athletic experience up to that ripe old age of 11. Of course there were the two girls in class who made the rest of my classmates look bad, they had grown up in and were affectionately know as “gym rats,” being part of the gymnastics club in town since they were 4 years old. Finally, it was my turn and for some reason this gymnastics thing just came natural! My instructor even asked me if I was a “gym rat?” I shook my head “nuh-uh, but its fun!”

At this point, the two real gym rats jumped in and coaxed me to try a more advanced skill, a “flip flop” other wise known as a back hand spring. After one gal demonstrated it, I wasn’t so sure, but they promised to “spot” me through it, making sure I didn’t crash. So I tried a couple, and with their combined assistance and added energy, I excitedly survived with a **very false sense of proficiency**.

I ran home after school that day and excitedly called my mom out to the front lawn to demonstrate my newly discovered agility: first a forward roll, then backward role, next a cartwheel, all of which went well and each success was rewarded with my mother’s enthusiastic applause. By now my ego was way larger than my expertise and experience, so I proceeded to demonstrate a flip flop. You guessed it, my flip was a total flop – I launched straight backward onto my head, experiencing for the first time “seeing stars” and gaining a mild concussion I’m sure.

Mom’s enthusiasm of my agility abruptly turned to concern, but she eventually approved my P.E. instructor’s request that I train and learn the routine (flip flop not required) for the City Elementary School Tumbling Competition in two weeks. My agility as well as my new gymnastics abilities grew with coaching and I finished tied for 6<sup>th</sup> place in a gym full of hundreds of kids. That was the beginning of my gymnastics era, becoming an official “gym rat” and **growing not only in my physical agility, but leadership agility** over the next seven years, all thanks to an exceptional high school teacher and gymnastics coach named George Grossi who adopted me as his protégé during summer school.

So what's your story about discovering an area of "agility" in your life? It doesn't matter if you were a jock or a nerd, a musician or a math major, a science geek or a thespian, **leaders come in all shapes and styles** just as learning occurs in various styles. Some of the greatest leaders I know didn't come out of High School or College with tremendous grade point averages and awards. But they did come out hungry to learn and make a difference in the world with the unique passions, abilities and calling with which God has blessed them.

Whether you are an emerging millennial leader, or an aging established leader like me, **you can learn and grow your Leadership Agility with some good coaching and a little encouragement.** So join me on this journey and see if your Leadership Agility isn't launched to a new level as we learn together over the next several pages of coaching!

## Coaching Exercise

What activities "came naturally" for you growing up?

What passions have you developed and pursued in your twenties and thirties? forties and fifties?

What aptitudes, skills and abilities have you developed over the years in line with your passions?

Are your passions, skills and abilities utilized into your current role(s) and responsibilities, whether personally or professionally in your work?

*If they aren't utilized in part or whole, let's begin to consider if there are ways to use them more often.*

## Chapter One

# Leadership Agility Starts With Presence



Growing up my parents taught me that upon meeting someone to stand up straight, shake hands firmly, look them in the eyes while stating confidently, “How do you do?” As I finished college and started my first job, that greeting morphed into a more casual, “Hello, I’m Dave” and sometimes followed by asking, “I’m in sales with Fruehauf Trailer - what do you do?”

Yes, **I learned early on my identity and personal value is based more upon my doing than on my being.**

What introductory script were you taught growing up?

What subconscious message did you embody about what your identity was based upon?

No matter what generation we grow up in, **we often size up one another in our initial connections**, making some very quick assessments and assumptions, usually based upon very little verbal interaction and information. Deep down we genuinely desire to know and be known, yet our “knowing” is mostly based upon our first impressions of another’s “presence.” By presence I mean the noticable posture, dress, mood, eye contact, and gut instinct we glean over a matter of several seconds. Our impression/assessment may or may not hold much truth given such limited grounding. And if we get a chance to converse a bit more, the very next question is often about their “performance” – what they do? Why?

**We’ve been culturally conditioned to equate our identity and the identity of others with “what we do.”** Problems from this occur because its extremely difficult to be successful in performing consistently, especially in a fast paced, constantly changing and evolving world. There are also serious complications that come with this, two of the results are: (1) **it leaves us feeling insecure and unconfident**, or (2) **feeling prideful and over-confident**, both of which make us shallow and limits our learning agility as well as our leadership. And when learning and leadership get bottle necked, our performance is further diminished. What a downward spiral!

Alright, I admit that among baby boomers, I was probably pretty average in my shallowness. I have spent much of my life basing my identity on what I do, seeking to offer a presence of competence and confidence. And in those times and seasons where I wasn’t either of those, I would disingenuously keep that stuffed under my best “presence” while trying to keep my identity propped up as inconspicuously as possible too. **The consequence of all this posturing led to shallow, superficial relationships**, whether it was social or professional. I found myself pretty lonely a lot of the time and my learning and leadership were also limited and shallow.

Okay tell me if I’m wrong, but right now many of you millennials are smiling to yourself thinking, “Our generation is not nearly so shallow, we value being more than doing!” And that’s generally true. A person’s story is valued, often told in the tattoos or clothes one wears. You desire significance over success, wanting to

make a difference in the world. **Your peers wear transparency like a badge of honor**, putting the good, the bad and the ugly out there for all to see and hear, especially on social media.

## Performance Over Potential

But some of your peers have also encountered the consequences of that when they apply for that first or second job after college. Ouch! In a clash of cultures, most boomer/buster leaders and their **organizations today are operating in the old culture of performance and doing**. The exception would be if you're among the few working for companies like Google, Zappos, Southwest Air or REI, that value both being and doing. You may not be consciously aware of it, but the underlying fear and frustration you carry as emerging leaders in your organizations is that what you do is more valued than who you are. You are often trained, developed and promoted based upon your performance, not your potential. The weight of this tends to morph one's identity and presence into performance mode. Blah! So much for that millennial generational advantage.

And what's even worse, that perpetuated shallow presence (personally and organizationally) limits learning agility. This in turn impacts and diminishes trust and collaboration, fostering instead competition and hoarding of vital information. All **this bottlenecks not only performance and results, but stifles our very being and the joy of life**, both at work and in the world.

## From Success to Significance

So how can an emerging leaders escape the kryptonite of doing over being? How do you maintain a healthy presence and identity based upon your being? How do we help our organization embody this shift also? Sure, our mission statements say we value being and doing, but living that out is another story. As a leader and organizational coach, I maintain that **the shift from success to significance comes through learning agility**. And the first step begins with each of us personally! That's what we'll be unpacking over the next few chapters. We'll discuss what is known as the *fullness of being: body, emotion, language (mind) and spirit*. We'll talk about how to expand our capacity to learn and grow utilizing the fullness of our being, not just our mind and conversations.

I hope you'll **stick with me on this learning and leadership journey from success to significance** because I believe each of you as emerging leaders can and will make a difference. A difference that shifts you, the organization you work in, and well as a shift towards a greater significance in the good it produces in the world beyond a simply successful commodity or service.

**Consider...**



# Finding a pathway to a Fuller Learning Agility and Leadership Presence



*Many centuries ago, a young entrepreneur traveling in a foreign land came across an elderly man sitting at the town gates. This curious business person approached the old sage and asked a simple question, “has there been any great leaders born in this city?” To which the senior statesman answered, “Nope!” Then after a brief pause, he finished, “Only babies!”*

## Born vs. Made

*“The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That’s nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born.”—Warren Bennis*

Whew – that’s good news for emerging leaders, isn’t it! Over the last several days, we’ve learned that there’s a big difference between making a good first impression (firm handshake, good eye contact, a radio announcer voice and appearing competent at what we “do”) and being an impactful leader.

So let me start with this – **an emerging leader is NOT one who climbs above the rest of his/her peers by competitively out performing them.** The helium that raises an emerging leader’s presence is their personal capacity to learn as well as create a collaborative culture of learning among their peers. And anyone, and I believe everyone, has the ability to grow their learning agility with the result of emerging as a leader who uniquely impacts those around them for a greater good! Imagine this millennial generation, with its huge desire to make a difference in this world, all growing their learning agility such that every one of them lends unique, transformational leadership.

## Being Based Learning

So what’s the problem? Our typical philosophy of learning in America is “mind” based – increasing knowledge via a classroom environment (epistemological learning). But [history and research has shown us that very few of the most knowledgeable people in the classroom with the highest GPA emerge as transformative leaders.](#) If it did, then why are we as “the most educated” generation in the history of the world still struggling with war, disease, poverty, malnourishment and pollution? I suggest its because we haven’t tapped into the fullness of our capacity to learn, and thus lead well. As **human beings**, versus human doings or human knowings, our presence is made up of four components: our mind, body, emotions, and spirit. If we just engage our minds in learning, its like a car engine operating on only one of four cylinders. If we shift our educational approach to “being” based (ontological), we could bring all four cylinders to move us from informational managers to transformational leaders.

So how do we learn to lead as human “beings”? Transformative leaders with Learning Agility are able to raise their own and their team’s level of learning and **awareness**, thereby seeing a broader perspective of **possibilities** (possible actions), then wisely choose the **action** that will advance their mission and produce a **greater good** through their service or product.

Here’s the process drawn out as a formula:

**Emerging Leader = ^Awareness of Being + ^Possibilities + Action -> Greater Good of Mission**

So how do we expand and activate our Awareness of Being (emotions, bodies, and spirits) to catch up with the capacity of our minds? That’s what we’ll be unpacking . Next we’ll talk about growing the learning agility of our emotions and moods, sometimes call Emotional Intelligence.

## Chapter Two

# Emotional Literacy: Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader?



Just this spring, a distraught and emotional 26 year old Yelp Employee in San Francisco turned to social media and wrote “An Open Letter to MY CEO” which went viral. A corresponding article in Inc. magazine was entitled: “[Emotional Intelligence 101: Why a Millennial’s Letter to Yelp’s CEO Got Her Fired.](#)”

## Untapped Possibilities

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is nothing new, there have been books and articles around since the early 1990’s. **The unfortunate part is that while we’ve been aware of its importance and grown in our understanding of its causes and consequences, there are very few places where we as adults, let alone our kids, can learn the critical skills of mastering moods and emotions.** How many of you millennial leaders can say you had emotional intelligence and mood mastery modeled and mentored while growing up either at home or in grade school, or even in college? Its been just within the last five years that Yale University has launched a curriculum called the Mood Meter to train up students and teachers how to grow and practically utilize tools for learning emotional intelligence.

I’ve included an [introductory video on the Mood Meter](#) to give you an introduction to the four basic moods that have been distinguished in the curriculum by Marc Brackett, the director of Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence:

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/qj6A1czvDhg" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen></iframe>

## There is Hope for Better Results

**Even though the Mood Meter has been established in the field of education, the impact and results are important for all sectors of Leadership and Learning agility.** In studying the results of the training, they’ve found that Emotionally Literate students and teachers experience:

1. Higher quality relationships,
2. Less stress, anxiety and depression,
3. More positive emotions,
4. Enjoy their learning/work, and
5. Perform better!

Within teams and the classroom, the results include:

- Greater performance,
- Stronger sense of community,
- Higher levels of engagement, and
- Fewer behavioral issues/problems.

**Here’s the good news – unlike I.Q., Emotional Intelligence can be taught, learned and developed.** In our next few posts, we’ll lend a simple definition of Emotional Intelligence, clarify the distinctions between mood and emotions, and give a few tools to help you develop the 5 critical skills of mastering moods that make a difference in leadership.

## The Politics & Domains of Emotional Intelligence

Of the following political leaders, who would you say has the most Emotional Intelligence: Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump?

**It’s kind of a trick question, because psychologists, sociologists and a dozen other ‘ologists can’t seem to really agree on a shared definition on what is an “emotion.”** And historians, political scientists and the American public may never agree on a shared definition of “Intelligent” that would apply to all three of the 2016 presidential candidates. The truth is that all three have E.I., but their strengths manifest in different ways.

I just did a quick Google search on E.I. with each candidate’s name and I found proponents for each as distinguished via the four Emotional Intelligence 2.0 domains charted below:

**Bernie** is complimented for his self-deprecating humor that engages and endears others socially (pun intended); certainly he gave Hillary a much tougher run for her money than anticipated because of it.

**Hillary** has been noted to have grown in her Self and Social Awareness, (which she herself has noted a weakness), going from a stoic senator who rolled her eyes when someone disagreed with her, to being able to at least hold a smile and eye contact (not a glowing review, but growth none the less).

Finally, while **The Donald’s** pundits in most of the debates criticized his bigotry and brashness as E.I. deficient regarding self and social awareness, there is no denying his social influence and relationship management have won over a strong percentage of the American people for the Republican nominee, even to the chagrin of many in his party.

**My point in all of this is to emphasize that Emotional Intelligence has several areas of competencies that must be developed, and each of us as leaders will use and display them uniquely.** Imagine if you were shoved out onto a stage behind a microphone to give a speech or engage in a debate nationally, what would the political pundits say about your emotional intelligence? **What would the people you have influence with say? Maybe share this post with your friends and get their perceptions of your E.I.**

	SELF	OTHER
AWARENESS	<b>SELF-AWARENESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Self-awareness</li> <li>Self Assessment</li> <li>Self-Confidence</li> </ul>	<b>SOCIAL-AWARENESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Organizational Awareness</li> <li>Service Orientation</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT	<b>SELF-MANAGEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self Control</li> <li>Adaptability</li> <li>Achievement Drive</li> <li>Initiative</li> </ul>	<b>RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing Others</li> <li>Influence</li> <li>Change Catalyst</li> <li>Teamwork/ Collaboration</li> </ul>

Personally, which of the following four aspects do you see as strengths? Which do you need to develop?

Leadership coaches are experts at helping raise your social emotional awareness and co-creating a presence that helps you more effectively practical self and relational management. **If this is an area you’d like to accelerate your learning, and thus your leadership, contact me for a FREE strategy session to discuss how to get started!**

Next we’ll jump into some specific definitions of emotions, moods and feelings as well as the actions (positive and negative) they cause and the consequences we experience.

# Emotional Intelligence is NOT an Oxymoron!



Ever wonder why emotional intelligence wasn't taught and tested in school? It isn't even in the New 2016 SAT! Really, there hasn't been a whole lot of study and breakthrough on emotions and moods through 50 years until the turn of the century with post-modernism. Do you remember some of the "smart" kids growing up were the most socially awkward? Maybe you were one of them like me! In his book *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman exploits a wealth of research that shows how emotional intelligence is a better predictor of success in life than many traditional measures of intelligence like the SATs.

Part of the problem has been that Anthropologists, Physiologists, Neurologists and Psychologists still struggle to agree on a common definition. For our purpose here, I'll start us out, fully admitting this is a generalized definition from the work of Ontological Learning Professors Dan Newby and Aboodi Shabi.

