

Leadership Development Program

Module 7 – Leadership roles and styles



2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

There are many roles that people fill in churches but we will focus on four leadership roles in this module. They are the primary types of leadership roles that exist in churches as well as other organisations and all four are mentioned in the preceding Scripture:

1. *“Others”*
2. *“Faithful” men*
3. *“Timothy’s”*
4. *“Paul’s”*

1. “Others” or Kingdom leaders

The fundamental role (that we all fill) is one who builds the kingdom of Heaven in their sphere of influence. In the preceding Scripture, this leadership role is as one of the “others.” The “others” are the end purpose of this Scripture and the reason for all leadership. These are the people who transform their families, workplaces, sporting and other communities to be more like Heaven. The ultimate aim of all of leadership and this Scripture from Timothy should be to help these “others” (of which we are also a part) to be effective.

According to the preceding Scripture, the main development these people need is to be able to be taught (by the “faithful men”). It doesn’t matter what other leadership roles we fill, we should all be taught by faithful men to bring the kingdom of Heaven to our spheres of influence.

2. Faithful men

Another leadership role in churches is that of a “faithful man” or “front-line” leader or manager. According to the preceding second Timothy Scripture, these people have three main requirements:

1. *Be able to teach others*
2. *Be faithful, or better translated “trustworthy”*
3. *Have key information “committed” to them by people like Timothy*

Front-line leaders therefore need to be able to understand the key information about the church or other organisation they are leading in, particular the vision, values and strategy. They should be faithful or trustworthy with these aims and be able to translate them to their “others” (groups and teams). They should be able to plan, motivate and organize people and keep their teams aligned with the aims of the church or other organisation. They should also be able to teach kingdom leaders how to build the Kingdom of Heaven in their spheres.

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3. Timothy's

The third leadership role in churches and other organisations is that of a leader of leaders. According to 2 Timothy 2:2 these “Timothy’s” or “leaders of leaders” should be able to:

- (1) *Listen to experts as a part of “many witnesses”*
- (2) *Build relationships with faithful people*
- (3) *“Commit” information and tasks to faithful people*

Leaders of leaders do not need everything spelled out to them in detail. They can think or hear an idea and implement it. Leaders of leaders should therefore listen to what experts (external and internal to the church) are saying and translate that to their own context. They can listen as a part of “many witnesses” as they can understand the important and relevant aspects of what they hear.

Leaders of leaders should also be able to recognize what “faithful” people look like and be able to build productive working relationships with them. They should be able to inspire, direct and engage these “faithful” leaders. According to the preceding Scripture from Second Timothy, this is done by “committing” to them. The word “commit” means “to *place alongside, to deposit*”. Leaders of leaders draw “alongside” leaders and “deposit” into their development. Leaders of leaders choose faithful people because they do not want to spend their time depositing into people only to find that they do not follow through with what they are expected to do. Those filling a “leader of leaders” role should have the qualities that encourage faithful people (leaders) to commit to the tasks and knowledge that the leader of leaders commit to them. Leaders of leaders have three basic functions that help people to bring that level of commitment. Like any journey, getting from point A to point B requires direction, speed and persistence. Leaders of leaders help with all three.

The leader of leaders provides **direction** through vision and strategy. They provide vision by identifying a gap between the present reality and a potential better future. They find ways to communicate the vision to make it compelling to people. They develop strategy to achieve the vision and communicate a clear path for improvement.

The leader of leaders facilitates **speed** by understanding the current and desired situation well enough to gather and deploy the resources (people, equipment, etc.) that are needed to bring about the vision. They build personal and organizational capacity to achieve the vision by developing people, systems and culture that facilitate the achievement of the desired results.

The leader of leaders encourages **persistence** by providing the environment and practices that train, motivate and engage their staff. They bring and celebrate success by rewarding those associated with the success.

