The Accountability Pathway

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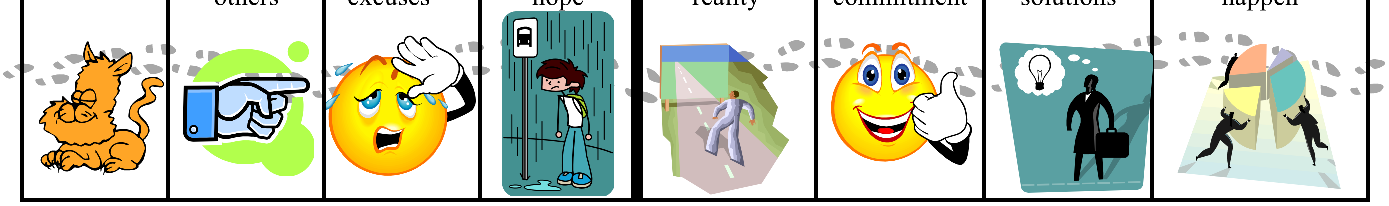
Unaccountable for commitments to action				Accountable for commitments to action			
Unaware	Blame others	"I can't excuses"	Wait & hope	Acknowledge reality	Own action commitment	Find solutions	Make "it" happen



1. If only we could "just do it"!

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How many times at work, at home or in your community do you say, "I'll do it!" and then just not get it done? Getting it done isn't that easy. We often don't have the tools and skills or simply don't follow through. We need to be accountable for our commitments to action and take the time to make them a priority.

2. The Accountability Pathway

Accountability is the ability to make commitments to action, then keep those commitments, or acknowledge that you haven't, and figure out what you need to do to move to action. Many people's experiences with accountability conversations are negative and often associated with punishment or shame rather than learning or celebration. The Accountability Pathway creates conversations about keeping commitments that are interesting, meaningful, engaging and lead to more effective action.

The Accountability Pathway graphically presents the different choices we make after we commit to do something. Keep the following in mind as you think about the Accountability Pathway:

- Accountability is developmental. You can be at different stages along the Pathway at work, with your family or in your community.
- Discussing accountability feels uncomfortable. However, you can explore the sources of your discomfort and use those insights to become better at making and keeping commitments.
- Using the Accountability Pathway can minimize your and others' frustration when you struggle to keep commitments, or are unproductively critical of yourself and others, and/or get stuck because no progress is being made but the topic is avoided and not discussed.
- The process can lead to discoveries about how to make and keep commitments that move you from talk to actions that produce the desired results – the results that make things better for you and others.

3. What's in it for you?

Get more action and results. The Accountability Pathway helps you be clear in your commitments and able to directly address whether you did or didn't keep those commitments. Conversations about the choices we make after we make commitments and the consequences of those choices are often avoided or handled ineffectively. Used deftly, the Accountability Pathway brings light and lightness to these difficult conversations and helps you walk the talk of more effective commitments to action.

4. How to walk and talk the Accountability Pathway

1. Display the Pathway – on a piece of paper for yourself or on the wall for use with a group.
2. Use the Pathway to review progress on commitments to action – did you make it? Where did you get stuck along the way? What helped you move along?
3. Encourage your own self-awareness and acceptance as you see where you are on the path.
4. Note where you are on your paper. When in a group, walk to that place at the wall poster.
5. Reflect on your own and/or explore with colleagues what might help you to move along the Pathway to "make it happen"!

5. The talk that helps you walk

The following is an example of what it sounds like when you talk about how to move along the Accountability Pathway.

The conversation below is an example of two people using the Accountability Pathway to learn how to move along from wherever they are to action. The conversation is between a "pathfinder" who is using the Pathway as a tool to guide the conversation and an "action owner" who has just used the Accountability Pathway to review their progress on a commitment they made.

Pathfinder:	*You reviewed progress on your action commitments. What did you discover?*
Action owner:	*Oh, I completely forgot what I said I would do.* (Unaware) *I thought I was going to get a reminder in the notes, but I didn't see the email.* (Blame others) *You know, I am so busy, that without someone reminding me, I can't fit this sort of thing into my schedule.* (I can't excuses)
Pathfinder:	*Is this something you are still interested in doing?* (Appreciative Inquiry to see if the commitment still exists)
Action owner:	*Yes… it is a good idea and if I could do it, it would make a difference.* (Affirming ownership of commitment)
Pathfinder:	*What might help you?* (Appreciative Inquiry to see what stage the person is in after affirming the commitment)
Action owner:	*Well…maybe this time I'll remember…* (Wait and hope)
Pathfinder:	*Is this coming week going to be as busy as last week?* (Effective Question to move the participant from "Wait and hope" to "Acknowledge reality")
Action owner:	*No…it actually will be even busier.* (Acknowledge reality)
Pathfinder:	*Is it important to get this done now?* (Effective Question to check ownership of commitment again)
Action owner:	*Yes, I have to do it this week; next week will be too late*. (Own it)
Pathfinder:	*Is there something that you might do that could help you get this done even in a busy week? Anything that has helped you under other circumstances?* (Effective Question to move to "find solutions")
Action owner:	*Hmm…I can write it down on my calendar for tomorrow morning and tell my supervisor that I have to get this done first thing in the morning…before I forget!* (Find solutions)
Pathfinder:	*Anything else you can do now to make it more likely you can do it?* (Effective Question to move to Make "it" happen!)
Action owner:	*Yes, I'll pull out my calendar right now and write it in. Also, during the break I'll call my supervisor and get their support for me spending some time on this. This will actually help my whole unit and I know my supervisor is interested in this too*. (Make "it" happen)

Proposal Based Decision Making

Make a proposal	Add to or propose new	Show Thumbs	Build support	Thumbs up!	Commit to action
I propose that …	***Do you want to add? Make a new proposal?***	***Where are you? Support? Don't support? Not sure?***	***What will bring your thumb up?***	***Proposal adopted!***	***Who will do what when?***

1. Decisions that stick

Are you frustrated when groups can't make decisions and get something done? Do you find sometimes that even when a decision is made, nothing happens? Proposal Based Decision Making is used to get decisions that stick, decisions that everyone can support and that lead to action.

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2. Proposal Based Decision Making

✓ Make a proposal

Take an idea of what you want and use proposal language to make a proposal. Use a calm, constructive tone of voice.

I propose that … *insert a short phrase describing what you want*

✓ Add to or propose new

Explore whether people want to add to your proposal or make new proposals. Consider the proposals as different options or possible decisions the group might make.

✓ See where people are – use a show of thumbs

Ask people to show where they are by a show of thumbs. Do they support a proposal (thumb up), are they not sure (thumb sideways), or do they not support (thumb down)?

✓ Build proposals everyone can support

Ask people whose thumbs are sideways or down (not sure or don't agree) "what will bring their thumb up"? Listen to their issues and encourage proposals to address the issues. Invite everyone to make proposals that everyone can support and ask people to do the work of finding convergence.

✓ All thumbs up! Decision made

A proposal is adopted and becomes a decision when every one's "thumb is up"; or, when almost everyone's "thumb is up" and the group decides they have enough support to move forward because the people whose "thumb is not up" are okay with the group going forward.

✓ Commit to Action

The group moves to action by deciding who will do what and when to implement the decision.

3. Tips …

- Don't just criticize… Do build on a proposal or make another proposal.
- Don't just advocate your own ideas… Do ask questions about others' ideas.
- Don't just ignore other points of view… Do address concerns and issues with proposals.
- Don't just hold back… Do make proposals and say what will bring you up.

4. The talk that moves to action

Using Proposal Based Decision Making can turn frustration into decisions that lead to action. The following are examples of frustrations turning into constructive proposals:

Frustrations	Proposal language that turns frustration into action:
The meeting is going on too long.	**I propose** that we conclude this meeting in five minutes, and use those five minutes to say what we want to do at our next meeting.
The meeting devolves into a circular discussion, repetitive comments and conversations that "go nowhere".	**I propose** that we review the issues under discussion and then say what we want to accomplish by discussing each of these issues.
People talking at cross-purposes, or about different topics simultaneously.	**I propose** that we list the topics under discussion, and then decide which topic to discuss first.
You and others are using their PDAs, reading correspondence or having side conversations.	**I propose** that we pause and see what people want to do right now in order for our time together to be well spent.
You have been sitting too long and are about to fall asleep.	**I propose** that we take a stretch break, come back to this discussion with new energy and decide what to do next.