## **A working definition of Emotion:**

**E-motion** refers back to its Latin root as **that which energizes a human being into motion.**

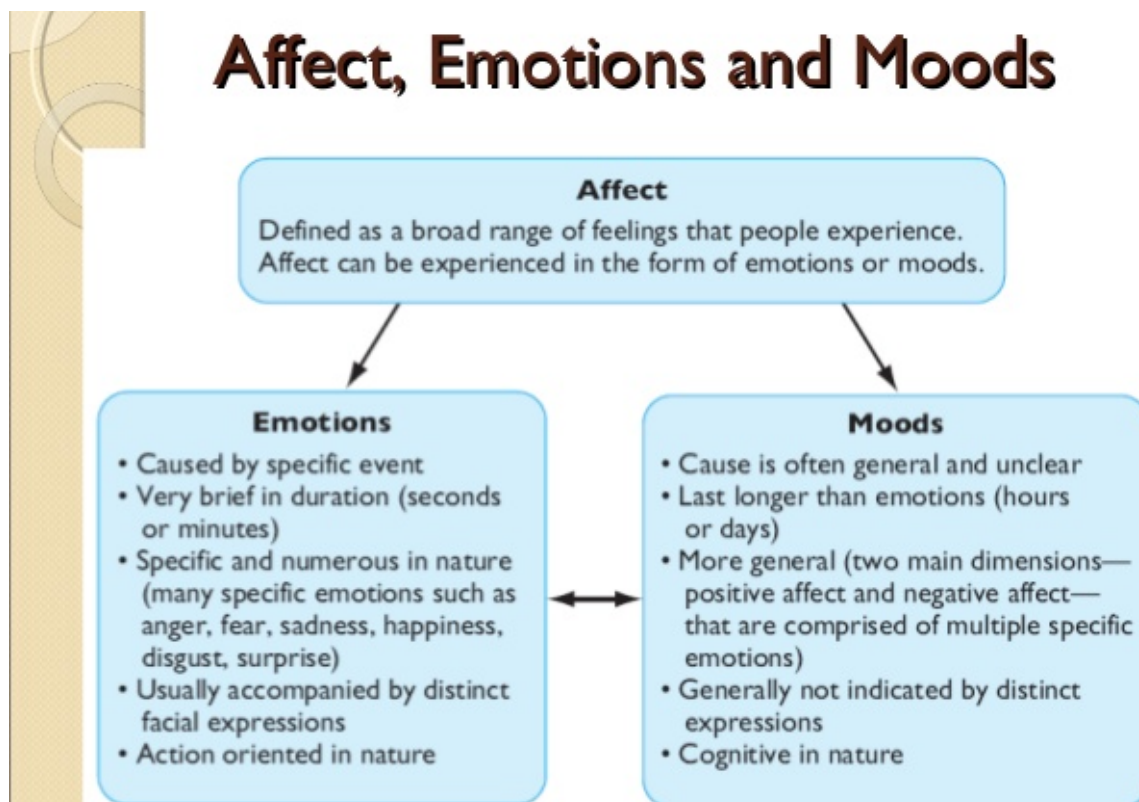
**Energy -> Leadership Action:** As leaders, we and our teams can be emotionally motivated to pursue or procrastinate on certain activities or responsibilities. For instance, joy predisposes us to celebration, tenderness to embracing, anger to punishment, calm to concentration and collaboration. And while we do not always act out the predisposition, the energy is physiologically and neurologically present. This energy itself is not right or wrong, it is simply part of our nature.

When my wife Sue and I first got married, I demonstrated my emotional ignorance by telling her when she would get upset about something, "Well you just shouldn't feel that way!" Oops, emotions are great indicators of how our body is interpreting the situation or circumstances around us and it serves us well to not deny them, nor stuff them down, but to grow in personal and social awareness of them in us and others. This in turn can lend us energy to address the situation appropriately.

**Stuck in our Stories:** This leads us to the **other side of the coin of emotions**, in that the intensity of our emotions does seem to be tied into our subconscious memory. Some emotional situations appearing to connect with an interpretive story or narrative of a personal memory stored in our database below our level of consciousness. For example, when we feel ambition, we will be living in a story that there are possibilities for us in life and we can go after them. When we are in the story that we never get what we deserve in life, the emotion of resentment is likely present. Again, most of these stories are held subconsciously, and understanding the story and the action it evokes requires more conversation or observation of how the emotion is held in the body's subconscious memory and what past life experiences have shaped its interpretation.

It is in this arena where **leadership coaching can be a huge help**. When a leader or team member finds themselves stuck, either unable to accomplish responsibilities, interact with team members well, or acting out in unhelpful or unproductive ways, a coach has the expertise to help that person unearth the subconscious story and likely reshape their interpretation so that new possibilities and action can be seen and affected.

Let's take one more minute to review the chart below to distinguish emotions from moods.



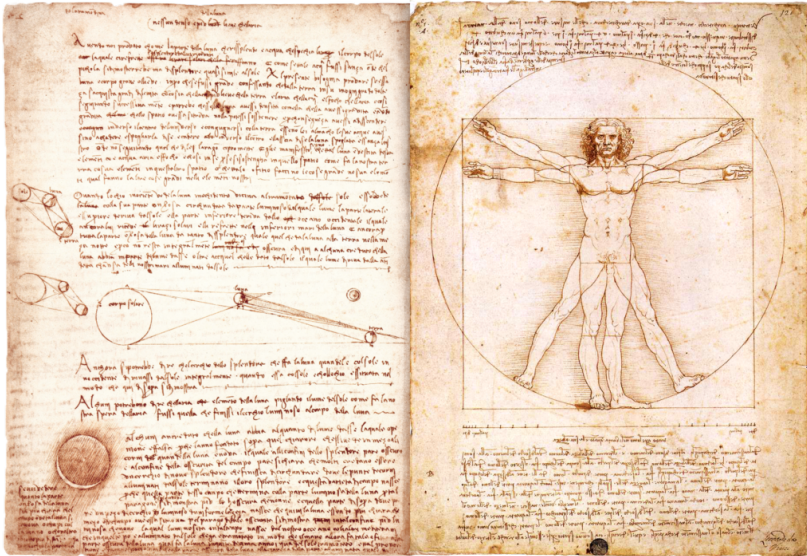
## Managing Moods

While moods are often non-discretionary, there are ways that we can shift our moods via our body disposition, our mindful thoughts, and our spiritual alignment. Some would even say that we can choose our moods, meaning that just because we got up on the wrong side of the bed (ie. a bad mood), doesn't mean we and those we lead need to be subject to that mood the rest of the waking day.

**So let me ask you:** How aware of you emotions? How well do you manage your moods, or do your moods manage you? Can you attach a name to each of the unique emotions you experience in the course of a work day, or over a week's time? Do you have some emotions or moods that seem to hijack you and cause you problems in your leadership? Don't be afraid to seek some help if you need to grow in your Emotional Intelligence. The ability of a leader to bring alignment to their body, emotions, thoughts and spirit determines the level of their leadership and learning agility. Our next chapter will zoom in on **Body Disposition and Language** as the second component of Leadership Agility.

## Chapter Three

# The Body of Learning & Leadership



## To Be Human

If we peel away all of the non-essential aspects of ourselves to just the basics of what it means to be human, what is it we all have in common? I think this is fundamental to grasping the fullness of Leadership Agility: We all think, reason and use language. We all experience moods and emotions. We all have physical bodies. We all possess a spiritual or etherial sense. And when we consider our experience of living we can see that these are not truly separate aspects of ourselves but are intertwined and continually responding to each other in a dynamic coherence. But for the sake of our study of Leadership Agility, we are addressing them as four domains, looking at each separately and will eventually reconnect them.

Our series' focus is Leadership Agility, the ability to be flexible, adaptable and adept at simultaneously managing diverse, evolving objectives, priorities, people and strategies. At the core of this agility is the leader's aptitude to learn, gain perspective and make wise decisions. Human learning involves so much more than only mindful intellect, it requires one's entire being – mind, emotion, body and spirit.

## E-MOTION Needs A BODY

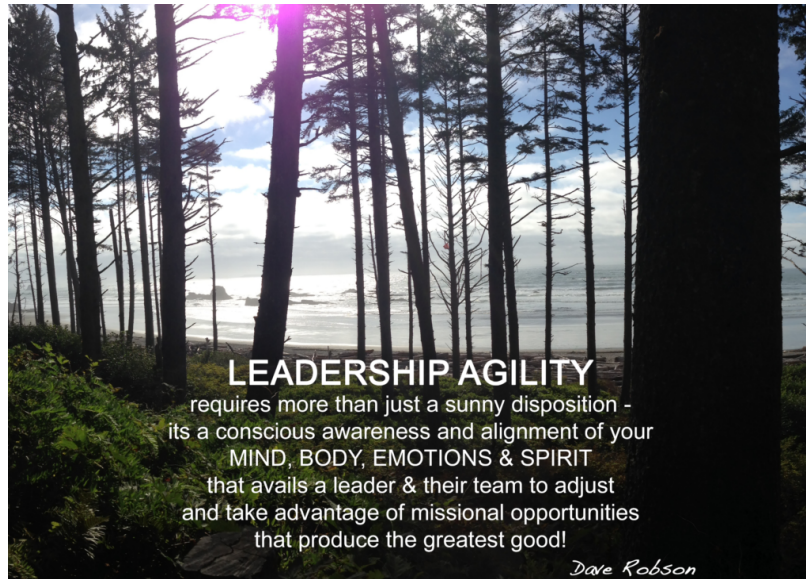
We've finished examining emotions as the situation gauges of which we intuitively measure and observe the world around us. They lend us energy that moves us to action. And for this energy to fuel our leadership, we need an appropriate vehicle to travel, and that is our human body. But the body is not simply just a mechanical entity of outward communication, movement and action, it is also an entrance for learning and wisdom by which to lead with agility.

*Ontological learning considers that the body's ability to understand, think and guide is every bit as valuable and powerful as our ability to reason but is less understood or noticed. Sure, we 'think' differently in the body than intellectually but lets consider thinking as 'understanding our current situation and formulating future possibilities and actions to bring it about. (Newby-Shabi)*

Leaders – how do you see your body? As a machine that needs repair or the batteries recharged occasionally? As an athletic instrument to push life's limits and capabilities? Or as a domain of learning, wisdom and

influence? Are you ready to expand your leadership agility? Next we examine the four powerful domains of body learning that avail wisdom as well as action: Openness, Flexibility, Stability, and Resolution.

## More Than Just A Sunny Disposition



If someone has a “sunny disposition,” we usually associate it with their emotional mood or mental attitude. But we can also recognize a person’s disposition by reading their body position (sometimes called body language). The shape of a body in “depression” or “joy” is intuitively recognized. It is often an emotion or mood that shapes one’s body. Curiously, we are usually unconscious of the body shapes we assume in life. But we can grow in our conscious awareness and we can learn how shaping the body deliberately will shift not only moods but also our thoughts. All three of these have a huge impact on our leadership agility. We refer to the shape of our body as our “disposition” because whatever our shape, it allows or “disposes” us to move through life in certain ways, sometimes productively, sometimes not.

### Disposition

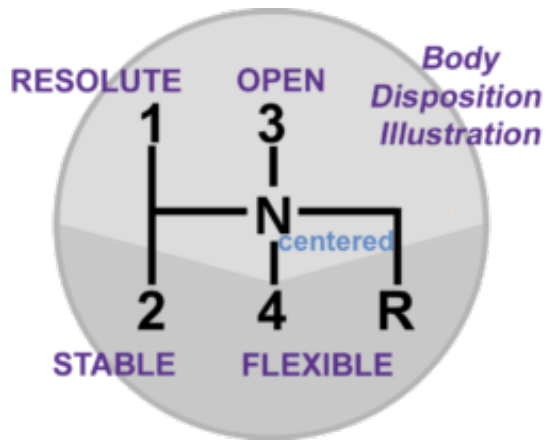
the shape or position of our physical body  
which allows or “disposes” us  
to move through life in certain ways.

We will now examine four powerful domains of the body that avails learning and wisdom as well as action: Openness, Flexibility, Stability, and Resolution. I like to use an analogy to help understand how our emotions, thoughts, body and dispositions work together.

Imagine your car for a moment, whether you drive a stick or automatic, your vehicle’s transmission has various gears. Our E-motions are the fuel for the engine, our bodies are the engine, our thoughts (both conscious and subconscious) operate as the accelerator and brake, and our dispositions the gears of the transmission. Each gear determines a preset mix of power and speed with which we can move forward or backward. Before we jump in and explain what each gear/disposition avails, we need a different perspective of the transmission pattern.







As you look at the shifter of a standard transmission car, all of the gears are accessed through neutral. Neutral is that free range of opportunity by which you can shift into any of the gears and initiate movement. Neutral is where opportunity awaits initiative. Neutral in body disposition terms is called “Centered.” While some might label it as an additional disposition, I hold it distinct viewing it as opportunity but void of initiative. Even choosing “Park” is a disposition of opportunity with an initiative of inaction. As you become more familiar with ‘centered’ and the four dispositions, you are welcome to make your own distinction.

So for today, let me describe an exercise for how you can “Center” yourself for dispositional opportunity. The instructions are from a seated position, but you can just as well do it standing up. I encourage you to physically engage in each exercise since our goal is to not only give you knowledge, but to help you “embody” the leadership agility to which each disposition can empower you.

## A Centering Exercise

While seated in a chair, solidly plant your body into it; your feet flat on the floor and your legs slightly apart. Rest your hands lightly on your thighs, palms upturned. Stretch your spine vertically and erect but not stiff with each part of your anatomy (legs, hips, spine, shoulders, head) sitting squarely on top of the one below. Center your weight neither forward nor back and be evenly supported on both buttocks. Sense your centre of gravity just below your navel and cantered front to back. In this position, make sure your face is relaxed, eyes closed, breath deeply and steadily.

This position is the one from which you can most easily move to any of the four body dispositions. From here you can move left or right, up or down, forward or backward with equal ease. There is an emotional centre also which is the **emotion of “acceptance”** meaning “I acknowledge that life is as it is even though I may not agree, endorse or like it”. Culturally we often misinterpret acceptance as meaning that ‘I agree’ or ‘I endorse’ or ‘I’m okay with’ but in its pure form, acceptance simply acknowledges that things are as they are. This is also the linguistic/thought of the opportunity of Centered. The final aspect of being we haven’t mentioned is spirit. While we’ve yet to unpack either of these yet in this series, we will give a brief suggestions of how they fit until we get to them more fully. Spiritually, you can center your spirit in alignment with God or the universe. For instance, a Judeo/Christian might consider aligning one’s being with God’s Spirit on top, their spirit in alignment, centered under God’s Spirit, then their Mind, Emotions, and Body each following down sequentially until all are centered and aligned.

The opportunity of “*Centered*” can be dynamic and done in movement as well as in stillness. We can stand in center, walk from center or bring our bodies to a centered position in any situation if we’ve developed the competence. I hope this has been a helpful explanation as well as exercise. I encourage you to make a few opportunities every day this week to practice being “centered,” shifting from whatever gear you find yourself in during the day into neutral. This is important, because an Agile Leader will be able to shift gears smoothly and frequently as their situation requires.

# The Powerful Presence Of Stability



Few American leaders in our brief national history carried as full and stable a presence of being as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His disposition is exemplary for our learning today. Not only did he carry stability in his body, but his mood, words and spirit raised our country to a greater good despite the radical change and resistance of his culture.

Stability is the body that produces order, increases awareness and helps others feel safe with us. As leaders, it generally slows our life down amidst the usual rush to allow us to notice all that is happening around us. Stability is also helpful when we need to speak, whether in a one on one conversation or a large group. **When we need to create a safe space for people or have a conversation in which we may feel vulnerable this energy can be helpful.** A fun illustration of leadership Stability occurs within the **Lord of the Rings** when the wizard Gandalf announces his power transformation from grey to white.



Body disposition is what holds our mood, mindset and spirit in a coherent presence. **Knowing when and how to adjust our presence is what energizes and makes an agile leader effective.** Here are a few examples of how a “Stable Disposition” can bring about a desired impact when combined with an appropriate mood, mindset and spirit. I have listed both positive and negative aspects. Keep in mind that these are interpretations and yours may be different.

Stability Mindset	Mood	Energy to move to a Desired Result
Life has possibilities and I want to act on them now	AMBITION	To engage with...
This person/initiative deserves my full attention and effort	COMMITMENT	To freely act in alignment with...
I identify myself and others as worthy and valuable.	DIGNITY	To honor others as unique beings
I do for others in a way that nurtures us both	SERVICE	To provide for others in a manner that doesn't deplete me
The future may hold potential danger despite not knowing when or where it may come	ANXIETY	To try to resolve an ambivalence one way or another. Without movement, this is simply worry.

I don't see a pattern familiar to me in this situation	CONFUSION	To attempt to "figure it out" or to integrate an idea into understanding
This should (or should not) have happened already	FRUSTRATION	To pressure a person or thing I believe is keeping "it" from happening
I could incur great loss and cannot cope with the possibility	DREAD	To proceed with deep caution on verge of giving up

*From Newby / Shabi*

## A STABILITY Exercise

From being Centered, take a position standing solidly on both feet shoulder width apart with your weight equally on each foot. Erect your back and stretch to raise the crown of your head without losing solid contact with the ground. Roll your shoulders back and down, allowing your arms to drop so that they are hanging by your sides. If you do not feel them drop solidly do the action again. The idea is that your shoulders are not pulled forward or held back in a way that either collapses or expands your chest but that they form a straight line across your chest.