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4. Paul's

The fourth type of leadership role in churches and other kingdom organisations is that of a “Paul” or a “**revelational leader**”. The role of the revelational leader is a different role than a leader of leaders or a “leader”. According to 2 Timothy 2:2 people like Paul:

1. *Receives revelation*
2. *Speaks to many people at once (“heard from me among many witnesses”)*
3. *Form strategies, systems and structures. For example, they outline key teachings like 2 Timothy 2:2 to help leaders (like Timothy) to lead managers (like “faithful men”) who help workers to get the job done.*

We need “others” to build the kingdom, “leaders” to coach people to build the Kingdom, and “leaders of leaders” to ensure that the leaders are aligned to the vision and values of the church. A revelational leader facilitates all of these and has four main functions that come from the three points above.

Firstly, a revelational leader gets **revelation** from the Lord for the community that they are serving in. This revelation drives the whole focus of the leadership and the rest of the people in the kingdom organisation into the direction and development that is specifically designed for them by the Lord.

Secondly, a revelational leader builds **platforms** for communication. Paul spoke to Timothy amongst “many witnesses”. Revelational leaders write, speak and use technology to offer solutions so that other leaders can solve classes of problems. They create communication structures (Paul used letters, personal visits and envoys) so their messages are communicated in a consistent way. These structures include ways to receive and understand systematic feedback about what is and isn't working. This is so they can improve their communication and systems of solutions. In doing so, they provide more useful guidance to leaders and others.

Thirdly, a revelational leader provides **systems of solutions** to vision, strategy, problem solving and innovation. Paul spoke to Timothy and others with a plan to identify faithful people, commit tasks to them and instruct them to teach others. From his experience and giftedness, Paul understood what leadership development strategy would work for Timothy as well as for other people like him. He saw patterns and suggested solutions.

Fourthly, a revelational leader builds **relationships with leaders of leaders** so that they adopt the systems of solutions proposed by the revelational leader. They use this relationship to monitor to what degree and how consistently leaders of leaders are applying the communications of the revelational leader. They take action when their systems of solutions are misused so that future potential problems are averted.

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Operating in different leadership roles

We all have the capacity to operate in all four leadership “roles” to some degree. The role we actually operate in is determined by our maturity and calling.

If we are predominantly a revelational leader, we still should be able to be a kingdom leader, a church leader and a leader of leaders. Our current role in our kingdom organisation determines to what degree we actually need to operate in each of the four leadership roles.

What role do you prefer? If you are a kingdom leader and are good at it and love what you do then you should keep doing what you do and really value what part of the kingdom that the Lord has called you to bring. However, if you wish to be a church leader, then you should learn how to organize, develop and motivate people in church. If you do not have that desire or capacity, then you are best to focus all of your efforts in building the kingdom where you are.

If you are already a proficient church leader, then you may want to consider adding a “leader of leaders” function. You may need to consider helping people with direction, speed and persistence as we have covered. If you already function as a leader of leaders, you may want to build the aspects of being a revelational leader – by seeking revelation, building platforms of communication, systems of solutions and relationships with others leaders.

Action Points

Consider the four leadership roles we have just discussed.

- ***Which role(s) are you currently called to operate in? What does that mean for what you should be doing and for your development?***
- ***Which role(s) do you feel called into in the future? Who can help you to understand and function in this role?***

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Leadership styles

Given that the roles of kingdom leaders, church leaders, leaders of leaders and revelational leaders have different functions, there are different leadership styles in which each of these roles can operate that are appropriate in particular situations. These are mostly referred to as “leadership styles” but are not only connected to a particular leadership role. You can also operate as a revelational leader, leader of leaders or a kingdom leader with these styles. The following six styles are an adaptation and summary of the six emotional leadership styles discussed in “Primal Leadership” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee). I have changed the names of three of the styles for clarity purposes. Let’s now look at the six different styles.