A Proposal Based Decision Making Scenario

Imagine you are a participant in a meeting that is now in its second hour. Everyone is tired, some are not paying attention and others are very tense. Noticing your own exhaustion and frustration, you propose a five-minute break and suggest people come back ready to propose what they would like to do next.

Everyone accepts your proposal with relief and rushes out into the hall for some coffee and a bio-break. During the break, you check in with some of your colleagues to see if they have ideas of what to do next, and share your own ideas.

After the break, you make your proposal. Other people build on your proposal. After the proposal is discussed and modified, people use their thumbs to show where they are. Some support the proposal and their thumbs are up, others are not sure and their thumbs are sideways, some don't support the proposal and their thumbs are down. Those who are thumbs sideways or down (not sure or don't support) are asked, "What will bring your thumb up?"

As the group listens to what will bring people up, ideas are combined and a proposal is developed that everyone can support. The modified proposal gets a thumbs up from everyone – decision made! Then people discuss <u>who will do what by when</u> so the decision can be implemented. People leave committed to the actions they will take to implement the decision. You and they feel relieved that the meeting "went somewhere" and moved from talk to action.

The Circle of Conflict Adaptation

Based on Christopher W. Moore's Circle of Conflict

1. What is the Circle of Conflict?[1]

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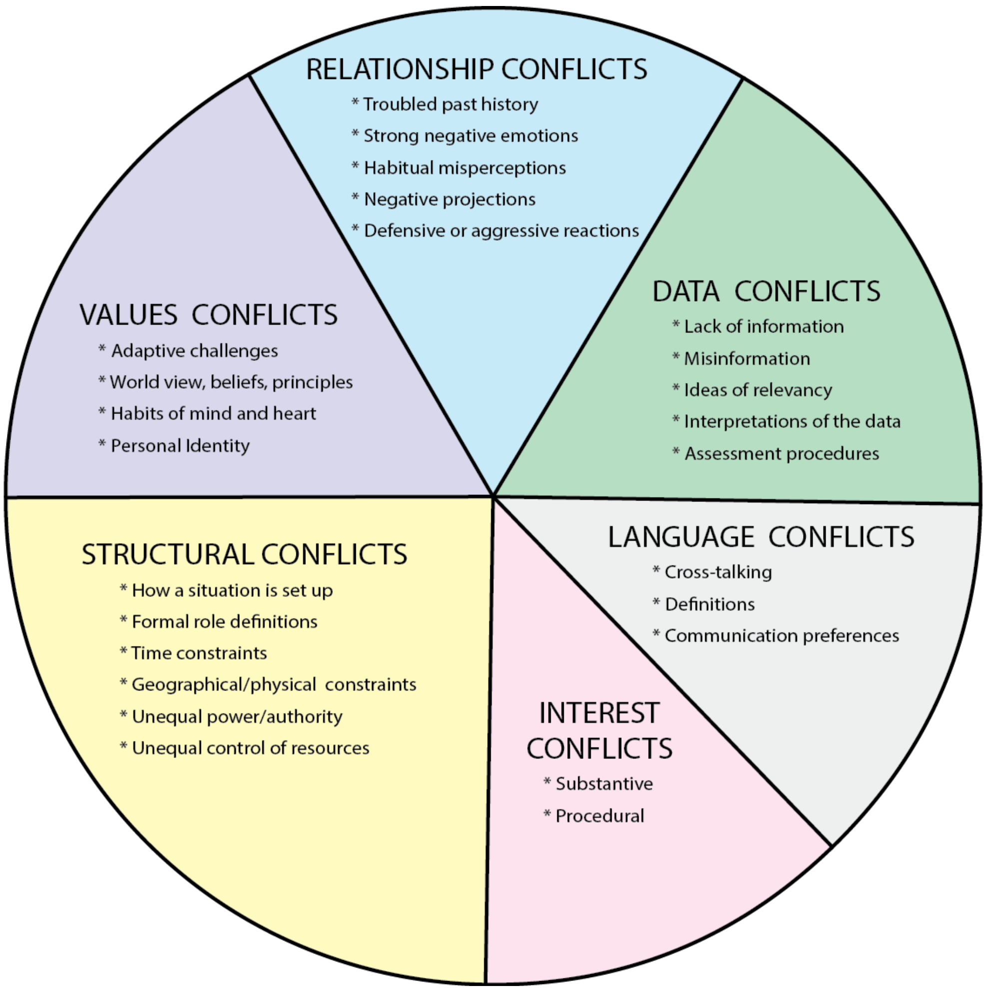
Christopher Moore's Circle of Conflict identified five sources of conflict: values, relationships, data, interests and structure. The circle is adapted to include language as a source of conflicts and expands values conflicts to include adaptive challenges[2]. The adapted circle depicts the six sources graphically. Understand that conflicts often have multiple sources. The size of each segment reflects the likelihood of that source being present. Sources of conflict that are difficult to resolve tend to persist over time.



2. Applying the Circle of Conflict

a) Observe what people are saying and doing,
b) Identify and name one or more sources of conflict, and
c) Take action where you can to address and resolve conflict.

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[1] Moore, *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict;* 2nd edition, 1996, pp. 60-61.
[2] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line,* 2002.

If you see or hear...	*You might…*
VALUES CONFLICTS	
• People leaving the room (flight). • Strong disagreements about what is right or wrong (fight). • Avoidance of specific topics. • Defensive or aggressive reactions that prevent discussion of topics threatening to identity or perceptions of "the way the world is."	• Label the type of ***values disagreement*** (e.g., cultural, political, religious, ideological) to illuminate potential cross talk. • Adopt group norms to overcome triggered reactions to values conflicts, e.g., patient, non-judgmental listening. • Explore assumptions or experiences to identify the source of differences in principles or competing commitments[3]. • Use appreciative inquiry to illuminate worldviews and/or belief systems and to catalyze mutual acceptance of differences.
RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS	
• People choosing where to sit to avoid someone. • Awkward silences and meaningful glances in response to who is speaking. • Tension seemingly unrelated to the substantive topic.	• Explore ***relationship barriers*** by noticing when they occur and how the tension shows up - between which people or groups. • Find ways for the people holding the tension to experience each other in new ways. As mutual understanding develops, move to address the pain in the relationship though redress, acceptance or forgiveness.
DATA CONFLICTS	
• Differences about data relevance. • Different interpretations of the same data. • Different ways of collecting data. • Using different criteria for developing data.	• Bring the ***data challenges*** explicitly into the conversation and name the differences in the use, definition and interpretation of data. • Encourage the use of the "best available data" and work together to develop "better data."
LANGUAGE CONFLICTS	
• Same words meaning different things. • People unaware that they are not in the same conversation. • People "listening for" different things.	• Identify the ***language differences*** and invite a focus on the meaning underlying the words, rather than the words themselves. • Model and encourage common language with common definitions. • Explore MBTI[4] communication preferences.
INTEREST CONFLICTS	
• Zero sum mentality. • People holding a position. • People not exploring each other's interests or articulating their own.	• Illuminate the ***competing interests*** underlying people's positions and use Interest Based Negotiation[5] to achieve a "win-win" solution by: 1) separating the "people from the problem," 2) building relationships, and 3) adopting criteria to choose options BEFORE making decisions.
STRUCTURAL CONFLICTS	
• People looking to other group members for "permission" to speak. • Fear or anger about the "way things are." • Assumption of hierarchical authority in collaborative settings. • An "inner circle" assuming disproportionate influence on decision-making. • Speech and/or behavior inferring that one gender, race, class or culture are "subordinate" to another.	• Name the ***structural factors*** influencing behavior. • Catalyze conversations about the structural factors and how they impact people's roles and authority. • Name the "unspoken" systemic or organizational frameworks influencing assumptions about who has power and who does not[6]. • Develop strategies to: ○ For structural factors within the authority or influence of the group move to action, and ○ For structural factors not within the influence of the group, identify who does have influence and engage them.

3. Conflict Orientation

Everyone has an orientation towards conflict. Take time to reflect on yours and that of others[7]. Find opportunities to practice the following that supports movement from talk to action:

a) Conflict is normal and necessary to the work of achieving results, and
b) It is possible to address and resolve conflicts.