Breathe deeply and slowly. Bring your eyes to the horizon and soften them so that you are taking in the full expanse of it. Your peripheral vision will be fully engaged. Your face is relaxed with the slightest trace of a smile. Once in this position, **see if you can connect with the emotion of dignity**. Dignity comes from the Latin root dignitatem, which means 'worthiness'. The language of the stability is "I can decide", "All is well", "I am competent and capable". Hold this position, emotion and story for two to three minutes and then notice how you feel. (*Special thanks to Dan Newby & Aboodi Shabi*)

**Again, Stability in our body produces in us confidence and movement to action.** In others, it provides order and confidence, often making people feel safe with us and our mission. Overall, it generally slows us down a bit and allows us to increase our awareness, noticing all that is happening around us so we can make wise decisions and take effective action.

## The Powerful Presence Of Resolution



We Can Do It! During World War II, the "War Production Co-Ordinating Committee" used this image as a picture of American Resolve back home, urging women into the manufacturing workforce to support the huge void of men then fighting overseas. Sadly after the war, most those women were then told to go home, spawning the use of this same image for 1980's feminist movement. **As with any disposition, Resolution has its bright and dark sides to be aware.**

# Unity Over Winning

A disposition of Resolution, especially in leadership is not about aggression because the most important aspect of this body position is the availability for constructive energy to resource commitment to a cause greater than ourselves. Whether it is a nation, an ideal, or our family, this is the energy that has us moving forward in life and taking on great causes. Here I believe a quick distinction is in order. **When resolution becomes self serving, we will resource competition over collaboration.** This over emphasis creates winners and losers rather than unity. This in turn seeds moods of resentment and resignation which begin to dominate our presence.

**Leaders who foster resolution in their teams, stir people to sacrifice for a great cause.** Unfortunately in our American business culture today, the meaning of “Sacrifice” has take on a negative connotation rather than a positive (see distinction on chart below). The negative associate envisions “loss” of personal value or resources for what becomes an outside cause, sometimes stirring resentment or resignation. The positive association embodies sacrifice as a sacred office (SACREd – offICE), so that one’s investment of personal value and resources come with a personal return in the greater good for everyone collectively. Often times, there is a strong spiritual and relational connection for those engaged with their entire being, resulting in honoring God as well as blessing others.

Another fun archetype of this is found in the Lord of the Rings trilogy as Gandalf faces the Balrog in the mines. The party is allowed to escape safely as he turns resolutely to the beast and asserts, “You Shall Not Pass!”



## A Resolute Disposition

Mastering this dispositional agility brings a balance of assertiveness with accommodation, competition and collaboration. **It is Resolution that distinguished between visionary leadership and mere crisis management.** Resolution creates pathways forward, whether its finding answers or solving problems, or resolving conflict. I like the way Stever Trivett describes it:

*“ The way we shape our bodies will determine whether others choose to move toward and with us, or away and against us, or simply be indifferent to us. The body we are will shape the leader we will be. “*

**Resolution is all about seeing possibilities in my life or leadership and acting with determination to bring about a greater good.** This body position usually carries a capacity for high energy, spirit and emotion, much more so than does Stability. It is a very familiar disposition in America and particularly in business. It is the disposition that allows us to move forward and to be committed to our faith, our business, our family, and our country – any cause greater than ourselves of which we are passionately engaged.

Here are a few examples of how a “Resolute Disposition” can bring about a desired impact when combined with an appropriate mood, mindset and spirit. I have listed both positive and negative aspects. Keep in mind that these are interpretations and yours may be different.

Resolute Mindset	Mood	Energy to move to a Desired Result
I will take the initiative to act even though I am unsure or scared	BOLDNESS/ COURAGE	To take the initiative to create what we are called to in life despite the presence of fear
There are possibilities in life an I will take advantage of them	RESOLUTION	To act immediately, energetically and intentionally to attain a desired result

I refuse for myself or others to be treated this way because it violates dignity and standards	INDIGNATION	To esteem and protect myself or another person's self and their boundaries
I serve others in ways that require extreme investment, believing it for a greater good.	SACRIFICE +	To serve believing in a cause and benefit greater than my own: "Sacred-Office"
I do for others in ways that deplete my and others resources	SACRIFICE -	To care for others while disregarding my needs.
Something specific in the future may hurt or harm me	FEAR	To avoid, by irrational denial or running away
I have broken the standards of my conscious or my community	GUILT/SHAME	To face the judgment and punishment of myself, God or my community
I assess you have something I deserve more than you, if I can't have it, you should lose it.	JEALOUSY/ENVY	To resent, and maybe undermine the possessor of my desire until I attain it or they are punished for it.
I assess an injustice and someone or something is to blame	ANGER	To repel or punish the perceived source of the injustice

*From Newby / Shabi*

## A RESOLUTE Exercise

Stand with one foot in front of the other and your front knee slightly bent. Move your centre of gravity forward slightly. Extend the arm above your extended leg to point toward the horizon with your fingers straight. Your other arm can be bent at the elbow and alongside your ribs with your fist clenched. Your vision is narrowly focused along your extended arm on a single distant point. Your jaw is tensed, your brow furled, and face expression-less. You are breathing in half-breaths, strong and steady. Your thoughts are brought to bear on the single object of your attention in the distance. **You are not feeling aggression or anger but a deep, calm commitment to a cause greater than yourself.** The disposition of resolution does not require standing and we can equally well sit or even lay in resolution. *Special thanks to [Dan Newby](#) & [Aboodi Shabi](#).*

## The Powerful Presence Of Openness



Openness may require the least amount of energy of our four dispositions (Resolute, Stable, Open & Flexible), but it is the vehicle by which inspiration and innovation are launched. It is the container of caring and nurture, love and connectedness, trust and faith. Openness is all about wisdom and perspective. **It's mindset is one of an entrepreneurial spirit and a explorative investigator.**

## Why Openness Matters

Openness requires expanding our perspective and awareness, growing as an observer, declaring our selves learners rather than experts. **The agile leader will invite others onto the team with them.** So we must learn to value and respect the diversity of perspective of those around us, no matter their positional authority. This requires vulnerability, risk taking, acceptance and respect and affirmation of each team member so that a culture of safety and learning are tendered.

Openness is the body of a mother for her child, of a caring teacher or coach, of lovers. It is an invitation to others to come closer and experience, even share in tenderness and care. Openness is greeting an old friend at your front door, embracing them and welcoming them into the living room and catching up in warm conversation, gleaning the learning and wisdom of their unique journey and insights. **Leaders who embody Openness are more collaborative, more conversational, raise the perspective and awareness of themselves and their team/organization to see greater possibilities, as well as gain greater clarity into the needs of those they serve.** All this fosters more powerful and effective impact and results.

## Embody Openness

All four body dispositions require practice to fully embrace the unique possibilities they each bring. The goal of these somatic exercises is embodiment, because **the leader's Achilles heal is reactivity – getting triggered and finding ourselves in an unhelpful or even unhealthy disposition typically with a fight or flight reaction.** Embodiment is the process by which our practice retrains our reactions through a disciplining of our subconscious to a wiser and more valued posture, and then action on our part. Understanding is just reading these blogs on disposition, mindset, emotions and spirit. Wisdom is putting this new knowledge into a practice we exercise unto embodiment.

Here are a few examples of how **an “Open Disposition” can bring about a desired impact** when combined with an appropriate mood, mindset and spirit. I have listed both positive and negative aspects. Keep in mind that these are interpretations and yours may be different.

Openness Mindset	Mood	Energy to move to a Desired Result
I acknowledge life as it is – even though I may not like or endorse it	ACCEPTANCE	To be in stillness without energy in any direction – very close to “centered”
If I ever do what he/she does, I want to do it their way	ADMIRATION	To emulate or copy valued character or conduct
I believe my action caused you pain although it wasn't my intention	APOLOGY	To acknowledge my part in a breakdown and seek repair and/or reconciliation
Being with this person in their pain is the most valuable thing I can do	COMPASSION	To share and experience the struggles of life together

I suspect there is something interesting or of benefit to me here	CURIOSITY	To ask questions and investigate possibilities, declaring I am a learner
I am content with life as it is	HAPPINESS	To enjoy the present moment
Life does not hold possibilities for me	RESIGNATION	To cease or withdraw action or relationship
I am safe and secure in this relationship	TENDERNESS	To provide nurture and protection for another
I can count on it	TRUST	To believe and participate in companionship and comradery

*From Newby/Shabi*

## An OPENNESS Exercise

Stand in relaxation with your weight slightly back. One foot can be set behind you to support your weight. Open your arms to form a circle in front of you with your hands about 2 feet apart. Release tension from your shoulders, neck, and chest. Have a relaxed smile on your face with your lips slightly parted and a soft gaze. Your thoughts are of care and gratitude. Tenderness is your predominant emotion. When you move, do so with grace and softness in gentle flowing movements. **Hold the mindset of a curious learner.** *Special thanks to Dan Newby & Aboodi Shabi.*

## The Powerful Presence Of Flexibility



Ask Duke Ellington and his band, flexibility is the disposition of creativity and celebration. It is often used by comedians, jazz musicians and modernist painters. This is a disposition very familiar to both children and child-like adults. Wouldn't it be great if a good portion of our time as leaders felt more like play than perspiration?! Flexibility is a great help for brainstorming or engaging in conversations of possibilities. And with these activities, the more the merrier. [Duke Ellington](#) was a masterful musician, a composer, and an agile leader for over 50 years with many of his band engaged for several decades! This video demonstrates how Flexibility is a "swing thing:" <https://youtu.be/qDQpZT3GhDg>

Imagine driving a race car in a grand prix or baja that winds through hair pin turns, rolling hills, and blind corners. While race drivers have to be resolute as they focus on the road ahead, they also need to hold the steering wheel with a calm lightness that allows them to respond quickly to the changing

conditions or quickly approaching crisis or crashes. They also need to be able to accelerate or brake very quickly. All this requires flexibility.

## Consequences Of Inflexibility

I grew up in a family that was pretty mixed in their ability to be flexible when it came to the race of life and leadership. We were very agile at adjusting and accomplishing the work before us, often with great discipline and great results. What we were not as good at was taking time to appreciate and celebrate along the journey or upon crossing a finishing line. We were quick to give a couple high fives and dive back into work on the next race without much awe, affirmation and thanksgiving. Depending on the season or situation, this led me to experience burnout, resignation and at times resentment. Maybe you've found the same to be true for you or your High-D team/organization (DISC Assessment)? How do we loosen up our disposition? One way is found in our example of flexibility again from The Lord Of The Rings – Merry and Pippin dancing at the Prancing Pony Inn after escaping the Ringwraiths.



So here are a few examples of how a “Flexible Disposition” can bring about a desired impact when combined with an appropriate mood, mindset and spirit. I have listed both positive and negative aspects. Keep in mind that these are interpretations and yours may be different.

<b>FLEXIBILITY Mindset</b>	<b>Mood</b>	<b>Energy to move to a Desired Result</b>
This energizes me and I want to continue it	EXCITEMENT	To do more, to experience again; to set into motion from the outside
I believe this gift adds value and esteem to my life	THANKFULNESS	To receive in appreciation or engage in mutual exchange
I know good and bad things happen but mostly good happens to me	OPTIMISM	To act freely and unhindered from pessimism, anxiety or fear
Everything in life should be good and the way I want it to be	NAIVETE	To ignore what appears unpleasant or risky
I have done a good job or service	PRIDE	To congratulate or celebrate myself
I have enough	SATISFACTION	To appreciate and enjoy
I have lost something of importance	SADNESS	To grieve my loss
Something you did caused me loss or pain but I will not use it against you	FORGIVENESS	To pardon and release the debt I incurred while releasing myself from resentment or retaliation
I don't understand this but will enjoy it anyway	WONDER/AWE	To remain in the experience, perhaps even with an aspect of fear



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I can count on it

TRUST

To believe and to cooperate in actions of  
companionship and comradery

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*From Newby/Shabi*

## A FLEXIBILITY Exercise

Stand off balance, on one foot, dance, jump, fling yourself around the room never repeating the same position. Whenever you notice a pattern forming break it and allow your body to move spontaneously. You will likely find yourself smiling and laughing. Your thoughts do not follow any set pattern and might be seen as random or in a state of friendly chaos. Your emotions are joy, curiosity and wonder. You feel like exploring and trying new things. *Special thanks to Dan Newby & Aboodi Shabi.*

## LEADERSHIFT

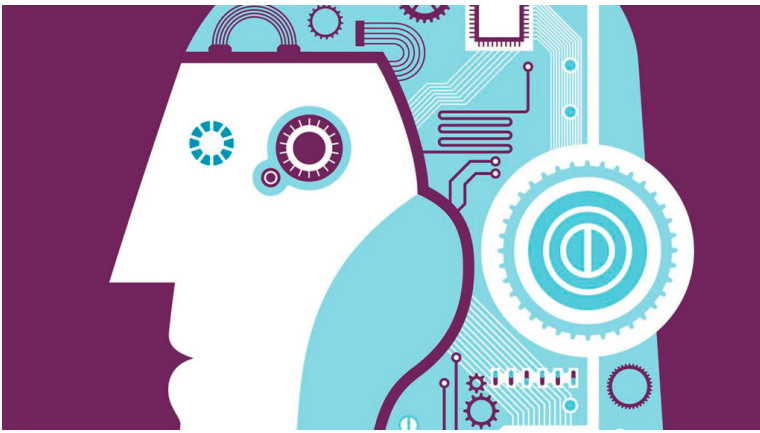
The four **Body Dispositions** can be thought of as shapes that live in each of us or that each of us live in. We also used the illustration of a vehicle, with dispositions as the various gears that determine the speed and power of our leadership. If you practice your shifting (centered) and these 4 body shapes, you will begin to see that one or more of them is a favorite and familiar gear/shape and one or more will probably feel less familiar and even uncomfortable. Mainly what this familiarity or discomfort represents is the degree to which you have learned or embodied them. Just like emotions, they are not absolutely pure and are often found in combination.

Seeing and experimenting with the connection between shape, emotion and story (body, emotion and mind/language) we can begin to see the power of our coherence as a learning leader and also the power of being able to shift in these areas for the sake of seeing things from a new perspective and having new choices available to us. This ability to see things from a new perspective gets process in our minds, then they find their productivity in our leadership conversations.

Emerging leaders, we will shift our focus of leadership agility among the four domains of human beings: Body, Emotions, Mind, and Spirit. We've covered Body and Emotions, so up next is our Mind. Specifically, we'll be talking about a mindset of learning and language!

## Chapter Four

### MIND Your Own Business



Wow – today we’re jumping into the **Mind of a Leader**. As human beings, our capacity to learn and lead doesn’t just happen through our mental acquisition of knowledge/data and objective reasoning. Leadership learning requires the creative fullness of our entire being: mind, body, emotions and spirit. If leadership were just about the data in this age of exploding algorithms and artificial intelligence, we’d be in huge trouble, **Like Dinosaurs Facing An Ice Age**. I just finished reading Rik Kirkland’s (senior managing editor of McKinsey Publishing) September 2014 interview summary called “[Artificial Intelligence Meets The C-suite](#).” I’ll say it again – wow!

Emerging Leaders – let me give you a few quotes that will shock and awe you, then I’ll give you some assurance that our Ice Age as leaders can be staved off if we’re willing to be very intentional about developing our Leadership Agility, and especially the fullness of Learning Abilities that comes through Ontological Learning (learning with our full being) that we coach with and teach here at LifeSource.



Think back, it was 2011 when computers became better than people at human tasks. Remember IBM’s Watson computer defeating the two leading human Jeopardy players on the planet? It is becoming increasingly clear that the comparative advantage of humans over software has been steadily eroding. Machines and their learning-based algorithms have catapulted over humans in pattern-matching ability and in the nuances of interpreting and communicating complex information. Here are some quotes from an interview with the authors of “The Second Machine Age” Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, examining the impact that “thinking” machines may have on top-management roles.

**Jeremy Howard:** “I think people are massively underestimating the impact, on both their organizations and on society, of the combination of data plus modern analytical techniques. The reason for that is very clear: these techniques are growing exponentially in capability, and the human brain just can’t conceive of that.