The directive style

1 Timothy 5:7-8 *“And these things **command**, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

A **directive** or commanding style of leadership is where we expect others to “Do as we tell them to do”. In the preceding Scripture, Paul told Timothy to command people to behave in a certain way. There was no negotiation on this command with him. When being directive, we give people specific instructions and we expect compliance. We do not give people room to make their own decisions. We monitor them closely and give frequent corrective feedback.

There is a belief amongst some that a directive style of operating is always a poor choice. This belief normally arises as a result of a leader over-using this style or operating in an *emotionally charged* directive manner. However, a directive style is most effective to lead a person doing simple tasks when that person is new, unskilled or unmotivated. The directive style is also appropriate for short term situations like emergencies, quick turnarounds or short term work relationships. It works for straightforward tasks and high risk situations, where deviance from strict guidelines may result in significant negative consequences. A directive style is also appropriate when all other styles have failed and you just need the task to be done.

A directive style is least effective in longer term situations. The directive style is also ineffective when used too often. A directive style has been found to be the worst overall style in its impact on the working climate of a group. It reduces creativity and engagement of the group.

If you are not naturally directive, then you may find that there are certain situations, like some that are mentioned in the preceding section, where your other styles are not working that well. For example, if you are a fireman and you need to burst into a room and get people to safety, it is best not to be democratic but highly directive. Similarly if we have an organisational emergency, we also need to be able to be strongly directive.

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Relational style

1 Corinthians 9:22 *“I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”*

A **relational** style of leadership is where we put the people doing the task and their emotions before the task itself and the goals of the task. The primary objective of the relational style is to create harmony. In these situations task achievement is usually dependent on strong relationships. When the relationships are going well, then the work goes well. In the preceding Scripture, Paul considered the preferences of different people and related to them in a manner that they were comfortable with. He did this so that his task objective could be achieved (to get the gospel to them).

A person who operates in a relational style spends a lot of time forming relationships, improving communication and building trust. The relational style is effective in building loyalty as well as being very helpful when you need to get diverse, conflicting groups to work together. It is also important when you are new to a group that you adopt this style. As the adage goes, “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

It is surprising for some to understand that the relational style is not as effective in raising team working climate as some of the other styles that we will soon discuss. It is mostly effective when coupled with another, more effective style. The relational style is least effective when performance is inadequate and you need to offer constructive feedback. At these times it can be difficult for people to understand why your relationship has stopped being a friendship. It is also an ineffective style when others are not interested in a relationship with you either because they are task-oriented or because you are not their “type of person”.

If you need to build your relational style, then you should take an interest in people, put yourself in their shoes and learn how different people “tick”. This is often best accomplished around social activities. This will help you empathize and sympathize with people and know how to resolve conflict and give recognition.

The visionary style

Philippians 3:13-14: *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and **reaching forward to those things which are ahead**, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

A **visionary** style of leadership provides people with a longer term picture of a better future. In the preceding Scripture, Paul said that focusing on “those things that are ahead” helped him to reach forward, forget the past and press toward the goal. A person operating in a visionary style helps people to have a future focus. They also show other people how their contribution fits into the accomplishment of the vision. A visionary also monitors performance towards the goals of the vision. The visionary style is the most effective style for

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long term motivation and engagement. It is especially important to operate in a visionary style when a clear direction or new standards are necessary.

The visionary style is least effective when you do not develop people. If you are constantly describing a better future but are not concurrently increasing the capacity of your team to achieve that future, then people will develop “vision fatigue” and eventually disengage with that vision. Also, if you lack credibility or are “out of touch” with your group, then your vision will not get any traction with them.

If you desire to increase your visionary style, you should first of all develop a compelling vision and translate that vision into strategy and objectives. You may want to solicit input from those whom you are expecting to carry out the vision so they increase their buy-in into the vision. Having established a “vision” then you should find ways to communicate your vision by using whatever channels you can make available to you. A visionary will continue to communicate the progress that has been made towards the vision.