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[3] Kegan and Leahy, "*The Real Reason People Won't Change,*" Harvard Business Review, November, 2001.
[4] Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Consulting Psychological Press.
[5] Fisher and Ury, *Getting to Yes*, 1981.
[6] Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture Based on the Competing Values Framework*, 2011.
[7] Pillsbury, *Results Based Facilitation: How to Move from Talk to Action, V5.61*.

Using Critical Incidents to Build Leadership Competence

Building on the work of CFAR (www.cfar.com)
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Leaders are tasked with solving problems that often represent persistent and unyielding challenges. An event is a critical incident when you as a leader attempt to address a challenge and things did not turn out as planned. Analyzing these moments can yield significant insights and learning about you personally, about how you understand or carry out your role and/or about how the system (the visible and invisible rules, relationships and dynamics of an organization) influences your leadership choices and opportunities.

The primary goal of critical incident analysis is not to problem-solve. Rather, it is to more deeply understand what happened and explore multiple ideas about why it happened the way it did. Critical incident analysis helps leaders see things in a new way and try something new.

Critical Incident Analysis: A three-step process

This learning from a critical incident is uncovered when you as a leader take these three steps to better understand what "did not go well":

1. **Describe** the facts of the incident: what was intended and what actually happened.
2. **Diagnose** what led to the incident: what are multiple hypotheses about "why" it did not turn out well.
3. **Decide** what to do: what are new insights and possible next steps to trying something new.

Getting Started

Think of an incident where things did not go well for you in your leadership role and where the issue or challenge is still present for you. Use an incident that is current and where – even now, with the benefit of hindsight – you're not exactly sure what you could have done to contribute to a better outcome. Jot some notes to yourself about who was involved, what was at issue, what you intended and what happened. The incident should be one in which you had a conversation with the other person or people and where you will be talking or working with them again in the future.

Step One: Describe What Happened

During this initial step, the person with the critical incident describes what happened to their colleagues. The description includes what they did, what they hoped would happen and what did happen. Address the question in your description:

- What are the facts of what happened?
  - Example Fact: "My colleague and I disagreed and then the colleague talked to my boss."
    - Tip: Focus on fact, not interpretation. An example of an interpretation is "my colleague undermined me."

After the initial description of the critical incident the leader's colleagues ask fact-based clarifying questions. These questions illuminate what happened and create a deeper understanding of power dynamics, formal and informal roles, intentions of others, etc.

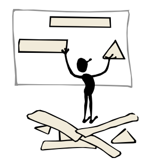
Step Two: Diagnose – Generating Multiple Hypotheses

During this step, colleagues unpack the critical incident and then offer more than one hypothesis as to what is really going on. In sharing hypotheses, the colleagues refrain from problem solving. The leader listens with an open mind to gain new insights.

The following are areas to explore in generating hypotheses[1]:

- Person-Role-System Analysis to illuminate the leader's contribution to the incident
- Presence of adaptive and technical challenges and issues of loss
- Influence of race, class and culture
- Factors of trust, power, authority, accountability and competing interests
- Competing interests

Step Three: Deciding – Next Steps Based On New Insights



The leader with the critical incident reflects on the hypotheses and shares their insights. Based on these new insights about the critical incident and new insights about self and others, the leader decides what he or she will do differently going forward and what steps she or he will take to address the situation in new way.

Trying It Yourself

Journal:

1. *What is a situation that you are facing where you don't know how to move forward… a situation you have attempted to address with no or limited success?* Include:
   - *What was at issue?*
   - *Who was involved?*
   - *What happened?*
   - *What did you intend?*
   - *What was your contribution to the incident?*

2. *Who will you invite to be your colleague analyzing your critical incident?* Include:
   - *How would you describe their role in the 3-step process?*
   - *How will you share the critical incident analysis approach with him or her?*

For more information visit http://rblconsortium.com and http://www.rbl-apps.com

[1] *These tools and frames as well as others can be found on RBLApps.com*

Adaptive Leadership for Results

Based on the work of Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky
From the book Leadership on the Line
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Leadership is about achieving results. Leaders seek to create alignment around a common result and then work with others to make aligned contributions to achieve the result. In this process, both technical and adaptive challenges will emerge. To achieve results, a leader must know the difference between technical and adaptive challenges and be able to implement strategies addressing both.

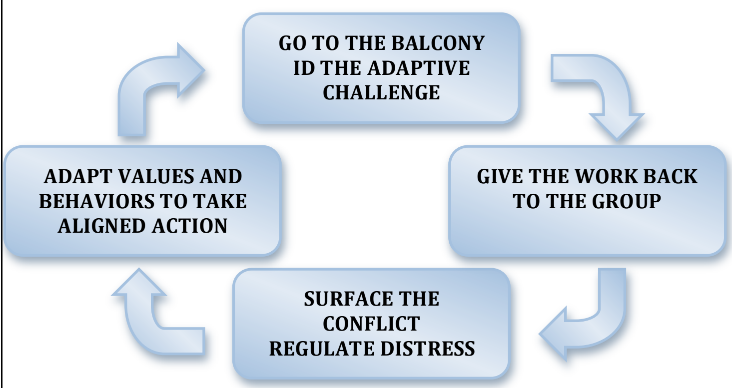
Technical challenges can be solved with existing knowledge, skills and/or technologies. Adaptive challenges are those where there is no readily available technical solution and the exact nature of the challenge may be unknown. Adaptive challenges are always present when striving for high alignment and high action because facing them involves challenging existing modes of operating, examining deeply held, often unconscious, values and beliefs, and exploring new ways of thinking or acting.

1. Telling the Difference Between Technical and Adaptive Challenges[1]

Does making progress on this problem require changes in people's values, beliefs, attitudes and behavior?

- *Whose values, beliefs, attitudes or behaviors must change in order to move forward?*
- *What shifts in priorities, resources and power are necessary?*
- *What sacrifices would have to be made and by whom?*

2. The Focus of Adaptive Leadership



Changing values, habits and beliefs is difficult and often creates feelings of vulnerability and loss. Adaptive leadership focuses on modeling and practicing a willingness to face discomfort and:

- Ask questions to illuminate the adaptive challenge;
- Acknowledge reality and expose threats and conflicts;
- Let go of or change current roles and resist defining new roles too quickly; and,
- Challenge norms or let them be challenged.

[1] The Art and Practice of Leadership Development, Harvard Kennedy School, Executive Program

3. Strategies (Principles) for Adaptive Leadership for Results[2]

a) Get on the balcony and identify the adaptive challenge

The dance floor is where the action occurs, where the leader is part of the dance and can only see his/her immediate surroundings. A leader goes to the balcony – above the dance floor – to see patterns identify and generate hypotheses about:

- What is the technical work and what is the adaptive work?
- What role does he/she hold for the group and what roles are others holding?
- What is being said and what is not being said?
- How authority is used and to what purpose?

b) Name conflict and regulate distress

Holding hypotheses allows a leader to name conflicts and surface dysfunctional norms. Naming and surfacing conflicts generates tension and distress by turning up the heat on what is hard to face. Making progress requires turning off the heat and addressing conflict. When the heat is too high, it is helpful to regulate the distress by pausing to do technical work or stabilize roles needed to sustain progress.

c) Give the work back to the people

The people with the adaptive challenge are the only ones who can identify a solution. Giving the work back means not providing answers from a position of formal authority but placing the work where it belongs and being willing to be part of the challenge rather than directing its solution.

d) Maintain disciplined action – battle work avoidance

Remind people of the adaptive work at hand and why it is important in the face of the following forms of avoidance:
- Displaced Responsibility as evidenced by attacks on authority or blaming others
- Distracted Attention as evidenced by no focus or focus on tangential issues
- Fake Remedies as evidenced by defining the problem to fit your competence and misusing consultants, committees and task forces
- Denial as evidenced by ignoring underlying conflict and creating false harmony

e) Holding steady

Holding steady is one of the most important attributes a leader can have. As hidden conflicts emerge and dysfunctional norms are addressed, leaders can feel a lot of pressure to “fix” things. To be able to “take the heat” means:

- Knowing that what is happening is not about you. It is about what you represent and projections made by others.
- Building a support system to give you perspective and resilience to take the heat.
- Keeping focus on the result and your passion for achieving it.