Let me give you an example. Google announced last month that it had just completed mapping the exact location of every business, every household, and every street number in the entirety of France. You’d think it would have needed to send a team of 100 people out to each suburb and district to go around with a GPS and that the whole thing would take maybe a year, right? In fact, it took Google one hour.”

**Andrew McAfee:** “It’s striking how little data you need before you would want to switch over and start being data driven instead of intuition driven. Right now, there are a lot of leaders of organizations who say, “Of course I’m data driven. I take the data and I use that as an input to my final decision-making process.” But there’s a lot of research showing that, in general, this leads to a worse outcome than if you rely purely on the data. Now, there are a ton of wrinkles here. But on average, if you second-guess what the data tell you, you tend to have worse results. And it’s very painful—especially for experienced, successful people—to walk away quickly from the idea that there’s something inherently magical or unsurpassable about our particular intuition.”

Ouch! That’s a blow to our leadership identity, not to mention our egos. But here’s the good news...

**“Andrew McAfee:** I don’t think this means that everything those leaders do right now becomes irrelevant. I’ve still never seen a piece of technology that could negotiate effectively. Or motivate and lead a team. Or figure out what’s going on in a rich social situation or what motivates people and how you get them to move in the direction you want. **These are human abilities.** They’re going to stick around. But if the people currently running large enterprises think there’s nothing about the technology revolution that’s going to affect them, I think they would be naïve.”

**So the role of a senior manager in a deeply data-driven world is going to shift.** I think the job is going to be to figure out, “Where do I actually add value and where should I get out of the way and go where the data takes me?” That’s going to mean a very deep rethinking of the idea of the managerial “gut,” or intuition.

What do you think leaders? After I read the entire article, I first had to pick my jaw up off the floor. How about you? Then I collected my thoughts and emotions and spirit, brought them in line with my freshly aligned jaw and here is what I’m pulling out of all this shock and awe for us as tomorrow’s leaders...

## “Minding Your Own Business” Means...

- Learning and agility requires way more than our mental acquisition of knowledge/data and objective reasoning – **Fact!**
- We can **no longer trust our “intuition” over the objective logic** of the analytical data we have available, or at least should seek to have available.
- We still need to be **objective, rational thinkers**, but...
- We and our teams need to **grow the subjective side of our consciousness**, the sentient capacities to feel, perceive, and learn, growing in awareness and responsiveness.
- Recognizing the call for **creativity and “second level” learning** – thinking out of the box, thinking collaboratively with our team(s), customers, suppliers, and the community/world at large.
- Cultivating our **people skills** and EQ to navigate deep social situations, team dynamics, creating powerful buy in and ownership of the vision and process.
- Developing greater **language skills** to make powerful offers and requests, negotiate, navigate and motivate those we influence.

Much of what McAfee described as “human abilities” were all about subjective **Learning and Language** – about mindful conversations. As leaders, a lot of our leadership insight starts in conversation within our own minds. From there it includes 360 degrees of conversations with our superiors, our peers, and our subordinates. It is in these critical conversations that the future is created, because language is generative!

So this is the where we’ll be headed over the next few sections as we dive into the **Mind of a Leader**, we’ll be unpacking how Language is creative, and is actually the vehicle of which the future is created. We’ll be equipping you with the communication skills needed to have powerful, generative conversations that will not only change your leadership, but change the world.

## Change the World? Change your Conversations!



One conversation – one little declaration of “Yes” or “No” literally changes the world. Do you believe your leadership and the conversations you engage in will influence and move people to a greater good?

**Language is Creative**

**Leadership is Generative**

**Let’s learn how to Change the World together!**

There’s an old preacher’s story that I enjoy:

*“One day a group of scientists got together and decided that mankind had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, “God, we’ve decided that we no longer need You. We’re at the point that we can clone organs, animals and people as well as do many miraculous things, we don’t need you here anymore, you can go your way.”*

*God listened very patiently and kindly to the man. After the scientist was done talking, God said, “Very well, how about this? Let’s say we have a man-making contest?”*

*To which the scientist replied, “Okay, great!”*

*But God added, “Now, we’re going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam.”*

*The scientist said, “Sure, no problem,” and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt.*

*God looked at him and said, “No, no! You go get your own dirt!”*



Now I don’t know if you would hold the “creation story” in the Judeo/Christian scriptures as epic truth or mythic tale, but there is something about those first two chapters of the book of Genesis that almost anyone, whether religious, agnostic or atheist would hold as true to life. It is that mankind is creative. The conversation varies as to what source and extent mankind has the power/energy to create, thus the humor of our opening story.

Its interesting to me, in each of the six day accounts of Genesis chapter one, it repeats the words, **“Then God said, ‘Let...,’ and God saw that it was good.”** So I read this as God’s spoken declaration brought about various creations of goodness. The pinnacle of (t)his creative work was mankind, made in His Own Image : *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female.”* (Genesis 1:26-7)

## LANGUAGE is Creative

Here again there is some debate about what characteristics of mankind fit into “His Image?” May I propose that at least one aspect of mankind that mirrors God’s creativeness is “the spoken word, language.” And I would also venture to say that the key to leadership, especially a leader who would operate with any kind of agility and depth of influence would require some mastery of language, holding a strong agility of spoken communication. When I say spoken communication in the aspect of language, obviously we’re assuming language is something more than mere passive description. Language in the context of leadership must be actively “prescriptive,” as demanded in a generic definition of leadership:

## LEADERSHIP Is Generative

a person(s) who influences or directs other(s)  
to generate an intended action, belief, purpose or result.

Everyday, we use language (in conversations with ourselves, others, or God) to create, to generate, to do things, to take action, to put in motion events and situations that would not have been put into motion had we not spoken. Reflect back on your life at all the times you have said, “Yes.” Now consider if you had said “No” each of those times, would your state of being, your relationships and your life circumstances be any different? Most of us would admit our lives, personally and professionally would be radically different. Our “Yes” or “No” is not describing anything. It is an act of opening certain possibilities and closing others. We are generating and creating out of what we speak. This has huge implications on our leadership and impact in our friendship, marriages, families, neighborhoods, workplace and the world.

Do you want to change your relationship with someone? Do you want to change your company or your community? Do you want to change the world? Then change your conversations, and start using your language more creatively. Next we’ll unpack what are the parts of speech needed for creative conversation and leadership!

## Leaders – There’s Powerful Action In Your Words!



*Sticks and stones may break my bones,  
but words will never harm me.*

Really? In the fall of 2016, our nation’s presidential campaigns, or perhaps crusades, were in full bloom though what some would say its more a field of stinkweeds and carnage rather than daisies and constructive comparison. Friday, two more ladies came forward (some would say “brought forth”) and they simply made a statement regarding their past experience with candidate Trump. Their words seem to be in line with a past recorded conversation that the candidate himself acknowledges as his own. And while a strong rebuttal has occurred, there remains this tangible wrestling in both candidates’ camps based solely upon Speech Acts.

My point here is not political – I’m simply illustrating that Words can be Actions. They can powerfully help or hurt others. They advance one’s mission or hinder it. Even the conversations that go on in our own heads build up our esteem and empower us, or tear it down and disable us. So while we typically see speech as something that precedes action, today we’ll consider that speech is action.

Given the number of conversations we have every day at home or at work, our own internal thoughts, text messages or even non-verbal language, its incredible that linguistic experts have identified only 6 primary speech acts that we are using everyday to lead.

## **Primary Speech Acts**

REQUESTS

OFFERS

PROMISES

ASSERTIONS

ASSESSMENTS

DECLARATIONS

Each speech act has a purpose and is useful in some specific way. Understanding its reason for being and how to use it effectively can give you access to a level of linguistic competence as well as leadership agility you may have never experienced. Let’s get started with REQUESTS, and spend a couple more blogs with the others.

### **REQUESTS - Speech Act #1**

Requests exist to communicate to another that there is something I need and I believe another can take care of that need for me. We make and receive requests constantly, whether from our kids, coworkers, or even a presidential candidate. For instance, I am thirsty and need a drink of water, they have a canteen or I believe they may know of a source of water. The perspective of requests can be emphasized, either projecting toward the speaker (Can I borrow your notes?) or the hearer (Can you loan me your notes?). When we request we are not simply describing, although the request may include a description, but are generating possible future action.

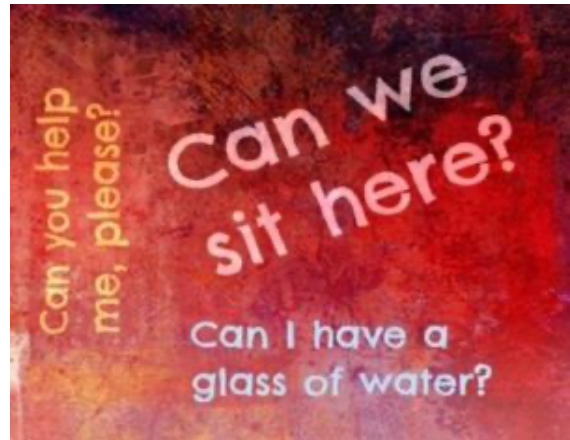
#### **Requests have a simple structure:**

I request you do “x” by time “y”

This structure holds true no matter the phrase in which it is expressed. It is important to understand the word “request” can be changed to many other words including: implore, beg, insist, petition, demand, ask, etc. While it may seem intuitive, many failures in relationships and organizations occur because this basic speech act is not exercised competently or completely in our conversations. Requests have certain necessary parts and requirements to be considered complete and therefore effective.

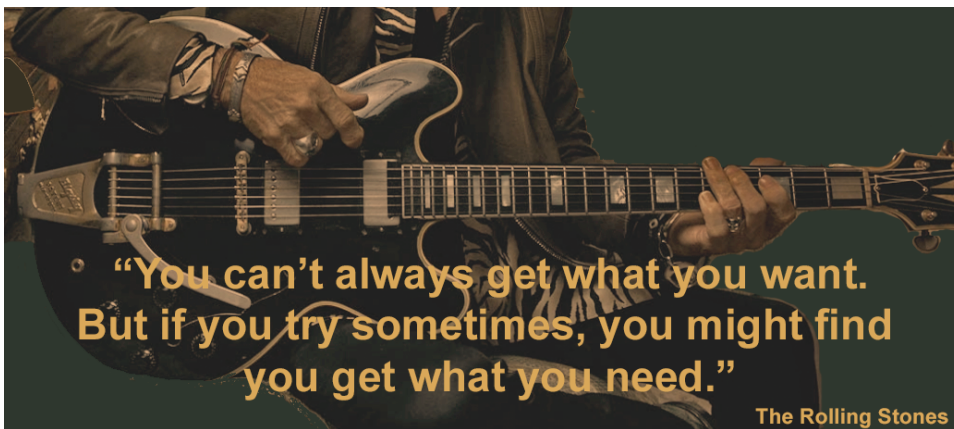
## Needed Components Of A Request

- A Speaker
- A Committed Listener
- Something Missing
- Conditions of Satisfaction
- Time
- Assumption of Competence
- Consideration of Mood of both speaker and listener
- Shared Background of Obviousness



We'll take each of these **Components of Requests** and consider their importance in creating an effective, compelling, and complete request. It does take time and practice to include these elements in our preparation but the risk we take when we do not is that our requests will be weak and ineffective. This often leads to communication breakdown at best, conflict at worst. If we are truly committed to getting the 'something missing' we need, it is worth the effort to plan our requests. If you have the complaint that you do not 'get what you need or want in life' one place to explore is your competence in the area of making requests.

## REQUESTS – Get What You Need!



Back in 1969, The Rolling Stones' song lyrics reflected upon the end of the long overdue party that was the 1960s. *"The first three verses address the major topics of the 1960s: love, politics, and drugs. Each verse captures the essence of the initial optimism and eventual disillusion of idealistic wants, followed by the resigned pragmatism of getting one's needs met."* (Richard Unterberger) If the 60's fashion return of 2014 was an indication, I'd say the same idealism of love, politics and drugs has been resurrected in our culture, for better or for worse. And these lyrics still ring true in our generation, "You Can't Always Get What You Want," but with powerful requests as Speech Acts, you can "Get What You Need" from others. Here's how!

Requests are often framed in the form of a direct statement, and sometimes as questions. Their structure looks like this:

**I request you do "x" by time "y."**

While it may seem intuitive, many failures in relationships and organizations occur because this basic speech act is not exercised competently or completely in our conversations. Requests have certain necessary parts and requirements to be considered complete and therefore effective.

## Components Of A REQUEST

**Speaker** – While obvious, it is worth mentioning for three reasons. 1. Most of us have within us unspoken requests: because we felt we didn't deserve to, because of fear of being declined, or simply because we haven't figured out the way. Regardless of the reason the fact that we have not made them means that there has not been a speaker available and thus no request has been made. 2. At times, we may believe we have made a request but have either mis-remembered or the technology we have relied upon has failed us. A text sent that never arrives to the in box of the intended reader or was ignored and never read by them is a request that has not been 'spoken.' 3. Sometimes we have expectations that we assume are obvious or evident to others and so do not speak the request.

In my family growing up, we had vast amounts of unspoken expectations floating around our home. The consequence of this was two fold:

**A.** I became pretty good as an observer of people's needs before they were voiced either inside or outside my family.

**B.** I found myself an angry, resentful, sometimes lonely person because I had never really learned how to make effective requests.

As a church planting pastor back in the mid-90s, this "Good Observer" served me well as a servant leader to the average church attender, but it made for havoc with my staff and volunteer leaders as they struggled to identify and fulfill my many unspoken expectations.



**Committed Listener** – How many of leaders have the habit of launching into our requests to a listener who is preoccupied, distracted, or otherwise disengaged? When that happens we do not have a committed listener. If we send off an email or leave a voice mail with the belief that we have made a request we often find ourselves disappointed when the request we thought we made went astray – you got it, there was no listener. ***The responsibility to engage a committed listener for the request belongs with the person making the request.***

**Something Missing** – Again this seems obvious except that often we have not considered what exactly it is that is missing for us that has us needing to make a request. We may have the sense that something is missing but having clarity and awareness is essential if we want to make a clear request that, when fulfilled, leaves us satisfied. If you find yourself here, one possibility for us is to ***make a preliminary request to the listener*** to help us articulate what our request should be. This is a strategy that is enormously helpful when working outside our areas of knowledge/skill.

For example, when I'm late getting my blog to our Virtual Assistant, I have to come up with and edit my own photos for instagram. I'm a huge Instagram newbie and trying to follow the same style using my old photo editor was wrecking me. Not only couldn't I get the transparent text background screen made, I didn't even know what it was called to ask? Yikes! So the next time I had my VA on the phone, I requested her help to articulate what I needed "transparent text background screen," and then I request for suggestions of a photo editor that could accomplish that, which follows all the same principles as a request for any object.

**Conditions of Satisfaction (CoS)** – These are the conditions that will exist when my request is fulfilled that will have me declaring myself satisfied. One of the most interesting and misunderstood things about ***conditions of satisfaction is that they must be quantifiable***. They cannot be opinions (subjective) or mere emotions.





For instance, if I ask Sue to go to J.C. Penny and buy me a warm sweater I am almost guaranteed to be dissatisfied. It could be that Sue has similar tastes in clothes to my own but there are many other considerations in buying a sweater: price, size, weight, material, pattern and color are a few. Each of these can be quantified. If I simply ask for a sweater, it is unlikely I will get what I am expecting or a sweater I am satisfied with. Thus it is not a clear or effective request. Lack of clarity in my conditions of satisfaction not only puts the fulfillment of my need at risk, it also puts the success of the listener (and in this case performer) at risk. Now if I said, “pick me up a sweater that is a good price, this size, not too heavy, of an unusual yarn, knit in a simple pattern and has bright colors,” I’ve increased my chances of satisfaction. Lack of competence in setting clear conditions of satisfaction has cost many people relationships and jobs. The cost can be very high.

**Time** – While time is a condition of satisfaction, it is perhaps the most important and the one most often overlooked. The fact that someone promises he or she will deliver a specific report to you on Tuesday does not guarantee satisfaction. Perhaps the meeting for which you need the report is at 10 a.m. and the listener is thinking they need to have it complete for delivery at the end of the working day. If the speaker and listener (requester and performer) live in different time zones there is even more possibility for a breakdown in this area.