The democratic style

Acts 15:28 *“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things”*

A **democratic** style of leadership is where we include other’s viewpoints in our actions and decisions. We ask relevant people about their perceptions and ideas and synthesize a group decision. In the preceding Scripture the decision “seemed good to us” (as well as to the Holy Spirit). The members of the group were asked, they gave their opinion and a consensus was formed. Those with a strong democratic style like to have meetings and they like to listen. The main benefits of the democratic style are to build commitment and generate new ideas.

The democratic style is most effective with competent and engaged team members. The style is met by silence with unmotivated people and with irrelevant discussion with incompetent people. The democratic style relies on all the people involved to set their own direction.

It is a good idea to adopt the democratic style when you are unclear about the best approach to a situation. It is also the appropriate style if you want to draw out ideas or buy-in from people. If you normally operate in a directive or visionary style, it is a good idea to adopt a more democratic style over less important issues to show your reasonableness to your team. This style is least effective in crises or other situations where decision making needs to be quick. It also lacks effectiveness for unmotivated, unskilled or uninformed people whose opinion, whilst important to them, is not that valuable to the group.

One of the major weaknesses with the democratic style is that performance related issues do not get addressed. The democratic style can foster unclear performance measures and tolerance of adequate performance. It tends to have a negative effect on standards (as people’s effort tends to be over-valued over

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their outcomes), rewards (as individual contribution tends to be under-rated) and clarity (as the multitude of opinions can cloud the direction of the group).

If you desire to increase your democratic style, then you should consider including more discussion in your meetings, sharing more information, including others in decision making, really listening to people and draw their perspective out of them and seek consensus in your decision making.

The pacesetting style

1 Corinthians 11:1 *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”*

The *pacesetting* style of leadership accomplishes results to a high standard and expects that others will “do as they do”. In the preceding Scripture, Paul expected the Corinthian church to observe his behaviour and behave in the same way. Pacesetting leaders establish themselves as the standard and lead by modelling. People operating in the pacesetting style tend not to collaborate as it takes time away from doing the work and are apprehensive about delegating because others will certainly not do it as well as them. Imitation or pacesetting works best in peak work periods and crises as people have a model to observe and follow to do similar tasks. Leaders in sporting teams need to operate in a pacesetting style (all their real “work” periods are peak periods, being on the field). All of their other leadership qualities do not mean much if they do not perform well during the game.

The pacesetting style works well to make a team, department or organisation move faster for short period of time. A pacesetting style requires “followers” to be self-motivated and competent as they only have the example of another to follow. A pacesetting style works best with individual contributors and not an interdependent team, as the pacesetter is the focal point and team interaction is not encouraged. In this way pacesetters work well with other pacesetters.

The pacesetting style is least effective when team members need direction, co-ordination or development. The pacesetter tends to try to get them to imitate them more closely when they are not meeting expectations or jump in and do the work for them, instead of coaching or inspiring them.

Pacesetters should state guidelines clearly and give clear feedback. Pacesetters can build a small team of other pacesetters but find it difficult to delegate work. So they quickly reach their limit of productivity with a small team. Pacesetting is an overall poor default style for longer term team development. When a team leader is operating in a pacesetting style, fellow team members who are not pacesetters tend to feel overwhelmed (and not inspired) by the pacesetter’s high standards and high achievements.

We all need to be pacesetters at some point. When there are peak periods or crises, we should be able to jump into the “front line” to set an example and to help to get the job done.

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If we need to lift our pacesetting style, then there are several things we should ensure. Firstly, we maintain the technical skills which are necessary to our profession. Whether it is IT, finances, sales or whatever, we should know how to assist and know how to help our teams where they are lacking. Secondly, we should know how to teach by example, that is, how to ensure other people intentionally learn from the way we are setting a model. We should set clear standards and emphasize results.

The coaching style

1 Thessalonians 5:14 *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”*

The coaching style of leadership has the objective to develop the skills and attitudes of those being coached. The preceding Scripture indicates to us that we need different coaching approaches with different types of people. Some require exhortation, others need warning, others need comfort and yet others need to be upheld. However, all will need patience. A coach will understand an individual’s need and respond with the appropriate approach.