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[2] Adapted from Heiftez and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business Review Press, First Edition (April 18, 2002)

Focusing on Trust: A Prerequisite for Creating Results[1]

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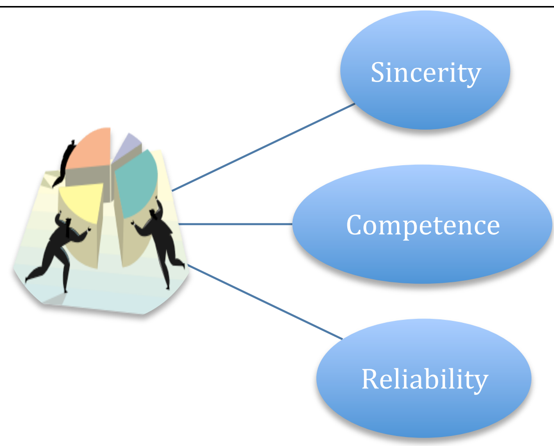
Work is about creating results together. It can be a very complex challenge (both technical and adaptive) to align everyone's contribution so that the work creates the agreed upon result. There are many elements required to create success towards a result. One element – trust – is often overlooked until it is broken or shaken. To be effective at creating results, a leader has to have the ability to generate, maintain and repair trust. *This is because trust is the necessary predisposition for coordinated action*. In other words, trust is required for there to be high alignment among and between groups of people committed to creating a result together.

I. How do I Trust?

Trust can be understood as believing others to be:

- Sincere – what is said matches what is thought
- Reliable – what is done is dependable and consistent
- Competent – what is delivered reflects the ability and capacity to perform what is promised

If you assess someone to be sincere, reliable and competent in a particular aspect of work, you deem him or her to be trustworthy in that area of work. If one of these three assessments is missing, then there is cause not to trust someone enough to be in high alignment in that area of work.



Assessing someone to be sincere, competent and reliable means that you trust that person – in that particular domain of work – to be trustworthy.

If you do not trust that person, ask yourself:

- Are they sincere in what they are saying?
- Are they reliable in what they are offering?
- Are they competent to perform what is asked of them?

Then ask what you and the other person can do to build trust.

II. Trust as a Choice

To engage in a trusting relationship with someone, therefore, requires a commitment to the agreed upon result and then reflection, scrutiny and engagement. Without this, you risk either being in simple or blind trust (or mistrust). Trust means choosing to trust knowing that there could be a break in that trust. It is, therefore, a bold act of leadership. This type of trust is based on judgment, constantly nurtured in interactions and words and is particular to each relationship and situation. For example, I may assess someone to be trustworthy in dealing with finances but not competent in working complex negotiations between two adversaries. Or, I may assess someone to be trustworthy in responding to my emails within 24 hours, but not reliable in attending 8 am meetings.

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[1] Based on ideas from **Building Trust: In Business, Politics, Relationship and Life** by Solomon and Flores

In any instance where I choose not to trust someone, I have the opportunity to discuss with that person why I don't trust him or her – in that specific area of work. If, for example, I choose not to trust someone to be competent in a particular area, I have a choice of offering training or some support to build his or her competence or not looking to him or her for a contribution in that area.

III. Trust Breakdowns

There are many reasons trust can breakdown on an individual level. For example, breaking a promise or being unreliable in actions or insincere in words can break trust. Broadly speaking, the following are major contributors to organization and/or team breaks in trust.

- Team members and/or leaders do not have a distinction between unfulfilled promises and unfulfilled expectations.
- Leaders spread their assessments of distrust to a whole class of people instead of distinguishing specific individuals.
- Team members and/or leaders exhibit unpredictable moods and behaviors.
- "Cordial hypocrisy" – stating publicly there is trust and knowing there is none – is accepted as an organizational practice.
- Those suffering the impact of unfulfilled promises are not allowed to provide any feedback.

IV. Strategies to Generate, Maintain and Repair Trust

With the result in mind, a powerful leadership move occurs when a leader chooses to act on this issue of trust. Here are a few strategies to inform your actions – what might you choose do?

1. Actions that Generate Trust
   - Have open conversations *about* trust
   - Tell the truth about actions and events
   - Know the difference between *promises* and *expectations*
   - Thank and give positive feedback to those who fulfill their promises to you
   - Provide constructive feedback to those who do not fulfill their promises to you
2. Actions that Maintain Trust
   - Support people to help them fulfill their promises to you
   - Be clear on your assessments of others' sincerity, competence and reliability
   - Hold yourself to be sincere, reliable and consistent
   - Solicit feedback on your impact on others
3. Actions that Repair Trust
   - Apologize for your mistakes, inconsistencies and broken promises.
   - Learn to forgive the person who caused the break
   - Have conversations about the impact of a break in trust on team alignment and the ability to achieve results together
   - Move to take actions to repair trust with regular check-ins on progress

High Action and High Alignment Assessment Tool

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To achieve results, leaders commit to taking a course of action that will make a difference. These actions align with and leverage the actions of other leaders and partners who are working toward a shared result. Leaders who consistently and frequently assess whether their commitments accelerate positive changes and build on and leverage the work of other leaders make progress towards results. They move forward together by consistently answering the question, "Are we in high action and high alignment?"

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Making a Powerful Commitment

Commitments are actions that an individual pledges to undertake. Powerful commitments are made with a conscious intent to get things done. The focus is on making one or two commitments that have the greatest potential to move the work forward, not on creating a long to-do list. Use the following questions to assess the power of a commitment:

- Is the commitment stated clearly? Does it describe what will be done by whom and when?
- Is the commitment observable and measurable?
- If the commitment is carried out well, will it support or leverage change that works toward a stated goal or benchmark, thereby driving the achievement of results?
- Is the commitment actionable? For example, can the person(s) making the commitment carry it out? Is the commitment clear on how to engage those who need to be involved?
- Do the actions of the commitment stretch beyond the leader's everyday work? Does the commitment challenge the leader to address the adaptive challenges that are barriers to moving forward?

Weak Commitments	Powerful Commitments
At the next staff meeting, I will share what we talked about in the leadership session.	I will meet with my reportees next week to review our trend line on adoptions and complete a factor analysis. This information will inform the next steps that we will take to meet our targets.
Talk with director about the need to change policy and procedures to improve outcomes.	I will collect information and data to demonstrate what is working and not, and link to best practices. By the end of the month I will make a policy implementation recommendation to the director.
Design job fair.	By next month, two key partners and I will attend two job fairs in the tri-state area to gather information. We will present our design recommendations at the next quarterly meeting of the work group.
Use MBTI in my work.	I will review my MBTI preferences and reflect on a conflict occuring between my executive director and myself. I will type-watch him and then implement a strategy to address our conflict by next week.

Data Drives Leadership Efficacy

While an action commitment can be written to be powerful, this power is only realized when implemented. Developing a practice of accountability is essential. Leaders who hold themselves accountable for performance are more likely to complete action commitments.[1,2] Completion rates increase when action commitments are committed to in writing, shared publicly with the team or workgroup and then reviewed and discussed regularly to improve execution and efficacy.[3]

Action commitments are assessed along a continuum of action and alignment. Collaborative groups spend a great deal of time collecting information and planning, but often lose momentum and fail to execute at a scope and scale that will make a difference. The following assessment tool allows leaders to assess whether they are

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[1] Littlefield & O'Brien. *Policymaking through Collaborative Networks: Issues of Accountability and Performance.* Poster presented at the annual conference for the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Boston, MA, Nov. 2010.

[2] Pillsbury, Goddard-Truitt & Littlefield. *Cross-Sector Performance Accountability: Making Aligned Contributions to Improve Community Well-Being.* Panel presentation at the American Society for Public Administration Conference, Miami, FL, 2009.

[3] O'Brien, Littlefield, & Goddard-Truitt. *A Matter of Leadership: Connecting a Grantmaker's Investments in Collaborative Leadership Development to Community Results*. Foundation Review, V5: 1, 26-42, (2013)

in high action and high alignment. By knowing where they stand individually and as a team, leaders can make decisions about the likelihood of effecting positive change and how to strengthen actions to accelerate results.