**Assumption of Competence** – Sometimes this component may be unseen when we make a request of someone. We often generally assume they have the competence to fulfill it. In preparation of a request this is an important aspect to consider and even investigate because if we make a request of someone who is not competent to fulfill it and they accept, we are putting our need and relationship at risk.

As I was finishing my Seminary training back in 1994, I did a two month internship with a fairly young and successful church startup in Arizona. My list of requirements included some group teaching and ministry. My overseer asked me to lead a time of communion for 30-40 of the congregation members one evening. In my church tradition, communion was commonly served as an add-on to the sermon of the day. So I shrugged and assumed my role was to simply facilitate handing out the elements of Grape Juice and Bread, then conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving. My overseer had expected that I would give a brief sermon in addition to serving the elements as was their tradition. While I could have done that with a bit of preparation, I did not show up with a competence to give a sermon that day, nor did I understand that was part of my overseer’s request. Needless to say we were both embarrassed while the congregation was disappointed and confused.



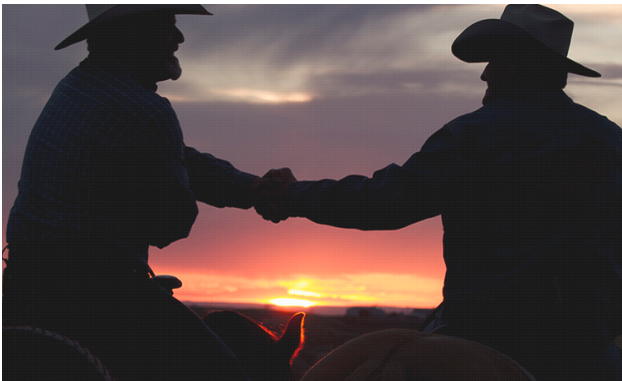
**Mood** – In Chapter 2, we learned about moods and emotions. Even without that in mind, we can understand that a request made from a mood of anger rather than a mood of compassion would be two different requests. Similarly when the listener is in a mood of urgency, they will hear and respond to a request differently than they would in a mood of service. Consideration of what moods will be most effective for both the speaker and listener is important to achieve effectiveness. Often as leaders, our awareness of these considerations are missing.

**Shared Background of Obviousness** – Simply speaking, when we are knowledgeable in a particular area of experience and expertise, we can often be blind to the fact that those things we consider obvious are unknown to all. In the example of requesting Sue to buy a sweater for me, I assumed she understood the details of a sweater I might desire. If I ask Sue to grab my gloves out of the garage as she meets me at our daughter’s stalled car down the street, she would have three areas and probably 6 pairs of gloves she could grab and probably not have any idea of which I preferred. Predictably, I would be angry if she grabbed the wrong ones in her hurry to

meet my request and get to our rendezvous in a timely manner, even though I assumed we had a shared obviousness. So Leaders, particularly when we are coordinating action with people from different backgrounds than our own – technical, linguistic, cultural, age – this aspect of making effective requests becomes essential for us to give our attention.

Wow, who knew there was so much to consider when making a simple request for something we need?! The reality though, it does take time and practice to include each of these elements in our preparation of making a request because our requests will be weak and ineffective if we leave out a component. If we are truly committed to getting the ‘something missing’ it is worth the effort to plan our requests. If you are singing with Mic Jagger “I cant always get what I want,” one place to explore is your competence in the area of **Making Requests**. We will now move on to next few primary **Speech Acts**: Offers & Promises & Assertions.

## A Leader’s Word Is Their Bond!



I grew up on a farm in Montana in the 1970’s where a person’s word was their bond. Many times when farmers negotiated an agreement, they would shake hands as a promise to both live up to their spoken commitment. Even though many of those agreements and business transactions were later written up and signed on contracts, they were usually negotiated out in the field or over coffee at the kitchen table. The presence and intention on both sides of the offer or request was important.

## OFFERS - Speech Act #2

Offers are essentially the same speech act as requests except that they happen in an opposite direction. I make an offer when I believe that something may be missing for someone, and I believe that I can provide it. In the example of making the request of Sue to buy me a sweater it could be reversed and Sue, noticing that I appear to be cold often, could offer to go buy me a sweater. All of the other elements articulated for effective requests apply – speaker, committed listener, conditions of satisfaction, time, assumed competence, mood, something missing, shared background of obviousness are identical. For consistency we can say that the structure of an Offer is:

**I offer to do “x” by time “y”**

Also, as with requests, an offer can be spoken using a variety of different wordings including “I am willing to x”, “I volunteer to x” or “I propose to x”. Offers may even be communicated non-verbally.

## PROMISES - Speech Act #3

Promises are linguistically the acceptance of either a request or an offer. The structure of a promise is:

**I promise to do “x” by time “y”**

A promise can be expressed also in other language or non-verbally. Linguistically a promise means that “I am committed, given my present understanding of the situation and resources to fulfill the request or offer according to the agreed upon conditions of satisfaction”.

Every promise either builds or subtracts from a foundation of trust. Every promise ties into an emotion of loyalty and carries weight in a relationship, whether personal or professional. There are three kinds of promise we face as leaders:

- **Powerful Promises** carry obligations to pursue fulfillment with complete commitment and integrity.
- **Shallow Promises** are made with secret or undisclosed conditions by one side of the agreement.
- **Criminal Promises** occur when there is a personal commitment to not fulfill it.

A promise is different from a guarantee. There is always the possibility to renegotiate or revoke a promise while this is not true of a guarantee. A promise, to be sincere, must include the emotion of commitment rather than compliance. The aim of a promise is for the promiser to be as committed to completion of the promised task as the person requesting or offering. In any case the following formulas show the relationship between a request or offer and a promise:

**Request + Acceptance = Promise**

**Offer + Acceptance = Promise**

## Two Points To Ponder:

Many of our conversations of requests and offers get hijacked because a Promise has not truly been made. If I **promise to do “x”** and we never define **by time “Y,”** then a promise hasn’t really been made. How often have we made a request and assumed a promise when the performer stated, “okay, I’ll see what I can do” or “I’ll let you know” or “I’ll get back to you on that?” If we take that as a promised commitment, then more often than not we will find ourselves disappointed.

Secondly, have you ever been disappointed when your request is delivered but not to your expectations? This occurs when we fail to clearly define “x”. In the full course of a productive conversation, the requested or offered “x” becomes clearly defined through a negotiation process that concludes with mutually agreed upon “Conditions of Satisfaction.”

The best way to live up to one’s promises is to negotiate well the “conditions of satisfaction” before shaking hands. We will explore an action-based conversational model that includes defining Conditions of Satisfaction. It is just such clarity and definition that helps us make and fulfill powerful promises to our offers and requests with greater consistency and satisfaction on both sides of the equation! Take care cowboys and cowgirls!

## Powerful Promises Are No Surprise!

Back in the 70’s, Holiday Inn executives chose a new marketing slogan “The Best Surprise Is No Surprise.”



Their promise was that the American Traveler would experience the same quality of stay no matter where in the world they traveled. And by 1972, founder Kemmons Wilson was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* – his company by that point franchised 1,405 inns in the United States and around the world. For us as leaders, whether its hospitality, or consumer goods in the marketplace, government or the non-profit sector, **the most powerful promises hold no surprises.**

There’s no worse surprise than when what’s been promised us in an offer doesn’t meet our expectations. **Unless its when we’ve promised to meet someone else’s request but fail to meet their expectations.** Trust is damaged, tempers are strained, relationships broken. Even costly penalties can be incurred or worse contracts are canceled with huge loss of time, finances, and even careers.

Surprise and disappointment can occur when a standard of quality is missed, or a delivery comes past due. But **the greater difficulty of keeping our promises rests in our ability to negotiate clear, shared “Conditions of Satisfaction”** up front before production or performance begins. Let me start with a couple of definitions followed by a terrific picture of the Cycle of Conversation that can help us as leaders to see the promises we oversee are fulfilled with no surprises.

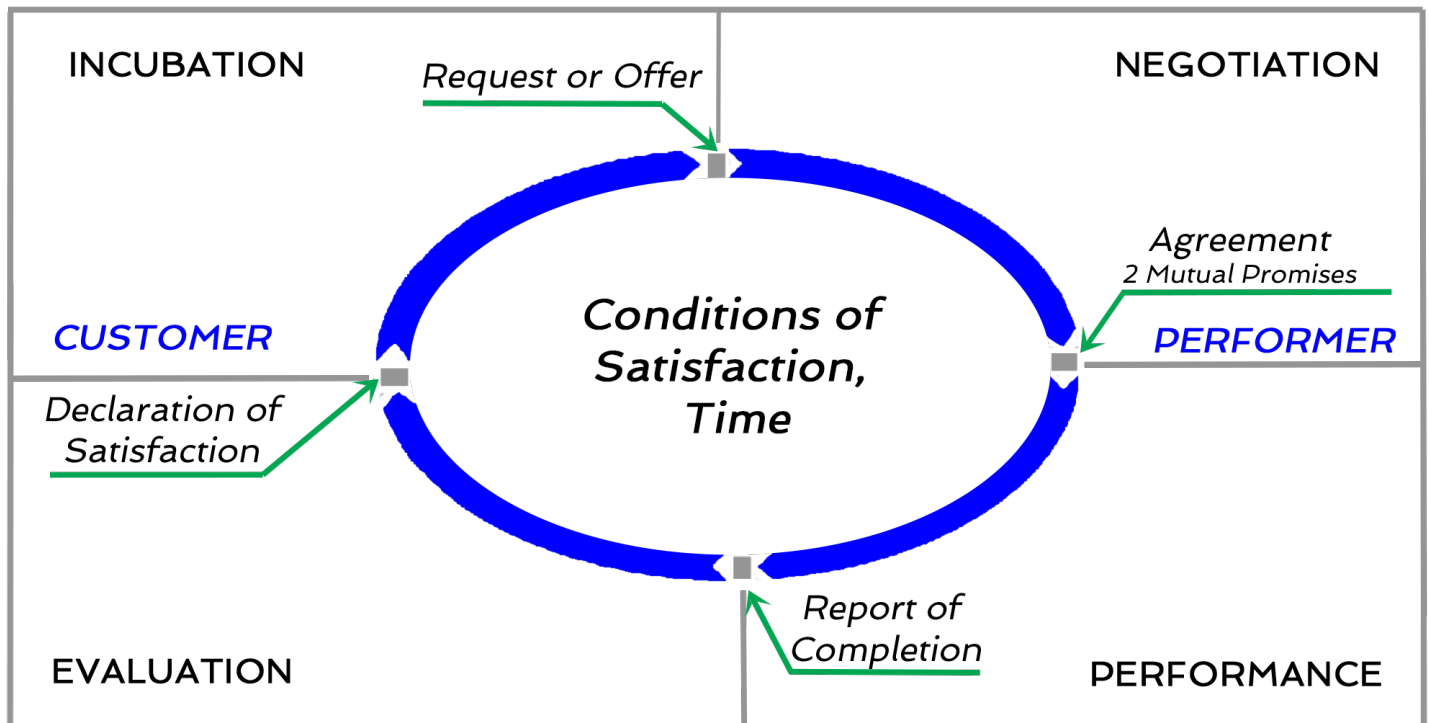
## Conditions of Satisfaction

Remember a couple pages back as we listed the Components of An Effective Request? **Conditions of Satisfaction** (CoS) was one of them – These are the conditions that exist when a request is fulfilled that will have our customer or cohort declaring themselves satisfied. One of the most important things about *conditions of satisfaction* is that they must be assertions: *specific, measurable and quantifiable*.

## ASSERTIONS - Speech Act #4

As our fourth Speech Act, an Assertion is a claim that something is true or false through a tangible measurement using an agreed upon standard. For instance if I claim to be 6 feet tall, it is an assertion that can be determined true or false by using a ruler to measure my height. *Okay, that assertion would measure up false – I’m probably closer to 5’10” and late 50’s, so I’m going backward by now - lol.* And when we make an assertion we are committing ourselves to provide evidence for our claim. This brings an interesting aspect of assertions and conditions of satisfaction. In the midst of negotiating the CoS (Condition of Satisfaction), **there must be agreement of what evidence both parties will accept** because a request is not fulfilled merely by the delivery of the product or service, it is only fulfilled when the customer evaluates the work and declares satisfaction and acceptance. If the CoS is not met acceptable, the request can either be withdrawn or renegotiated. Here is a great picture of the whole process:

# Cycle of Conversational Action



# Cycle of Conversational Action

So how do requests, offers and promises all fit together for conversations that change the world? It's a lot simpler and more intuitive than one might guess. Here is a diagram originally comprised from the teaching of Chilean political exile Fernando Flores, a UC Berkeley Univ. PhD who developed amazing work on Conversations for Action and Workflow.

While the chart is fairly self-explanatory, allow me to share a helpful narrative I picked up. Lets say a purchasing agent for a chain of retail sporting goods stores has a request for a new piece of training equipment from its customers. Recently, media spotlight turned to a professional athlete excelling in their field. This athlete credited their success on a newly designed piece of training equipment. Due to the great publicity, the stores have customers who are requesting similar training equipment.

So our Cycle begins in the upper left quadrant of the chart - **INCUBATION**. Our **Customer** (speaker making request) would be a Purchasing Agent for the retail stores, making a **REQUEST** of a **Manufacturer's Representative** for a similarly designed and produced training product that is popular. The timing of fulfillment of this request would be important because such opportunities are usually short lived as media spotlights quickly shift and created other fads.

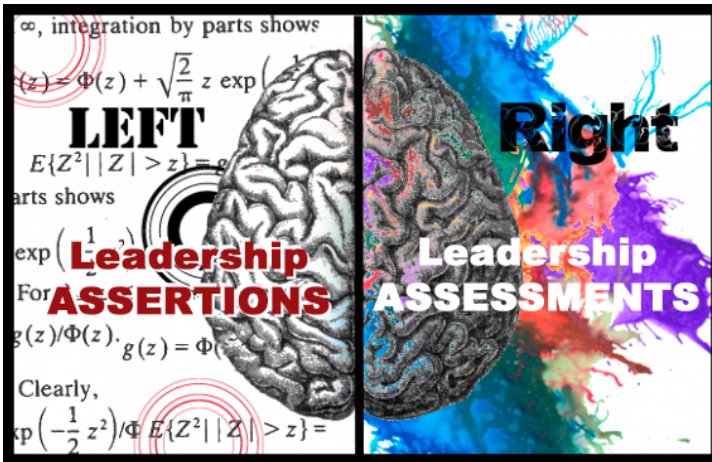
We now move to the top right quadrant where the **Manufacturer's Rep** would **NEGOTIATE** with the **Customer** to define what we term "Conditions of Satisfaction." In our case, such things as all the "specifications" of the equipment, material and production costs, packaging, shipping costs, delivery date and locations would all be a part of the lengthy Conditions of Satisfaction. Once those terms are agreed upon and **ACCEPTED**, a **PROMISE** in the form of a written contract is usually signed between the two.

The Cycle continues in **PERFORMANCE** (bottom right quadrant) as the **Manufacturer** produces the equipment order to fulfill the requirements and deliver the finished product on time (**COMPLETION**).

The final stage is **ACCEPTANCE**. Once the **Manufacturer** completes their promise, it is up for our **Customer** to "accept" or "decline" the product according to whether they determine that the Conditions of Satisfaction have been fulfilled. If the delivery is **ACCEPTED**, the Cycle is complete, the request fulfilled and the work accomplished. If the delivery is not accepted, this can lead to either a withdraw of the initial request or re-negotiation of new terms of satisfaction.

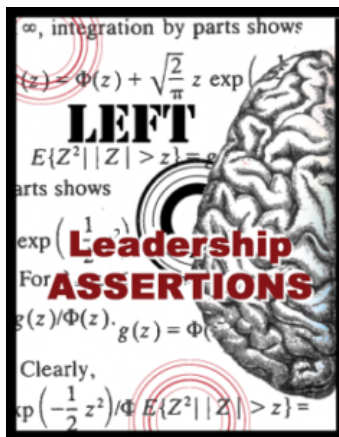
*How are you at making powerful requests or offers? Do you complete the full cycle by detailing the "conditions of satisfaction"? Do you obtain a true "promise" with a time constraint as part of the negotiation?* These are all important factors that comprise the agility of powerful leaders whose promises hold no surprises. Consider an experience you've had where promises were kept or broken because of the conditions of satisfaction (or lack thereof). Understanding the distinction between Assertions and Assessments (up next) is critical for powerful conversations that bring about Action and desired Results. Your leadership agility depends on it!