A coach will establish goals, assess strengths and weaknesses, discuss ways of achieving the goals and will form a development plan with a person. The coach will then provide ongoing feedback and support.

The coaching style is effective when the coach and the person being coached have awareness about the person’s deficiencies. A coach needs to be able to ask open-ended questions, provide feedback and cope with short term failure. The coaching style does not work too well in crises, short-term projects and with people who are only committed to the short term.

Which style am I?

There is no right or wrong style of leadership. Each style has importance in the right situation. The more style options you have, the better results you will have. Research shows that if a person could master four of the leadership styles, especially the visionary, relational, democratic and coaching styles, they will experience greater impact from their teams.

We should ask what style the situation requires and whether we can adopt one of the styles that are appropriate in that situation. We should make sure that we don’t simply fall back on the one or two default styles that are most comfortable to us.

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Style assessment

The following quick questionnaire assesses what styles you are operating in. Please be as honest as you can when answering all these questions. The results will not mean very much unless you answer these questions accurately. Please rate yourself between 0 and 10. If you definitely disagree, rate yourself as “0”, if you definitely agree, rate yourself as “10”. If you disagree as much as you agree, rate yourself as “5”.

- Q1. My enthusiasm is contagious*
- Q2. I can heal rifts between co-workers*
- Q3. I am quickly aware of the skills of others*
- Q4. I expect everybody to work as hard as me*
- Q5. I am direct in telling others my wishes*
- Q6. I help to develop other’s strengths and abilities*
- Q7. I turn negative situations around quickly*
- Q8. I like to get people to try new things*
- Q9. I don’t tolerate average performers*
- Q10. I have friends at work*
- Q11. I invite my team into decision making*
- Q12. I tell my team why their work is significant*
- Q13. I help my team to develop long term goals*
- Q14. I make detailed plans for my team’s problems*
- Q15. I prefer management by a team rather than by an individual*
- Q16. I admit when I do not have the answer*
- Q17. I give little flexibility for how things are done*
- Q18. I let my team know I am pleased or displeased with their performance*
- Q19. I go out of the way to be helpful to my team*
- Q20. I give everyone a chance to be heard before decisions are taken*
- Q21. I paint a picture for my team about what the future could look like*
- Q22. I respect my team’s feelings*
- Q23. I will use my authority to get my team to agree with me*
- Q24. I communicate my vision of exciting possibilities to my team*

After you have rated yourself out of ten for each of these questions, add up your scores in the following way

- A1. Questions 5, 7, 18 and 23 – your “Directive” score*
- A2. Questions 2, 10, 19 and 22 – your “Relational” score*
- A3. Questions 1, 12, 21 and 24 – your “Visionary” score*
- A4. Questions 11, 15, 16 and 20 – your “Democratic” score*
- A5. Questions 4, 9, 14 and 17 – your “Pacesetting” score*
- A6. Questions 3, 6, 8 and 13 – your “Coaching” score*

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These scores give you your perception of your default leadership styles. Like any self-assessment, the accuracy of this assessment depends on your self-awareness. Most people also need others to assess them to understand the way they are perceived. Other people's assessment of your style often differs from your perceptions. You will tend to rate yourself according to how you intend to operate whereas other people tend to rate you as you are actually operating. Hence, you should ask others to rate you as well. If a leader is weak or strong in one of the styles and their team agrees, then there is a common point to work from. Where the team disagrees with the leader, it is more likely than not that a leader has a blind spot that they should reflect on.

Action Points

Consider the six leadership styles we have just discussed:

- ***Which styles did the questionnaire indicate that are you strongest in?***
- ***Which styles did others feedback that you were strongest in? Were they different to yours?***
- ***Does your role require you to adopt a style that you are weak in?***
- ***If you needed to build the strength of a style, which one would it be? Who do you know that has a strength in that style to help you?***