Rating the Level of Action

No Action (0)	Assess/Pre-Plan (1)	Plan/Prepare (2)	Execution (3)	Increase Scope/Scale (4)
No action commitment is made that focuses on: Outcomes, benchmarks Actors (direct reports or peers, program recipients, superiors or external partners) Personal leadership development	The action commitment focuses on the collection or sharing of information. It might include: Collecting baseline information and data Understanding underlying issues and factors Sharing general information to increase awareness of the problem, but without the expectation of influencing the outcomes/result Developing personal leadership skills	The action commitment focuses on the preparatory phase required for successful execution. This commitment might include: Developing strategies or structured activities Preparing people, materials or products required for execution Meeting with others to leverage contributions to achieving results Joining strategic partners who will make a direct contribution Collecting information or data to assess the needs of a population or to strengthen strategies	The action commitment focuses on implementation of strategies, activities, or tactics. This involves action that has a direct impact, such as: Implementing activities to improve the well-being of a population Preparing strategic partners to make a direct contribution Using information to assess effectiveness of strategies Providing information to target populations for their use	The action commitment is focused on strengthening actions or taking actions to scale. These commitments might include: Restructuring strategies for better impact Expanding the scope or scale within the group, agency or community Expanding the scope or scale to broaden reach across agencies or communities

Rating the Level of Alignment

In collaborations, strategies and activities are lined up in such a way that they bridge, leverage and support each other for greater impact. Imagine a rowing team with each member rowing in a different direction—lots of action but no forward movement! When in high alignment, collaborative groups are linking goals and objectives to focus on a common result, with each leader making a contribution.

No Alignment (0)	Connect and Support (1)	Agree and Begin Work (2)	Assess and Hold Accountability (3)	Spread and Sustain (4)
Actions are not connected to: Results Goals Strategies Interests of other leaders Development needs of leaders	Actions aligned with: Development needs of leaders Supporting the structure of a team Building basic understanding of agreed-upon results Connecting with individuals to build familiarity Joining new people without specifying role and contributions Deeper understanding of other leaders' perspectives, values, resources and interests	Actions aligned with: Broad vision and strategic direction Needs to build capacity in self and others Agreed-upon preliminary actions Strengthening relationships and resolving conflicts Accepting the distribution of work to accomplish strategies based on common agreements	Actions aligned with: Agreed-upon strategies and actions Assessment of the impact of actions and performance to inform decisions and accelerate results Leveraging relationships on behalf of results, strategy or performance Leaders holding self and others accountable for commitments Actions are based on holding a part/whole perspective	Actions taken to link and connect: Actions with positive outcomes for greater impact Leaders trusting the resilience of relationships to take risks and make the changes necessary to execute effective strategies

Getting and Staying in High Alignment and High Action

Once leaders have used the above rating tools to self-assess their own level of action and alignment, and give feedback to other leaders, the information can be displayed to show progress over time and identify opportunities for moving to higher action and higher alignment. The visual display of ratings supports problem solving, accountability and increases collaborative leadership efficacy. Rating data can be easily displayed and analyzed using the Excel HA/HA Assessment Tool found on the www.rbl-apps.com site.

High Action/High Alignment

Aligned contributions occur when leaders work together to take effective action that is complementary, mutually supportive and leveraged to produce measurable improvement in a result.

Contents

1. The Four Quadrants of Aligned Contribution

Takes actions that contribute to results	Works to be in alignment with others: Low	Works to be in alignment with others: High
High	**High action, low alignment** A leader working actively and independently to contribute to the result, but not reaching out to build relationships with others to achieve complementary efforts. · A leader acting on their own agenda · A leader uninterested in adapting to maximize impact	**High action, high alignment** A leader with resilient relationships acting on collaborative decisions and being accountable for measurably improving results. · A leader implementing shared strategies · A leader working to strengthen relationships
Low	**Low action, low alignment** A leader observing what is going on and not engaging in either relationship building or taking action that can contribute to results. · A leader sitting on the fence · A leader not connecting with others	**Low action, high alignment** A leader joining with others and fostering relationships, but not using the relationships to leverage contributions to the result. · A leader not in action to implement strategies · A leader getting to know and connect with others
	Low	**High**

Works to be in alignment with others

2. To What End?

High Action/High Alignment is only possible if you and those you want to work with seek to achieve a common result that cannot be achieved alone. Authentic agreement on the result defines the purpose and meaning of the work and allows people to answer the question, "to what end?" The pull of the common result is strengthened when people can vividly describe what the result looks like and how you will know when you have it.

> Is there a result you are committed to achieving that you cannot achieve alone?

3. High Action

Even with authentic agreement to a clearly understood common result, what people do doesn't add up. The Four Quadrants of Aligned Contributions is used to get groups moving together in the same direction and actively matching up their actions to achieve results.

High action captures actions that both contribute effectively to the result and are frequent enough and large enough to make a measurable difference. High action requires leaders to examine what they do, how much they do, and whether what they do contributes to the result.

> Are your actions timely and sufficient to make a difference?

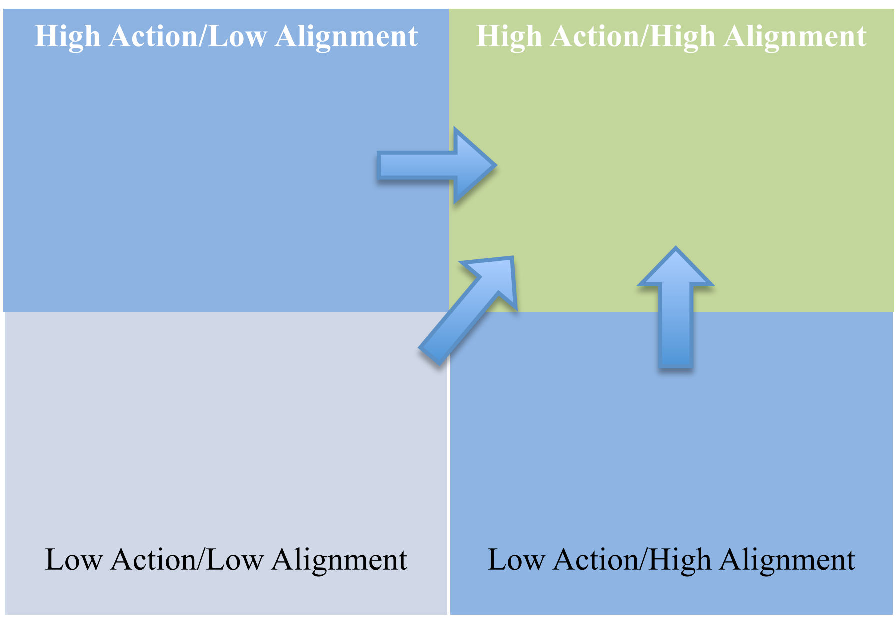
4. High Alignment

Achieving alignment with peers is hard when you are in the habit of being the "boss" or the expert and can tell people what to do. The work of alignment requires listening to other points of view and modifying your own; understanding the limits of your authority and accepting other people's authority; living with shared decision making; and accepting other ways of learning and doing. Taking the time, the energy and the risk necessary to change how you work in relationship with others is the work of high alignment.

What are you willing to do differently in how you work with others to align your action?

5. Where are you now?

Look at the four quadrants of aligned action. Consider the result you share with others that is worth changing for. What quadrant are you in now? Where do you perceive others to be? Share your assessment with others and understand their assessment. What do these assessments tell what you need to do and what others might need to do to get to or stay in aligned action?



What quadrant are you in? Where are others? What do you and others need to do?

6. What will you each do to move into or stay in aligned action?

Through your conversation, discover what will you need to do to either get to aligned action or stay in aligned action? Make a commitment to aligned action that specifies what you will do, how you will do it, when you will do it and how what you do will match up with or contribute to what others do.

What is your aligned actionable commitment?

Results Based Leadership Benchmarking

1. Preparation	2. Observation	3. Comparison	4. Application
What are my leadership results? What do I want to learn? What am I looking for?	*What did I see? What were the leaders doing? How were they doing it?*	*How does what I am seeing compare to my leadership? What insights do I have about my leadership?*	*What insights can inform my own leadership? What action will it take to apply those insights?*

1. Leadership Benchmarking

Contents

Leadership benchmarking is a method used to prepare for and learn from leaders and on visits to organizations. It provides a common language and a framework for seeing, understanding and observing the impact of leadership approaches and tools.