# Which Brain Do Agile Leaders Speak From?



If a Leader's Action is their Speaking, which side of the brain speaks forth better results? And just as our brain works in different capacities between factual rationalization and intuitive imagination, how do our Speech Acts of Assertions and Assessments correlate to that? Let's dive in and find some answers as well as gain some skill to grow our own leadership agility!

So far we know that an assertion is an objective claim that something is factually true or false because it is measurable and verifiable. Assertions are **Left Brain** oriented:



- Rational**
- Systematic**
- Logic**
- Facts**
- Computation**
- Tactical Details**
- Sequential**
- Practicalities**

They are associated with what is being observed out there in the world we work and lend leadership in, not with the person making the statement. Assertions deal with the science side of life and conversation, legitimized through observable proof or evidence. Using our equations:

**I assert that "X" is so!**

Leaders use assertions because they are seeking to create a shared understanding of reality. It is **assertions that set the context for considering requests and offers, for negotiating actions and ultimately making promised commitments**. That's why we focus on measurable data, even though we know it may not be the most important contributor to success. It does however, enable us to coordinate our thoughts with reality and have productive conversations.

Interestingly, an assertion can sometimes be publicly accepted due to the data's longstanding and consistency, thereby used without recent verification. Unfortunately the world is so rapidly changing, **the agile leader must constantly be challenging old publicly held assertions** through conversations as well as using analytics, even modern algorithmic computer analytics if affordable, to make sure that our assertions (view of the facts) is well grounded. In other words, trends tend to change much more quickly than they did even 10-20 years ago. The agile leader will always challenge and seek to ground the pertinent assertions/data of their team, their market or field of work so they can negotiate well and establish accurate promises and thus powerful results to accomplish their mission.

Here's some simple examples of assertions. I may claim to be 5'11" tall, it is an assertion that can be determined true or false by producing my driver's license or by using a ruler to measure my height. If you accept my driver's license as verification, you'd be gaining false data that was last verified over 13 years ago when my picture was also taken – oops! *So, my assertion would measure up false, I'm closer to 5'10" – due to those 13 years of wear and tear and attrition as a 57 year old man.* **So as leaders, a large part of high level leadership decisions and strategies need to be verified by empirical data.**

One more simple example: I say, "Wow, it's 95 degrees out today, whew! That is an assertion you can check with a thermometer and verify as true or false. Now if I say, "Wow, it is so hot today, whew!" Then that is not an assertion since my reference to "hot" is subjective, which may be totally relevant to my experience and history, but may or may not match up with those to whom I am speaking. This second subjective phrase of "it is so hot" would fall under the category of an Assessment.

## ASSESSMENTS – Speech Act #5

An assessment is a subjective claim open to interpretation based on personal thoughts, emotions, aesthetics, and experience. They are **Right Brain** oriented:

**Creative**

**Intuitive**

**Feeling**

**Imagination**

**Visualization**

**Non-Verbal**

**Big Picture Strategic**

**Possibilities**



Assessments reflect the world of the person making the observations, not the things out there that are being observed (ie. as happens in assertions). So **it is about your interpretation of life as you judge, evaluate and form opinions**. These opinions are true only for you as the assessor and may not be deemed either right or wrong. Again using our equations:

**I assess this about "X".**

We can use other words here in lieu of assess: perceive, observe, discern, etc. And for example, if you say "that a book is excellent," you are sharing your view of its quality. Your assessment that the book is excellent does not make it so; it is simply your interpretation. In other words any assessments that you make are not truth with a capital "T" (True for all), but they are true to you (if you are being sincere). **Your assessments reveal the way you see and interpret the world** but that does not mean they will be true (perceived the same by others).

Leaders assess their and others' job performance and productivity. They assess the market or culture and its trends and movement. They assess themselves and their balance. They assess progress of strategic plans and goals, as well as the tactical objects and practices in place to accomplish the goals. Leaders use assessments to expand perspective and broaden the number of possibilities in all these areas. Leaders also use assessments to explore new actions and discern the effectiveness of their results.

According to Australian Ontological Leadership Mentor [Steve Trivett](#), **agile leaders tend to steer away from too many broadly agreed upon assessments** in brain storming conversations. Uniformity of opinions doesn't

generate much learning and creativity. While different opinions can cause arguments based upon ungrounded assumptions, **agile teams can use assessment-based conversations to expand their learning by generating a broader perspective of reality.** The conversational learning can then be shifted to creatively generating new possibilities of actions needed to improve results and move them forward on their mission.

**Agile leaders will also encourage creative conversations that challenge old assertions** and past plans, goals and tactics that may have worked well for a long time, but may leave a company vulnerable if their culture or market is subtly changing. This is not to deny that many interpretations will be shared and not all of them may lead to full usefulness or any usefulness at all, but the collective creative learning and possibilities that arise from assessments often verify their value.

So back to our original question,

## Which Brain Do Agile Leaders Speak From?

If a Leader's Action is their Speaking, which side of the brain speaks forth better results? And just as our brain works in different capacities between factual rationalization and intuitive imagination, how do our Speech Acts of Assertions and Assessments correlate to that? We've learned that **both sides are needed in exploring new realities and actions** through our conversations of assessment, and then in creating new realities in the speech acts of our assertions.

**Agile leaders will have a solid grasp of both these actions** to create new possibilities, declare shared understanding, to choose the most powerful actions and move themselves and their organization forward on their unique mission with innovative results. Now go experiment in both types of conversations emerging leaders, for you will change the world, I am confident of that!

Before we move on to our Sixth Speech Act of Declaration, we need to take a short side bar. As we have moved into this realm of distinctions like "assessment versus assertion," or "truth versus Truth," its here we encounter the crossroad of linguistics, beliefs and morality. So we'll briefly dive into what can become a bit of a hornet's nest regarding truth: capital "T" vs small case "t."

## Distinguishing between "truth" and "Truth"



One way to approach distinguishing between the two is to consider "truth" as assessment, and "Truth" as an assertion. It is **here we encounter the crossroad of linguistics, beliefs and morality.** This is extremely relevant to the world we live in today because it connects to current events like "racial profiling by police" as well as "religious extremism."

On a personal level, this distinction has several implications for how we see our selves, our lives and calling, our relationships and the level of happiness and significance we embrace. There are positives and negatives that can arise within ourselves, our relationships, organizations, and countries when we raise our assessments (beliefs of truth) to the level of assertions (factual Truth). When it comes to governmental politics or religion, **this can become an explosively important distinction.**

Let's unpack a bit more at the personal level. An interesting perspective comes from [Dan Newby & Aboodi Shabi](#): "When we hold our assessments (truth) of ourselves as assertions (Truth), we will hold those assessments as if they are qualities of ourselves, and we do not question them – we will believe they are unchangeable. What often happens in these cases is that we acquired a belief about ourselves and **at some point this becomes our 'Truth'.**" The equation might look like this:



## I am so as “X”

**This can have positive or problematic implications.** For example, you may have grown up in a family that affirmed you as being valuable and loved as a human “being” irrelevant of your “doings” or accomplishment. While you assessed that as true through their words and actions, over time that truth could grow into an assertion and become part of your identity as Truth you no longer question. Similarly, if you have an on-going belief that you are “not enough” or that you are lazy, you might live as if those are True, with huge costs in your life – for example, you might forever be trying to prove that you are “enough”, or you might become unambitious because you have learned to believe that you are lazy.

One of the most freeing things we can do personally is to **examine the beliefs we have about ourselves**, challenging whether those are unchangeable facts of identity and who we are (Truth) or if they are simply stories of our experience or circumstances that can change (truth), distinct from our being and identity. Here is a helpful definition of assessments:

**Assessments are beliefs based on past experience  
we can use to predict future behavior.**

They are essential in life in order to keep us safe – to prevent us from walking in front of a moving bus for instance, or to employ the right people for our business. And **when Assessments are raised to the level of Assertion, they can either lend us confidence which develops healthy habits over time, or they may also keep us frozen and unable to learn and grow.** Sometimes in the negative, these exhibit themselves in the form of procrastination, or phobias, other times as triggered emotional outbursts.

One question that is extremely helpful when confronted with these negative symptoms is to ask ourself, **“What is it I am believing in this situation?”** And then pause to reflect what you might be believing as an assertive **Truth** that is not serving you well. This kind of awareness can often shift that negative belief back to an assessment level **truth**.

We’ve learned that assessments are within us and observer based, while assertions are beyond us defining objective reality. Yet when it comes to religion and governmental politics, there are certain beliefs that are held as moral Assertions/Truths, usually being ethereal or supernatural and thus beyond objective verification. Most religious observers in our world can hold these moral Assertions/Truths (spiritually elevated assessments) with a lightness and mood of righteousness.

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

**(gk) just, truthfulness**, without prejudice or partiality

**(old eng) rightwiseness** – being in wise, right and just relationship with others.

**antonym** – intolerant, judgmental, prideful

Unfortunately with moral Assertions, **the fine line between lightly holding a mood of righteousness to unjustly wielding a moral imperative can be crossed at all levels of life.** We see it when a parent crosses the line with their child from discipline to abusive punishment. We see it in organizations as unhealthy conflict arises, people chose sides and attack each other rather than what was originally just an impersonal issue or assessment to be resolved. It fuels gossip in our neighborhoods, churches, as well as families. On a larger scale, we’ve observed and experienced it strongly across America in protests over the last few years regarding instances of police action towards minorities resulting in “Black Lives Matter” type movements. We saw it governmentally on the grand scale of Nazi Germany during World War II. We saw it religiously almost a millennia ago in the Christian Crusades and we see it today in the declarations and destruction of the Islamic State (ISIS).

**So how can these infractions of righteousness, justice and tolerance be dealt with?** How do we heal and reconcile the harm, damage and division that occurs when boundaries have been crossed? It requires a Declaration!

## **Well, I Do Declare...**



*I believe that this Nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth."*

President John F. Kennedy May 25, 1961

Declarations are action statements that basically accomplish two things:

**Generate and Begin New Things**  
**Graduate and End Existing Things**

The reality of [President Kennedy's generative declaration](#) became a graduating reality on July 20, 1969.



*"That's one small step for a man,  
one giant leap for mankind."*

Neil Armstrong Apollo 11

## **DECLARATIONS – Speech Act #6**

Words are Generative – Speech is Action!

Declarations as speech acts are used to generate new possibilities, new actions, and new results in the world!

This is our last of six speech acts first introduced with “Change The World? Change Your Conversations.”

## Primary Speech Acts

REQUESTS

OFFERS

PROMISES

ASSERTIONS

ASSESSMENTS

DECLARATIONS

With Assertions, first comes the world, then comes a descriptive word of what is already so. With Declarations, the “Word” comes first, then the “world” follows and starts the process towards a new reality. **Declarations generate new possibilities, new actions, and new results in the world!** Leaders, we have the authority and the audacity to create a bold new future. Let’s look at a few of the more powerful declarations we can make thanks to the contribution of [Dan Newby](#) & [Aboodi Shabi](#).

## Vital Declarations

Two of the most important declarations to become at ease with are “I apologize” and “I forgive.” Contrary to what is generally thought, **apologizing does not mean that I believe I was wrong or even that I did something incorrect.** Linguistically an apology means I recognize that something I did (or didn’t do) may have inadvertently caused harm to you. I am declaring that it was not my intention to injure you.

Forgiveness likewise is commonly misunderstood to mean that I will now forget the hurt. Linguistically **to forgive means that if we interact in the future I will not use this experience against you.** Actually, to forget the offense would mean that it could no longer be useful in shaping our relationship, which is very different than the function of forgiveness.

One important place to consider the power of forgiveness is when we declare forgiveness for ourselves. When we do, it allows us to move through life without continually punishing ourselves for past mistakes. **We are not forgetting our errors or poor choices, but we are not using them to punish ourselves.** This can open up enormous possibilities for learning and peace.

A third declaration that might be included as vital is our Vulnerability.

## A World That Demands We Be Vulnerable

Oh My! Vulnerability in leadership? Oh the Shame of it all!

Can I be transparent for a minute?! This book had it’s origins back in 2016 in the form of 31 blog entries written with one month’s time. I was working ahead and writing Blog Day 23 on day 19 and I was pretty close to exhausted while thoroughly enthusiastic. Here’s what I confessed:

*“I’ve stayed up many many nights this month cranking out, crafting, and at times remunerating blog stuff around leadership agility until after midnight. (At this point, the few of you who are keeping somewhat up are thinking, “Yea, we’ve notice!” lol) So here it is, Thursday night, er’ Friday morning and I’ve scheduled to go out of town in 8 hours for two days to rest, recreate and reconnect with my wife and our three kids in San Diego.*

*Whew! You’ll be reading this Sunday morning (Day 23), or some later date, but suffice it to say I’m letting one much more wise and literate and transparent share with you. Below is the Brene Brown TED video on [“Listening To Shame”](#) – Oh My!*

And with that small confession and a twinge of shame for defaulting that day's blog writing to a video, (and a darn bit better than most of the work I had created that month), I hit my send button on the blog with link embedded and headed out for some rest and recuperation.

No matter whether you are a young emerging leader or an established leader, we are accelerating into a post-modern leadership culture amidst an even quicker changing world that demands we become self aware, that we face ourselves, our teams and those we serve with humility and transparency, unless we are talking about the paradox of President Donald Trump. None the less, the quicker we can come to an awareness of our own vulnerabilities and shame, the more agile and able we will be as leaders to serve the world and our teams and our sphere of influence with a fullness of heart and gratitude and thanksgiving that pleases God and changes the world for a greater good. That you might decrease and your influence increase...

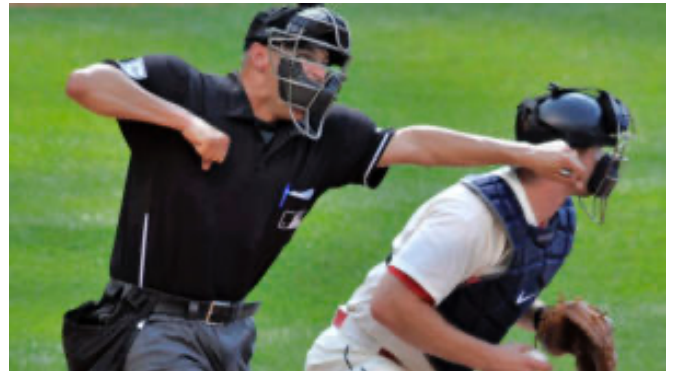
## Declarations that “End Things”

They are used to resolve situations such as when a judge or arbitrator declares the resolution of a lawsuit and who will pay what to whom. Declarations that conclude might include a boss stating you are fired or a referee declaring that a game has ended because time has run out. When a judge declares a couple divorced, it can be seen both as concluding a relationship and opening a new future for them both. It might also resolve some issues upon which they still disagree. In cases such as this (and of referees, umpires and other such roles) the official has the authority to declare a resolution because that authority has been granted by others. In the case of judges this authority has been granted by the legal system which itself derives its authority from a declaration by the government, which was declared into being by the people or in some cases by a monarch or dictator. In each case **the power to make valid declarations comes from previous declarations.**

## Creative Declarations

Let me close with one more story from a terrific ontological book on creative communication: [\*Language and the Pursuit of Happiness\*](#) by Chalmers Brothers.

Two baseball umpires were sitting around talking and one says, “Old Joe, he’s a great umpire. There’s balls and there’s strikes, and he calls ‘em like they are. (*assertion*)” The second umpire then says, “Yea, Joe’s a great umpire...there’s balls and there’s strikes, but he calls ‘em like he sees ‘em. (*assessment*)” Just then Joe walks up and says, “You’re both wrong... there’s balls and there’s strikes, but they ain’t nothing’ till I call ‘em! (*declaration*)”



**Leaders** – the act of calling them makes them what they are, actually declaring them into being. And for groups of people (families, teams, businesses, countries), context is also created in language. Context is brought forth or shifted by mission statements, strategic plans, declared priorities and goals. All this creates context in which certain future actions get interpreted as “good” or “bad,” “right” or “wrong,” “acceptable” or “inappropriate.” All this is directly tied to leadership and it is a powerful phenomenon not only to notice, but to speak and act and lead. And to the extent that leaders (all of us) act consistently with our declarations, we produce not only an identity for ourselves, but we along side of our teams and organizations generate not only change, but transformation in our world! **Speak forth wisely, powerfully, and generously Leaders!**

## Chapter Five

# The Spirit Of A Leader



The human spirit is the ethereal capacity of consciousness and connectedness of our being to something beyond the natural realm, something super-natural that some would call divine. Beyond one's self and natural creation, this connection might be with a heavenly LifeSource. It is in this connection, some would say relationship, that the spirit of a leader becomes significantly aware of a greater purpose, a passionate calling to a greater good (mission) fueled by inspiration, wisdom, benevolence, and sacrificial love.

Let me ask at this point, **“Who would you identify as your divine LifeSource?”** For me as a Christ follower valuing the Judeo-Christian scriptures of the older and newer testaments, I identify God as my creator and life leader. Therefore, I believe...

*“The calling of one's spirit to a heavenly mission to bring about a greater earthly good is the inspiration of leadership.”*

Throughout this chapter, we will be learning how to grow our agility: (1) to be inspired and charismatically share that inspiration, (2) to judge and discern wisely as well as cultivate such wisdom among the teams we lead, (3) to activate a benevolence of spirit within us and others so that we can serve and lead sacrificially in love as the greatest good!

## Circle of Life & Leadership

We have almost come full circle from where we began with the thesis that Leaders are Learners. And as **human beings** our leadership presence is made up of four ontological components: our mind/language, body, emotions, and spirit. If we engage only our minds in learning (education), its like a car engine operating on only one of four cylinders. If we shift the singular educational approach to “being” based, we could bring all four cylinders to move us from informational managers to transformational leaders. This is the kind of leadership that must emerge if we are going to tackle the demands of a constantly accelerating, changing world in need of wise transformation.

So how do we learn to lead as human “beings”? Our last component is **“spirit!”** And transformative leaders with Leadership Agility are able to raise their own and their team's level of learning and **awareness** in the realm of **spirit**, thereby seeing not only a broader earthly perspective of **possibilities** and actions, but receive a divine “inspiration” of heavenly perspective and possibilities. From inspiration, leaders receive “impartation” to choose powerful, effective **actions** that will advance their calling and mission to produce a **greater good** through their service or product. So here's the process drawn out as a formula:

**Emerging Leader** = Inspirational Awareness  
+ Earthly and Divine Possibilities  
+ Decisive and Effective Action  
=> **Mission of Greater Good**

So how do we expand and activate our spirits to lead with a divine agility? Stay tuned as we embark on our leg of learning in the areas of charisma, enthusiasm, wisdom, calling, and sacrifice!

## A Spirit Of Wisdom

Whether you consider “the wisdom of Solomon” from a mythical, literary, or religious vantage point, Solomon has been considered the embodiment of “a spirit of wisdom” by countless generations and a variety of religious traditions over the centuries. In the accounts of Solomon, there are leadership lessons to be learned!

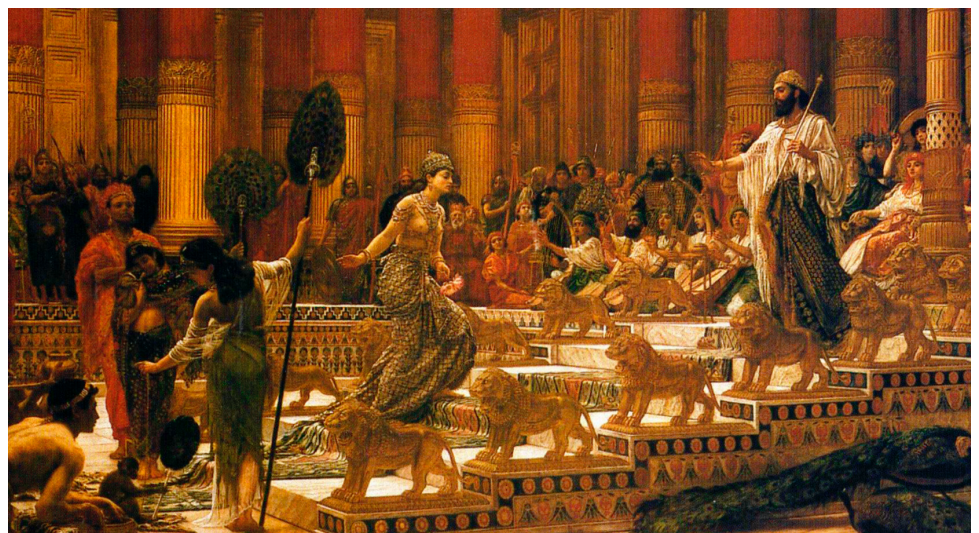


## Leadership Lessons from Solomon

Following the account in the Older Testament book of 1 Kings, Solomon was appointed leader after his father, the great King David. But Solomon perceived that position and power were not enough to be an effective leader so God offered Solomon more, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” Solomon knew the role required “servant leadership” yet considered himself a mere child and so humbly requested of God a discerning heart, or what we call “wisdom.” I love God’s response...

*“Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have you asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. **I will give you a wise and discerning heart**, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings.” 1 Kings 3:10-13*

**Leaders**, wisdom’s perspective is from heaven to earth – wisdom’s source is spiritual, perhaps of God himself – wisdom is practical both for *discernment* as well as *decisions* to lead and administer justice rightly and morally – thus heavenly wisdom has its earthly rewards! Even from as far away as Ethiopia, the Queen of the South (Sheba) sought a Spirit of Wisdom, recognizing the truth and power of God that was gifted to Solomon and then full embodied 1000 years later by Jesus himself. (Matthew 12:42)



## FORMULAS OF WISDOM

A working definition of WISDOM:

**Frame an Issue + Form an Action Plan + Forge a Charge => Fruitful Results**

Wisdom requires an elevated awareness to accurately **Frame an Issue**, whether that issue is a problem to be solved or an opportunity to attain. This elevating stage of wisdom discerns an expanded range of possibilities to address the issue. We'll call the supernatural aspect of this framing **INSPIRATION**.

Next, wisdom requires both general factual knowledge of the issue along with a situational discernment and insight (intuition) regarding specific dynamics to decisively **Form an Action Plan**, choosing one action of the numerous possibilities. This supernatural Formulation of general and situational intuition into an Action Plan we'll call **IMPARTATION**.

Finally, wisdom's plans must courageously be put into practice and the wise leader must **Forge a Charge** with their available resources, both human and material. The supernatural empowerment of a courageous personal resolve that also rallies the troops to charge we'll call **ACTIVATION**.

Wisdom always produces **fruitful results** for the greatest good of the community, which we'll call **TRANSFORMATION**. Here's another way to formulate the Supernatural Work of Wisdom:

***Inspiration + Impartation + Activation => Transformation***

To see the work of wisdom in action, we turn to a practical yet dramatic example: Two newly delivered mothers ask King Solomon to discern and settle an argument over which of them was the actual birth mother of a living baby after the other baby died one night.

*Soon afterwards two young prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled.*

*Then the king said, "Let's get the facts straight: both of you claim the living child, and each says that the dead child belongs to the other."<sup>24</sup> All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king.<sup>25</sup> Then he said, "Divide the living child in two and give half to each of these women!"*

*<sup>26</sup> Then the woman who really was the mother of the child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, sir! Give her the child—don't kill him!" But the other woman said, "All right, it will be neither yours nor mine; divide it between us!"*

*<sup>27</sup> Then the king said, "Give the baby to the woman who wants him to live, for she is the mother!"*

*<sup>28</sup> Word of the king's decision spread quickly throughout the entire nation, and all the people were awed as they realized the great wisdom God had given him. I Kings 3:23-28*

### **What can we learn from Solomon on how to gain and grow in wisdom?**

1. The women seeking divine wisdom came before the King as God's anointed and inspired leader. King Solomon asked the women to **Frame the Issue** as he listened to both sides of the story to get the facts straight.
2. Then with what seemed an impartation of wisdom, Solomon **Formed an Action Plan** to solve the problem and so staged a stress test of the women, "Bring me a sword." While the seemingly chosen decision of action was to divide the child, the real decision was to discern the rightful mother who emerged with sacrificial compassion so her child might live if even apart from her.
3. Solomon courageously **Forged a Charge** to have the child spared and delivered to his rightful mother that also served to further inspire the greater community because justice was administered with wisdom.

*“My son, eat honey, for it is good,  
and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.  
Know that wisdom is such to your soul;  
if you find it, there will be a future,  
and your hope will not be cut off.  
Proverbs 24:13-14 (ESV)*

**What are your heart’s desires for those you serve and lead?** There are several ways you can embody wisdom as a leader unto transformational results:

1. **Prize** Wisdom above all else you desire as a humble leader, just as Solomon did. (Proverbs 4:8)
2. **Pray** for Wisdom and ask God who delights in dispensing it. (James 1:5)
3. **Pursue** Wisdom as for hidden treasure in a multitude of places... (Proverbs 2:2, 4-5)
  - A. in the Scriptures (Psalm 19:7)
  - B. in the World and Nature (Proverbs 6:6)
  - C. in Wise Teachers both directly and indirectly (Proverbs 13:20)
  - D. in Light of Eternity because life is short (Psalm 90:12)
  - E. in Relation to Jesus (Colossians 1:16-17; 2:3)

## A Spirit Of Enthusiasm

I believe the human spirit is hardwired for worship, to show reverence and adoration, love and appreciation. Whether its through religious events or everyday activities, whether towards God, others, or even an abstract object or ideal. If you desire to experience a people, a nation of enthusiastic worshippers, visit India where many of the world religions reside in a kaleidoscope of faith and beliefs.

“The Holi Festival of Colors is associated with a loosening of social restrictions normally associated with caste, sex, status and age of Hinduism. Holi thus bridges social gaps and brings people together: employees and employers, men and women, rich and poor, young and old.”



In who I am as an observer, I believe the loosing of restrictions and bridging of people is the true worship of life as well as the festival, even if only for a day distinct from the usual day to day “religion.” I have to admit my bias here regarding religion. While I have spiritual practices that could be described as religious, I really don’t appreciate religion as an aspect of appeasing god(s) or others. I rather believe that true worship is appreciating my relationship with the God who created me and all other beings. God values me, calling me “very good” and calls me to the greater good of expressing love in service. Therefore my worship is expressing my appreciation to God with all my heart’s affection, mind’s attention, and willful allegiance in all I am, all to whom I relate, and in all I do.





A few years back, I was privileged to join a team for three weeks in Southern India as we encouraged and equipped a group of enthusiastic male and female leaders who are seeing a movement of faith sweep into villages and cities alike bringing transformational hope and change for those under-resourced and lower in cast. This group of 50 plus ministers had a contagious and charismatic leadership style that spanned the gambit from passion to fervor to zeal.

## The Energy of Enthusiasm

Our English word Enthusiasm originates from the latin term Enthousiasmos: En' = in, Thou = God, iasmos = inspire, giving an ancient context of “one inspired by God.” The term was used to describe a spirit of intense, emotional optimism that compels energetic pursuit of action within a cause. In regards to leadership, Enthusiasm precipitates the inspiration of God through a leader to followers, energizing infectious action and innovative achievement of a greater good. The results of which are often way beyond mediocrity, even to an ends of miraculous!

## A Leader's Charisma

Today we would describe such an enthusiastic leader as “charismatic.” In ancient greek, the word “charis” referenced “divine favor and grace/gifts from God upon an individual or group to empower and equip them for a destiny of sacred service. While this at first glance seems a little pigeon holed, let me give some perspective. I believe that all human beings are created in the image of God with value and worth. Every person has a unique calling unto sacred service to others for the greater good of all creation. It is totally up to them whether an individual chooses to respond to their calling, or recognize God, or utilize that “charis” which energizes their natural abilities along with God's gifts. Also note that the “charis” and calling upon a person's life doesn't have to be restricted to the culture or cause of religion. Their cause might be for family, business, education, science, medicine, government, media, or even arts and entertainment.

***“Enthusiasm is the mother of effort, and without it nothing great was ever achieved!”***  
Ralph Waldo Emerson

No matter where you go in the world, leaders embody a “Spirit of Enthusiasm” where divine passion and excitement inspire a common mission and commitment to energetically serve and sacrifice for a greater good! Such charismatic leadership is not innate but learned, and it is an anointed gift from God for His good purposes through the life of the leader. Upon acceptance and appropriation of their calling, each leader receives a divinely supernatural empowerment bestowed upon their natural being and leadership to accomplish their supernatural destiny. With any great cause and leadership calling comes the requirement of “Sacrifice.” But sacrifice may not mean just what we've always believed it does.

# A SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

When you hear the word “sacrifice,” what comes to mind?

Is that thought or image positive or negative?

If I’m honest, for many years as a young leader, my definition for “a spirit of sacrifice” fell in line with the quotes you find on Google Images when you type in

## “Without Sacrifice...”

*... there is no success*

*... no love ... no growth*

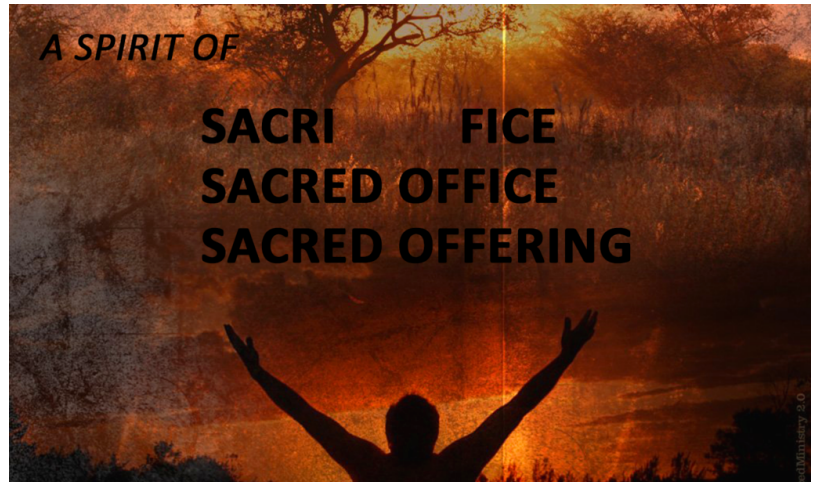
*... no gain ... no wisdom*

*... no progress*

*... no accomplishment*

*... no victory*

*... there is no glory.*



I grew up in a hardworking, somewhat blue collar family with a terrific work ethic, We sacrificed a lot to maintain a middle class lifestyle. But the problem was that my view of sacrifice was all about what I had to “give up” in order to get ahead. Most the time sacrifice was all about “loss,” all about “a reduction of value or resources” in order to survive, let alone really succeed.

But you know what? A few years down the road from college, I found myself pretty resentful as a young leader just transitioning from business into ministry. I felt God had called my wife Sue and I to start up a new church in Southern California. And with the sweat and struggles of that work was some tremendous success, but after a number of years I realized what it was costing me in time, talent and treasure. And it began to feel a lot like loss. I was often disappointed and found myself in a mood of resignation. I was probably mad at God, and for sure I was mad at others I worked with who weren’t working as hard as I was, who weren’t sacrificing as much as I was to be successful. I would even brag as a leader that there was no one who worked as hard or sacrificed as much as I did. Now I have to admit, my “spirit of sacrifice” was more about what it would gain me in affirmation, appreciation and acclaim, than it was about giving God those very things. Oops!