Holograms create wonderful images for the distribution of information in organizations… Most organizations acknowledge that when a customer comes in contact with anyone from the organization…the customer experiences the total organization for good or ill. Under the laser light of these `moments of truth' the organization becomes visible… In a hologram, every part contains enough information, in condensed form, to display the whole.

Ken Wilbur, 1985

Leadership benchmarking is made possible by this property of organizations. An encounter of any set of people under any circumstances is illuminating. During a site visit, it is possible to see a cross-section of the organization and have an even richer opportunity to see leadership teams and know them by what they have created.

2. Four Steps

a) Preparation – what is my focus?

Preparation consists of developing a purposeful focus for the leadership benchmarking experience and familiarizing yourself with the leader and the organization. Develop your purposeful focus by answering the following question: "What am I trying to accomplish?" The "what" can be at the person, role or system level and is defined by where you are in your leadership journey. Familiarize yourself with a leader's resume and accomplishments or an organization's annual report and marketing materials to sharpen the focus of your observations and questions.

b) Observation – what did I see/hear in areas of focus?

Observation is the essence of the benchmarking experience. It is the opportunity to use your purposeful focus to consciously notice as much about the guest leader and/or the organization as you can. In observation, you are striving for a clear-sighted view of facts. Facts include what you see and what you hear. Powerful observation clearly distinguishes the "facts" from your conclusions or judgments about what you see and hear. In the process of observation, you are answering the following questions with as much concrete, specific and descriptive information as possible:

- What did I see?
- What did I hear?
- What are the people doing?
- What do the people say about what they are doing?

c) Comparison – how is my leadership/organizational approach similar or different?

The utility of benchmarking is created during the third step of comparison**.** In this step, you are organizing the information gathered during observation to answer the following questions:

- How does this compare to my organization or my own leadership?
- What have I observed that might inform my own leadership choices (either to try out what I have seen OR specifically not do what I have seen)?
- What might be useful to apply back home?

A comparison process that is grounded in specifics and is rigorous about both your own organization or leadership and what you are benchmarking is more likely to lead to insights that lead to application.

d) Application – what insights can I apply back home?

The benefit of benchmarking is created during the fourth step of application. In this step, you are making choices about what you will do and how. Based on the judgments you made during your comparison, you move to application by answering the following questions:

- Are there ideas or insights I might use in my own organization or leadership development?
- What do I need to do to adapt or customize these ideas for my use?
- What steps will I take to implement these ideas or adopt them?

It is in application that the possibilities identified during benchmarking are used to accomplish something back home.

3. Tips

✓ In leadership benchmarking, suspend judgment. This is not about good or bad; it is an opportunity to see an organizational slice of life. The intentions and choices of the leadership team are as informative as the results.

✓ Issues you feel deeply about may trigger you and overwhelm your ability to gather information. Improve observation by being conscious of your triggers and then hold a more neutral stance.

✓ First see the possibilities and then choose the areas you want to explore for application.

✓ Choose a few manageable actions to do now and learn about the viability of your choice from the experience of application.

✓ Challenge yourself to choose ideas and approaches that you don't already know how to do.

✓ To apply a leadership approach, first identify the core elements of the approach and then imagine what each of these elements might look like in your own environment. Address change at the person, role and system levels by clarifying:

- The idea or approach
- The intended impact
- The actions to be taken over the next two weeks to implement the idea or approach
- The fear and resistance that may be encountered
- What can be done to address fear and resistance

4. Benchmarking Matrix

Leader's Focus	How does it look in Leader's organization?	How does it look in the visited organization?	What might be useful to apply back home?

MBTI Awareness at the Person-Role-System Level

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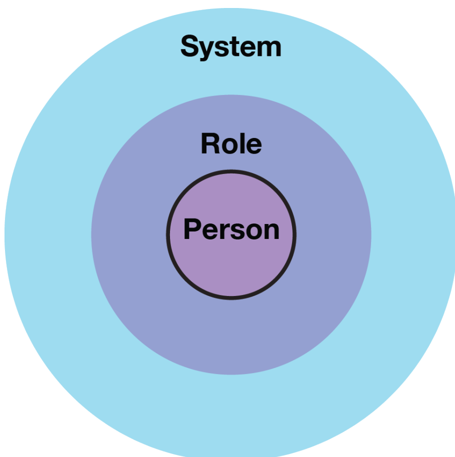
Content

1. The Person-Role-System Framework

The exercise of leadership is influenced by a person's preferences and the role he or she plays in formal and informal systems. The person-role-system framework is used to address common barriers to aligned action. Answer the following questions to apply the framework.



System

Where do you exercise your primary leadership role?

What sector are you in and how does that influence your role?

How is success defined?

Role

What is your formal title?

How does it describe what you do and what authority you have?

What is your informal authority and what is its source?

Person:
How does who you are as a person influence how you exercise your leadership in role?

2. Personal Preferences Influence the Exercise of Leadership

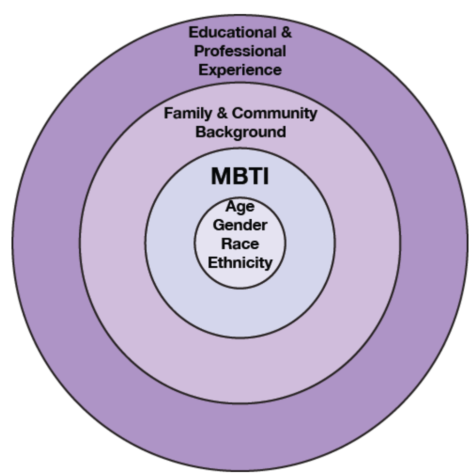
MBTI is one lens to understand how a person exercises their leadership in a role. MBTI provides a common language for leaders to know their own preferences and understand those of others.

Type©[1] insights

- Where you get your energy? (**E** or **I**)
- How you take in information? (**S** or **N**)
- How you evaluate information? (**T** or **F**)
- How you approach choices? (**P** or **J**)

How are your preferences the same or different from others you work with to accomplish results?

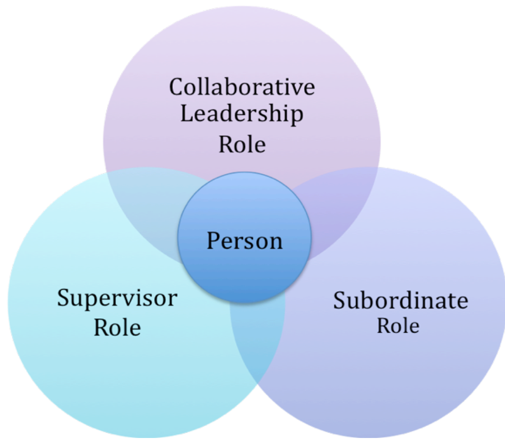
What can you do to work better with others?



[1] Hirsh, E.; Hirsh, K. & Krebs Hirsh (2003). Introduction to Type and Teams. California: CPP, Inc.

3. Multiple Leadership Roles

In one day, a leader in different roles might conduct a team meeting with their subordinates, meet with their boss and attend a community meeting with peers. How a leader exercises leadership in these multiple roles is strengthened by using awareness of preferences.

What is the Type profile of the group in your: Supervisory Role? Subordinate Role? Collaborative Leadership Role?		How can you use Type awareness to take aligned action in each of these roles**?**

4. From Awareness to Aligned Action

The following are examples of how to use MBTI awareness to move to aligned action:

Action	Example
Propose a norm	Propose a pause for quiet reflection. Both **I**ntroverts and **E**xtroverts will benefit from the opportunity to process internally and listen openly.
Strength based problem-solving	The following sequence uses everyone's strengths to solve problems (Z model): 1. Review the facts (**S**ensing strength) 2. Consider the options (i**N**tuitive strength) 3. Apply criteria to choose the best option(s) (**T**hinking strength) 4. Before making a final decision about which option(s) to implement, explore the impact on people of that choice (**F**eeling strength)
Address conflict	Type influences both what can trigger conflict and what resolution looks like. Use the following awareness to address and resolve conflict: TJ: Triggered by challenges to/of authority, desires closure TP: Triggered by challenges to/of trust, desires a defined process FJ: Triggered by challenges to/of beliefs, desires intact relationships FP: Triggered by challenges to/of values, desires respectful listening

Reflective Practice: A Catalyst for Aligned Action

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1. Why Reflective Practice?