## Sacrifice as Obligation

Reflecting back to those days, here’s a bit of what I’ve learned about myself, about leadership, and even about God. First, my perspective of “sacrifice” was all about **obligation**. I felt I had to work hard to please God and others in order to be loved, significant, valued. No, “to please God/others” isn’t a strong enough phrase. It was more like “to appease God and others.” Now keep in mind that most of this was below my level of consciousness at the time. I subconsciously believed I had to work hard to stay in other’s favor, to redeem my guilty feelings and avoid abandonment or even punishment when I didn’t meet the standards of perfection or purity I set for myself or felt they had set for me. It was kind of like I believed God was angry, and if I didn’t produce enough or perform perfectly I was letting him down. As if He was dependent upon me. Wow, I chuckle at that thought now, but at the time it created a huge amount of pressure living with that lie and underlying belief system in play.

## Hitting the Wall

In 2010, I hit “the proverbial wall.” I was exhausted to the core of my being: body, heart, mind and spirit. A lot of times for leaders, when this happens, they blow up personally or they blow up the organization they lead. God was very gracious to me and His people at the church I led as he multiplied our congregation into about 6

other area congregations that were very similar to ours in style and belief. And He allowed me to take an extended sabbatical to rest, recover, reconnect, recalibrate, and rejuvenate in my being as well as my calling.

## Sacrifice as Sacred Offering

During the next few years, a major shift occurred in my perception and definition of “**a spirit of sacrifice.**” No longer was sacrifice about guilt, obligation and trying to please people and appease what I believed was an angry God out to punish me for my shortcomings and selfishness. Sacrifice was now about living my life as a “**sacred offering.**” Sacred means “set apart as special, valuable” As I simply surrendered myself to God as his son, a master piece of His creative genius and design, I discovered He was happy with me just as I am. As a new father is please with his toddler son, enjoying his young boy staggering about in play and discovery, so my heavenly Father sees and delights and values me.

## Sacrifice as Sacred Office

I also discovered that sacrifice was about my calling to a “**sacred office.**” Now that my work didn’t determine my self worth and identity, I was now able to serve God and others as a steward in my Father’s house with His wealth of provision. Every thing I possessed was a gift from God, including my ability to love and lead, encouraging and equipping others to serve out of gratitude and thanksgiving. I saw my sweat and service as an investment, not as a loss, realizing I could never out give God. The more I invested into the others, the greater the return he would bring to me and to them. I no longer was resentful because I didn’t need their approval or even their appreciation (although it was nice when it came), any more that God’s is in need or dependent of mine (although he delights when I express it it also). My calling shifted from earning personal gain to contributing to a greater good in the world, and helping others to experience that same “spirit of sacrifice.”

## Are You Needing To Shift Your Spirit?

I’ve noticed there are at least two seasons in a person’s life where they “**hit the wall**” and need to shift their leadership perspective on “Sacrifice.” One is in the **mid twenties to early thirties** as they seek to define their calling in life. The other is like mine, at that **mid-life crisis** point where we find ourselves tired and ready to resign from what we’ve been doing, or maybe resentful about the sacrificial loss we’ve calculated has been our plight. So whether you’re an emerging leader, or an established one, there’s life on the other side of the wall.

## THE GREATEST GOOD IN OUR WORLD

Here at LifeSource Leadership, we are passionate about your calling and destiny as a leader. We believe you are called to be a significant character in the narrative that is bringing about the Greatest Good in our world. **Our purpose and passion as leadership coaches is all about...**

**...energizing you to fully embody Good within your being and character.**

**...empowering you to freely express Good through all you do in your calling.**



When it comes to faith, hope, love and goodness, there are a few powerful stories that bring this to light in epic fashion that stirs us to the core of our beings, inspiring us to live with hearts fully alive for the Greatest Good. This story of [Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee in Lord of the Rings](#) is one of them for me - enjoy the link.

## Here's our perspective of GOOD

**LOVE** – an unconditional embracing of each human being's intrinsic value; whether embracing ourselves, others, or even God. Love is experienced in relational community and exercised in mutual appreciation – expressed in such a way as to build up and add value to another in word or deed.

**FREEDOM** – *from* anything that limits the embodiment of our greatest Good (fears, hurts, habits, beliefs) – *to* pursue and express the greatest Good in our life calling and purposes.

**RELATIONSHIPS** – A healthy context of love and belonging where healing and growth, provision and protection are generously experienced.

**SACRIFICE** – not in a sense of unanswered loss, but to the giving and receiving within a 'sacred office' that every human being is uniquely called to serve and contribute to locally and globally.

**IDENTITY** – a human being's unique character and creative expression of the "imago dei" that resides in every single person on this planet.

**CALLING** – the passionate and powerful expression of an individual or group's contribution that brings about a greater good in the lives of others.

**CONVERSATION** – the give and take dialogue of requests and offers that creates/generates a preferred future of goodness.

**GENEROSITY** – believing that "Good" is unlimited, offering ourselves and our resources beyond necessity or even expectation, trusting value will be multiplied in gratitude.

We'll continue our focus and discussion on the ultimate pursuit of every leader to be about the Greatest Good in their life and calling – and yes, it's worth fighting for!



# CHASING YOUR CALLING

**You feel drawn to make a difference - called to bring about a Greater Good in the world!** If you're an emerging Millennial leader, you probably find yourself on a determined, maybe somewhat desperate quest to discover your calling and step into your destiny, bringing about a greater good in the world! If you're an established leader, you might be ready for a recalibration of your call. Unfortunately, you feel like Alice lost in Wonderland searching for the elusive white rabbit of your calling.



In **The Matrix** – Neo is searching for the answer to his calling, his destiny...He appears before the Oracle, Am I the ONE?" If she had told Neo that he was the ONE, he would still not have believed it. Even with Morpheus and the rest of the crew telling him he was the ONE, he still did not believe it. The Oracle knew that Neo needed to discover it for himself over the course of time, through various events and responses.

I believe our hero's journey gives some freeing insight! Your calling is not a buried treasure that you will unearth in a moment of exaltation. I know – bummer, huh! Rather, **your calling emerges along a developmental journey over time amidst numerous process events progressively dependent upon your response in each one.** Each process event illuminates more and more vision and definition of your calling. So let's define a leader's calling:

## CALLING

*"The passionate and powerful expression of an individual or group's influence and contribution that brings about a greater good in the lives of others."*

Here's the good news – there is a "red pill" (so to speak) for your journey to discover and advance into your Calling. We can walk you through three stages: **(Stage 1)** we assist you in purposefully **mapping out "your Story"** to identify the various past process events of people, places, events and life lessons that have shaped you into the person you are today. **(Stage 2)** We will help you assess your powerful and unique **"SHAPE"** as an emerging leader: **Spiritual Gifts, Heartfelt passions, Abilities, Personality, Experiences.**



And from this fresh awareness of **"who you are"** and **"where you are"** on your pathway, you will gain a greater clarity of your calling and **(Stage 3)** we will together map out a custom tailored **Strategic Leadership Development Plan** to give you vision, direction and practical steps to advance on the next stage of your calling journey unto destiny! If you're ready to chase your calling, sign up for a free Strategy session at [www.LifeSourceCoaches.com/Leadership](http://www.LifeSourceCoaches.com/Leadership).

# LEADERSHIP AWARENESS

How observant are you as a leader? In our high change, high tech global society, the level of awareness needed to keep track of all facets of ourselves, our organizations, and indeed our world so as to lead well has grown astronomically. There's more to learn and be aware of as leaders than ever before.



I ask this because if we are going to impact the vast global issues we face today (terrorism, hunger, healthcare, imbalanced labor/economies, climate change, gender equality, etc.) as well as engage the challenges and opportunities we encounter daily in our personal and professional lives, we are going to have to grow as **Observers**, expanding our wisdom and awareness as human beings.

*“We can’t solve today’s problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”* Albert Einstein

Five chapters ago we launched out on our Leadership Agility journey with the declaration **“Leaders are Learners.”** But we have yet to tap into the fullness of our capacity to learn, and thus lead. In 2013, the United Nations estimated a price to solve world hunger – \$30 billion a year. It may seem like a large sum of money, but when compared to the U.S. defense budget – \$737 billion in 2012 – \$30 billion seems more attainable. So if we have the “knowledge” and seeming resources, why hasn’t hunger been eradicated over the last 3 years? Lots of reasons, but let me focus in on one area of distinction specifically:

The learning systems in America today are knowledge based Epistemology with its “western” origins from Ancient Greece (400-300 B.C.). Epistemology is the study of knowledge, or how we Know. Ontology is the study of Being – becoming and existence. Both fields study how man learns and grows, but there are some differences (see chart).

## Ontology vs Epistemology

Study of Being	Study of how we Know
Semitic/Asiatic Mindset	Greek Mindset
Eastern Mysticism	Western Science
Wisdom Based	Understanding Based
Emotion & Supernatural	Language & Nature (Body)
Post-Modern	Modern

Despite the advantages and advancements that Epistemological learning has brought for so many centuries, it has reached its capacity and led us into our current western world crisis.

# Western Crisis of Dichotomy

Thinker

Doer

*body*

*emotions*

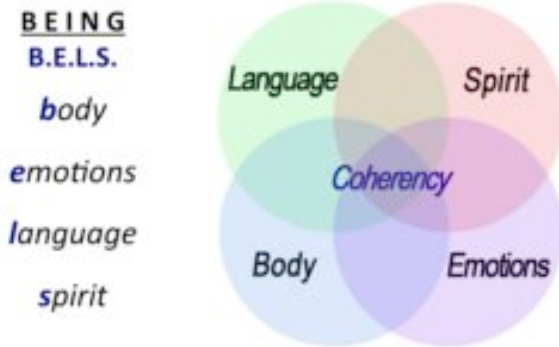
*language*

*spirit*



Epistemology creates a limiting dichotomy for us as human beings, both as learners as well as leaders. Epistemology focuses on only two of the four domains of who we are as human beings: Language and Body, our thinking and our doing. (See Chart Western Dichotomy) Unfortunately, we are not just human knowings or human doings, we are **human beings**.

## Ontological Observer



And the Observer we are in life (our learning presence) is made up of four vital components: our **language/mind**, our **body**, our **emotions**, and our **spirit**. If our level of awareness only engages our language and bodies in learning, we become extremely limited with an incoherency of learning. It is like a car engine operating on only two of four cylinders. But if we could shift the Observer that we are back to a “being” based Ontological learning approach, we could engage all four cylinders to move us from limited, somewhat incoherent informational managers to truly transformational leaders who truly change the world!

In this training manual, we’ve accomplished a terrific introduction of each component of our “being” and ontological learning in the context of leadership. My hopes have been that you have grown as an Observer, raising the level of your awareness unto deeper learning, indeed wisdom. And from this growth you have seen the level of your leadership agility and abilities raised. Of course, the real test of our leadership is seen in the results it produces. And that’s the final topic we’ll examine together.

## ACCOMPLISHING RESULTS



If you’re a Snowy Owl, awesome awareness isn’t enough, you have to swoop and snag your lunch too – **Its What You Do!**

If you’re a Leader who wants to grow your leadership agility, you increase your awareness – **Its What You Do!**

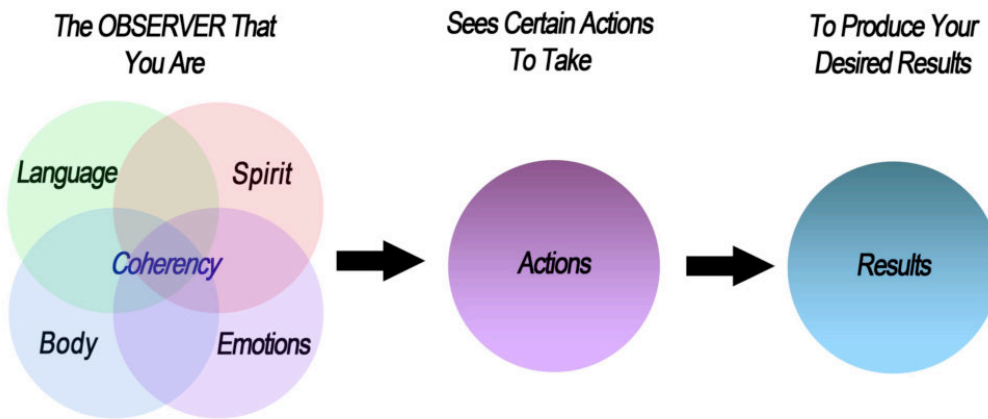
If you’re a Leader who wants to fulfill your calling for the greatest good, awareness isn’t enough, you have to get **Leadership Results –Its What You Do!**

It is true, **leadership agility demands and depends on great awareness**, so we need to constantly be learning and growing as **Observers**. But leadership isn’t measured by great wisdom and perspective, it’s measure by **Results**. And “Accomplishing Results” is directly correlated to the **Actions** we choose.

So let me propose a simple leadership equation: **Observer + Actions = Results.**

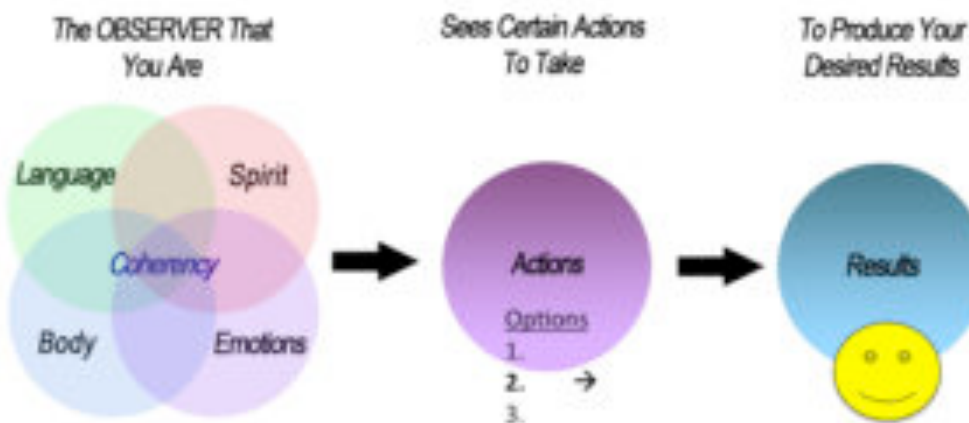


Using the OBSERVER illustration we created yesterday, our equation looks like this.



The OBSERVER That You Are is “the way you see life.” To expand your learning and growth as an Observer, our Ontological approach focuses on the dynamic interrelationship between all four areas of our being (B.E.L.S.) – **Language** and the conversations that we have with ourselves and others, **Emotions** and the moods we choose, **Body** as our non-verbals, and posture as a vehicle for action, and finally **Spirit** and our relationship with God unto truth and wisdom.

## Successful Leadership Cycle



As an **Observer**, when all four of these areas of being are in alignment, I not only live in the abundance and fullness of my Being (**coherency**), I also see a broad range of possible **Actions** I can choose by which I hope will produce **Successful Results**. May your success bring about the greatest good in your character, filling you to overflowing love and hope and peace. For it is out of the quality of your very being that significant actions and results spring forth.

# Unsuccessful Leadership Cycle -> Two Types of Learning



But what happens if the action I choose is **Unsuccessful**? I find my being in **IN-Coherency** with an opportunity to learn. So what learning takes place? This is where our Leadership Agility is launched into motion. There are two orders of learning that can take place, and this is the central topic of my Leadership Development Training - **“Launching Your Leadership Agility.”**

If you want to grow your leadership agility, you increase your awareness- **Its What You Do!**

If you want significant leadership results, you **Launch your Leadership Agility** with a LifeSource Coach - **Its What You Do!**

## Partners For Your Leadership Results... Its What We Do!

This completes our Training Manual towards growing your Leadership Agility. You've been educated and hopefully equipped with the foundation of expanded awareness, wisdom and perspective to launch forward as a more agile leader! This shift alone will impact the results you attain as a leader to bring about a greater good, both within you and around you. Those are the things we desire and delight to partner in:

Become a **LifeSource Partner** – you'll receive weekly hope, encouragement, and practical support straight to your email inbox. Click here to become **Partners For Your Journey!**

Become a **LifeSource Client** – if you or your team are ready to truly **Launch** your vision to new heights, gaining inspiration, impartation, and activation that results in a greater good in your world! Swoop in on transformational results, sign up with Coach Dave for a 30 minute complimentary [Launch Strategy Session](#) here. **It's What You Do!**