Content

Taking aligned action[1] to achieve a common result presents opportunities for awareness and growth. Aligning actions requires an awareness of one's impact on others and a willingness to consider and commit to changes in behavior. Leaders can learn to take the time and space to examine their experience and gain greater awareness of how their actions reflect their:

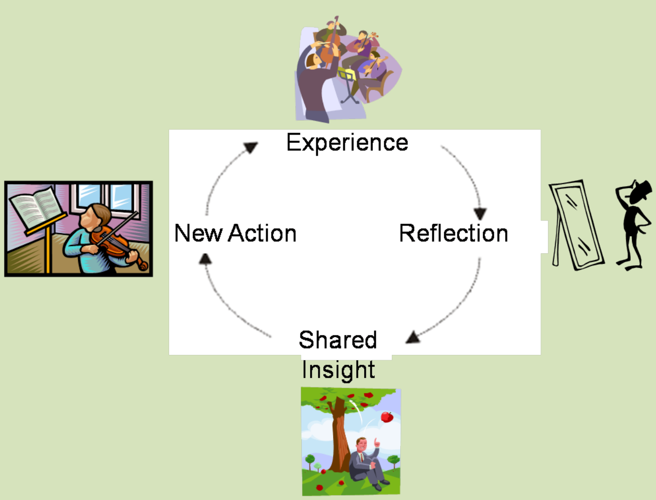
- Values,
- Beliefs, and
- Perceptions of role.

Taking the risk to share these insights with other leaders catalyzes the mutual discovery of the changes in behavior that might create the possibility of aligned action and contributions to a common result. This process of examination, insight and mutual discovery leading to new action is called reflective practice.[2]

2. Practice Method

To begin the practice, stop what you are doing and give yourself a moment to breathe, slow down and pause to reflect on what is happening. Take a few minutes to think and feel more deeply. Write down your reflections and insights– either in a journal or on a piece of paper.

Journaling is not something everyone is comfortable with; however, it is critical, as it allows you to pause, read what you have written and then gain insights from your reflections. Journaling becomes easier and more valuable over time.

Reflection to Action Practice Cycle	Reflection Questions for Aligning Action
	*1. What is your <u>experience</u> of being together with others to achieve a common result?* *2. <u>Reflect</u> on:* o *What is happening,* o *Your role,* o *The role of others,* o *Your feelings and those of others,* o *The impact of your behavior on the capacity for aligned action.* *3. <u>Make note of and share your insights</u> about how what you are doing reflects your values, beliefs, assumptions, mental models and perceptions of the limitations and opportunities for action.* 4. *What will it take to move to aligned action? What might you need to change? <u>Choose to act</u> and after experience reflect again.*

[1] Pillsbury, Jolie Bain, **The Theory of Aligned Contributions**, 2008.
[2] Schon, Donald, **Educating the Reflective Practitioner**, *1987.*

3. Practice Guide

- ☑ Carry and use a journal to jot down reflections, insights and commitments to action
- ☑ Share your insights with other leaders and be curious about their insights
- ☑ Make choices about new actions and give yourself permission to be awkward as you try new behaviors
- ☑ Be willing to continue to learn from experience and use the power of reflective practice over time to discover what it will take to move to aligned action
- ☑ Over time, notice what helps you move to aligned action and what blocks movement to aligned action
- ☑ What do these patterns reveal about
    - *Your adaptive leadership[3] challenges?*
    - *Your MBTI[4] preferences?*
    - *Your own assumptions and experiences around race, class, culture and gender?*
    - *Your own understanding of the multiple roles you play, the formal and/or informal authority you have in those roles to act and influence others to act?*
    - *Your orientation toward conflict, and the types of conflict that might need to be surfaced and addressed?*
    - *Your relationships?*
    - *Your unique strengths and how those unique strengths can be leveraged with others' strengths for aligned action?*
    - *Your interest in and willingness to be accountable for your own choices?*
    - *Your allies in moving to aligned action?*
    - *Your competing commitments?*
    - *Your capacity to manage transitions?*
    - *Your appetite for risk and your risk management strategies?*
    - *What you are willing to hold yourself accountable for?*
    - *Your capacity to change your own behavior in service of a common result?*
- ☑ Persist in your practice

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[3] Heifetz, Ronald **Leadership on the Line**, 2007.
[4] Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®

Situation, Behavior, Impact (SBI)[1]:
Constructive Feedback for Skill Building
© Jolie Bain Pillsbury

What is Constructive Feedback?

Feedback is provided to inform choices people make about their behavior. Feedback includes:

- √ Observation and impact data, e.g., reactions and perceptions.
- √ Descriptive, specific details of what a person was doing when.
- √ Neither praise nor criticism; it is not evaluative.
- √ It is not directive; it does not tell people what to do.

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*Feedback: "*When you started the meeting, the question on the chart was clearly written, but when you read the question, your voice was low and I couldn't hear you."

Criticism: "You communicated poorly."

Praise: "You communicated well."

Directive: "You should have spoken more loudly."

SBI: A Model of Constructive Feedback for Skill Building

Situation, *Behavior*, *Impact* (SBI) —provides information about the impact of the behaviors associated with the use of Results Based Facilitation skills.

S Describe the Situation

Specify the situation in which the behavior occurred by describing the what, when and where.

Example: "When you turned your back in order to flip chart during the discussion on norms..."

Not: "When you were facilitating..."

B Describe the Behavior (Not an Interpretation of That Behavior)

Behavior is a person's action; behavior is described using verbs (action words).

Example: "You lost eye contact with the group for several minutes."

Not: "Turning your back was poor practice."

I Describe the Impact the Other Person's Behavior Had on You

Impact statements offer candid (authentic, accurate) feedback of your emotional response and how that emotion affected your participation in the conversation.

Example: "When you turned your back in order to flip chart during the discussion on norms, you lost eye contact with the group for several seconds. During that time, everyone was speaking at once and I couldn't figure out how to get my voice heard. It made me feel unappreciated and I withdrew from the conversation."

Not: "The conversation fell apart."

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[1] The SBI model presented here is an adaptation of the Situation, Behavior, Impact Method used by the Center For Creative Leadership.

SBI Practice Method

The practice method that accelerates the development of RBF skills includes:

√skill practice followed by appreciative self-assessment, and

√feedback using SBI shared by those who experienced the skill practice.

In hearing SBI about one's practice, listen deeply and do not question or contest the feedback; rather, use it to develop greater awareness of impact.

The following is an example of how the SBI practice method can illuminate how the same behavior has a different impact on two different participants:

Situation: When you were checking to see who wanted to speak at the beginning of the meeting.

Behavior: You said to Ann *"You haven't raised your hand; however, I may be reading something from your expression — do you want to speak?"*

Impact statement from Ann: *"I appreciated being asked. I realized I did have something to say and was comfortable saying it."*

Impact statement from another participant: "*I got concerned when you asked Ann if she wanted to speak. I wasn't ready to share and was anxious you would also ask me."*

SBI Feedback Form

Copy the following half-page form and make enough copies so everyone experiencing the facilitation can provide feedback.

SBI Feedback Form	
Facilitator observed: ____	**Date/Time:** ________
Your name: ____	**MBTI type:**_________
Your Role during the Facilitation*: ____	
Situation (when and where):	
Behavior (specific description of what you observed the facilitator say or do):	
Impact (the impact on you in role: what you felt or thought in response to the situation and behavior of the facilitator and how it affected your participation):	
* The role you have in a group or in relation to the other group members and/or the facilitator informs how you experience another person's behavior. For example, when in a supervisor role, you may be more sensitive to behavior that might challenge your authority than when you are in a peer role.	

Ten Conversations for Creating Action and Alignment

© Raj Chawla and Jolie Bain Pillsbury

An organization's results are determined through webs of human commitments, born in webs of human conversations.

Fernando Flores

Contents

At the heart of leadership is the capacity to create results that matter to the people with whom you work and the people you serve. When you and those with whom you work have a common understanding and a shared commitment to achieve measurable results that matter to you all, then acting together effectively can become your daily practice. Having the ability to know the kind of conversation to have in a particular situation, to be in alignment and take action together, is a powerful leadership skill.

1. Identifying Levels of Action and Alignment

The first step is to notice the current level of alignment and action for yourself and those with whom you work. Find your places in one of the quadrants below:

High action, low alignment A leader working actively and independently to contribute to the result, but not reaching out to build relationships with others to achieve complementary efforts.	**High action, high alignment** A leader with resilient relationships acting on collaborative decisions and being accountable for measurably improving results.
Low action, low alignment A leader observing what is going on and not engaging in either relationship building or taking action that can contribute to results.	**Low action, high alignment** A leader joining with others and fostering relationships, but not using the relationships to leverage contributions to the result.

2. Types of Conversations to Create High Action and Alignment

Once you know the situation you are in, the second step is to choose a powerful conversation that will move you toward or sustain you in the ***"high action and high alignment"*** *quadrant.* Types of conversations that may help you get there, as well as ways to start the conversations, are included below.

Moving Towards High Alignment

Leaders engaging people to work together for a common result require connecting different interests, commitments and perspectives in a new way so that everyone has a relationship to each other and a shared result. Low alignment is a symptom of undeveloped relatedness.

Conversation	***Possible ways to start the conversation***
1. Meaning	This is what is important to me and what I want to do with you…What is important to you? What matters to you? What do you want to do together?
2. Relationship	I'm not satisfied with our level of commitment and I'd like us to talk about it. I'd like to hear what you value about our working together. How can we build a cohesive working relationship?
3. Success	What is a successful outcome for each of us? What are our conditions of satisfaction for our work together?
4. Possibility	What can we create together? What is possible? What are the different options? What is open to us? What is our true potential? What haven't we considered?

Moving Towards High Action
Mobilizing action requires addressing issues of pace, capacity and competency and peer accountability.

Conversation	*Possible ways to start the conversation*
5. Accountability	This is what I am contributing. What are you willing to contribute towards our success? When are you willing to make that contribution? What are you willing to say yes to? What do you say no to? What are the consequences for each of us of taking this action? Are there areas that no one else has taken responsibility for that are key to success?
6. Commitment and Promises	What is your commitment to the results and the work so that we can meet our goals? What is your commitment to me so that I can be successful? What commitment do you need from me so you can be successful? What has each of us promised?
7. Action	Let's coordinate the timing and communication of our tasks in order to get this work done in time. This is how I am progressing on my commitments… How are you progressing on your commitments? Do you want my input? Do you have any input for me? What proposals do you have for who needs to do what and by when?
8. Results	What outcome do we want to see? How important is that result? What are we willing to do, stop doing, not do or change to achieve that result? Is this bottom line reasonable? What do others expect of us? What do you expect as a result of our working together? What do you expect that our work will produce? Who will benefit from achieving the result? How will we know if we have achieved the result? Who are partners who can contribute?

Conversation to Move Out of Low Action and Low Alignment
The cornerstone conversation to move out of a place of both low alignment and low action is one that allows you or those with whom you work to reflect on their own personal power – the power to act and the power to forge relationships.

Conversation	*Possible ways to start the conversation*
9. Personal Power	If you could move forward on your own, what would you do? What prevents you from exercising your power? What are your sources of power? From your own unique gifts, talents and experience? In your roles of both formal and informal authority? In the systems you are part of? If there were no constraints, how might you approach this? What do you need from us to support you? What can you give yourself permission to do? Is there risk you need to mitigate? If this is not a place you want to be, what can you do to make it meaningful? What do you need to do to leave?

Conversation to Sustain High Action and High Alignment
Once you are in a place of high action and high alignment, there are conversations of reflection and learning that can sustain this high level of engagement until the program results are achieved.

Conversation	*Possible ways to start the conversation*
10. Reflection	What just happened? What did we learn? What should we do next time? Were our working assumptions accurate when we started? Isn't it time to stop and reflect? Which of the conversations that got us here do we need to have again?

3. Creating a Practice to Track the Impact of Your Conversations

A key leadership practice is reflecting on your planned and actual actions, results and impacts. As you try out different conversations related to High Action and High Alignment, set aside time to: (1) identify what conversation you need to have with whom; (2) decide what you hope to achieve with this conversation; (3) have the conversation; and (4) outline the impact of the conversation and what happened during and after it. Use a journal to note these reflections and if something doesn't work the first time, try again.

For more information visit www.tenconversations.com and www.rblconsortium.com.

The Z-Model for Problem Solving

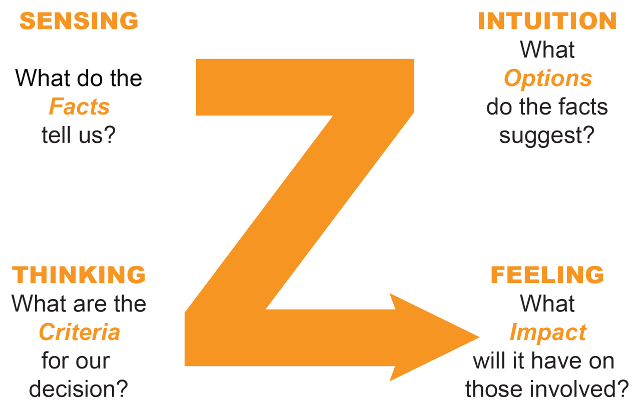
Contents

A common approach to problem solving can enhance a group's ability to make decisions together. The Z-Model is such an approach. When used in conjunction with a consensus process, such as Proposal-Based Decision Making (PBDM)[1], group decision making is more effective.

1. What is the Z-Model?

The Z-Model provides a sequence for reaching decisions using Myers-Briggs Type Indictor (MBTI®) preferences. The sequence is as follows:

1. Use **S**ensing to gather the facts of the situation.
2. Use i**N**tuition to create different options that might address the situation.
3. Use **T**hinking to agree on criteria to select the options that will work best.
4. Use **F**eeling to assess the impact on people of implementing the selected option.



Revisit and refine your option(s) to address any issues raised during the assessing of impact.

The above four-step sequence was discovered when researchers examined the problem solving approaches of groups that reached effective decisions. The sequence of **S**ensing, i**N**tuition, **T**hinking and then **F**eeling is not represented of any one of the 16 MBTI types and requires everyone to stretch out of preference.

2. The Z-Model and PBDM.

In the Proposal Based Decision Making process group members make proposals, build on each others' proposals and then work towards building a proposal everyone can support. The Z-Model supports PBDM by using the strengths of all preferences in the decision making. For example:

- When generating proposals, the Z-Model helps people identify the relevant data (S) and then create multiple proposals to address what the facts of the situation mean (N).
- When deciding among multiple options, the Z-model helps people to first apply criteria (T) and then to explore the impact on people (F).

3. Using Effective Questions to Implement the Z-Model.

The following Effective Questions (EQs) can be used to implement each step of Z model.[2]

[1] Pillsbury, *Results Based Facilitation: Book Two – Advanced Skills*, Ingram Press, 2013.
[2] www.myevt.com/teamdev/4-mbti-function-pairs informed the effective questions used in the steps of the Z model.

EQ’s for the Z-Model

1. **The Facts** (**S**ensing)
   - What are the relevant facts?
   - What specific data is available about the situation?
   - What does experience tell us?
   - What are the realistic constraints?
   - What incremental steps have already been taken?
   - What facts describe where we are?
   - What should we keep that works?
2. **The Options** (i**N**tuition)
   - What are all the possibilities?
   - What is the big picture view of where we want to be?
   - What are the alternatives?
   - What might address many factors at once?
   - What might happen in the future?
   - What trends or patterns can inform different approaches to the problem?
   - What could we do?
3. **The Criteria** (**T**hinking)
   - What needs to be considered in assessing the options?
   - What are the criteria that will determine the best decisions?
   - What are the best options, with their pros and cons?
   - Is there a model that we can apply to better understand the options?
   - What are the fundamental assumptions underlying the options?
   - What are the logical consequences of implementing each option?
   - How does each option contribute to the desired result?
   - How will we objectively assess progress and success?
4. **The Effect on People** (**F**eeling)
   - With whom do we need to collaborate and in what ways?
   - How will people feel about the implementation of the selected option?
   - How will our stakeholders react?
   - Which solutions will promote maximum acceptance and ownership?
   - Is the option consistent with our values?
   - Who will be affected by the implementation of the option(s)?
   - How will we communicate with others about the selected option?
   - Are there other parties relevant to the solution who should be included?