The Effective Leader is Impactful, Fair, Strategic, Balanced, and Equipped to Flourish

Dr. Lakeisha Walker, LCMHC, CTRP
Bridge of Hope Life Transformational Services, LLC
Professional Coaching: Partnerships of Honor
Roundtable: Professional Coaching

Abstract

Flourishing does not occur by chance; it occurs by effort. And growth transpires when the effort is purposeful and intentional. We face various challenges daily, and our perception of the challenges determines our actions. The mindset to flourish is often developed when one has been exposed to a view of thriving versus a view of stagnation. Thinking in a stagnated way overexerts the brain. One who struggles with human flourishing could also struggle with professional flourishing, thus hindering effective business decisions and leadership efforts. The leader's mindset is the driving force of leadership activities. Leaders increase self-awareness, harness abilities, increase performance, shift mindsets, and are equipped to effectively lead with the interjection of coaching. When utilized in the coaching aspect, *the effective leader is* leadership development model assesses leadership capacity based on one's ability to be impactful, fair, strategic, and balanced. Leaders are assisted with identifying and developing skills that equip them to identify and develop skills in others. That is the power of coaching, human flourishing, its role in business and leadership, and the implementation of The Effective Leader is Leadership Development Model™.

Keywords: leadership, coaching, human flourishing, mindset shifts

Introduction

Each second someone makes a decision that will either support the act of flourishing or the act of dwindling away. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defined *flourishing* as marked by vigorous and healthy growth. To this end, a person who is flourishing exhibits behaviors of forward movement versus someone who is dwindling away and stagnating. As mindsets shift and perceptions are reevaluated, the path towards transformation is cleared. Since a thought and an emotion are at the seat of every

decision, the notion of shifting and reevaluation are both vital because when coupled together one's mindset is formed. In this manner, coaching is introduced as a tool to assist with self-awareness, which enhances decision-making skills. The Effective Leader Is Leadership Development Model™ was created to assess one's capacity for impactful, fair, strategic, and balanced leadership and when used as a four-tiered coaching tool, leaders gain insight into areas of personal and professional flourishing.

Four-Tiered Coaching Tool

Tier 1: The Effective Leader is Impactful™

To begin, it is important to understand that positive impact organically happens when leaders operate from a space of purpose and authenticity. The initial step in moving towards this said space of purpose is to identify one's leadership style, which occurs within this first tier. This leadership development model administers the Leadership Styles Questionnaire by SAGE Publications Inc. to measure authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The first tier lays the foundation of leadership framework considering that it is the leadership style that shapes one's voice and directly impacts the culture of the organization. Too, leaders are taught strategies for building credibility and trust, which are both crucial in terms of impactful and effective leadership as well as in shaping organizational culture that is conducive to high work performance. Altes (2024) indicated,

From fostering open communication to creating a solid organizational culture, building emotional safety, inspiring leadership within teams and positively impacting mental health—trust is the thread that weaves through the tapestry of effective leadership. As professionals navigate the complexities of their roles, they would do well to recognize trust as not just a trend but an enduring principle that can transform individuals, teams and organizations. ("Conclusion," para. 1)

A leader who attempts to mirror the style of another leader will hinder personal and holistic flourishing, as flourishing is strangled by a lack of a leader's ability to lead from a place of inner security. When leaders are unable to grasp inner security, one could consequently struggle with managing power. A lack of power management could possibly create discord and tension, thus negatively impacting performance and growth. Leaders who have a high self-concept find it easy to delegate responsibility, create synergy, earn respect from others, and self-manage. This type of leader will find it easy to walk in personal power, which is given because of the rapport that the leader has with staff members versus position power or position leadership, which is granted just because of the leadership role that the leader is assigned to fulfill.

An impactful leader studies one's thoughts, emotions, actions, and needs. When faced with challenges, the leader is driven by the acknowledgement of how a leader's actions impact the actions of others and therefore chooses to self-manage. A secure leader has a high level of self-acceptance and knows one's story well enough to be honest with oneself. "Insecurity often leads to avoidance. People tend to be the most avoidant with their own flaws" (Vaynerchuk, 2021, p. 12). Vaynerchuk (2021) contended that when leaders recognize one's area of needed growth they often overcompensate in other areas to cover their insecurities.

Human flourishing is diametrically evident in the life of a leader who is impactful. It is difficult for an individual to function as an impactful leader if they do not learn how to take a different route to deal with personal roadblocks. It is like traveling on a familiar road only to arrive at a place in that road that is now under construction. Roadblocks are distractions to human flourishing while happiness, joy, contentment, and gratitude are all outward expressions of human flourishing. Let us take a Galatians 5:22 approach to human flourishing and impactful leadership as the leader walks in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that are produced by the Holy Spirit. An organization can flourish when it is led by a leader who is flourishing. "As leaders achieve greater self-awareness and greater inner security, their need for control and outward security diminishes greatly" (Roberts, 2012, p. 81).

Coaching can then be implemented to aid in leadership development that is focused on value-based goal setting, inclusion, creating buy-in, rapport building, etc. Lewis (2022) reported, "When trust is instilled in an organization, tasks get accomplished with less difficulty because people are more likely to collaborate and communicate with each other in productive ways. As a result, outcomes tend to be more successful."

The effective leader who is impactful understands that there are universally desired traits of highly effective leaders. These traits are introduced and expounded upon within the first tier as the leaders are taught the difference between a manager and a leader. A manager focuses on processes and system development; a leader focuses on employee development that results in organizational sustainability. For example, imagine working at XYZ Organization and a close loved one unexpectedly passes away. This death is not of a distant cousin, a great great great aunt, etc., but someone whose death will totally disrupt life as it has been. Instead of your supervisor offering condolences, they ask, "Will you be at work tomorrow?" This supervisor is leading as a manager who is concerned about business processes. The employee needs the supervisor to lead as a leader and show some concern for their personal situation.

Leadership impact is felt and has an ongoing influence on individuals when the leader understands the process of leadership and is interactive, inclusive, open to the

viewpoints of others, creates unity, encourages expressiveness, and inspires commitment. "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. A relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 30). At the foundation of effective leadership is a leader who is impactful.

Tier 2: The Effective Leader is Fair™

What does fairness look like in leadership actions? As leaders progress to the second tier of this leadership development model, it is imperative that attention is given to the individuals' strengths, needs, personal dynamics, and areas of growth as well as the needs of the organization to develop conflict resolution skills, understand change, increase motivation, and move from recruiting to retaining. Potential is unlocked, impact is maximized, and genuine connections are established when leaders are viewed, supported, heard, and understood as individuals versus from a focus that is merely through the lens of their role within the organization.

For example, a previous coaching client indicated that she noticed that her work performance decreased after undergoing a situation that resulted in a feeling of being unappreciated and devalued. The content within this tier highlights improving feedback discussions, addressing performance concerns, identifying blind spots, and tackling the elephants in the room.

> It's a myth that managers need to treat all their employees equally. In reality, they need to treat their employees equitably. There's a big difference between the two, and one that the managers of the future will need to understand as they increasingly move the work to the people instead of the people to the work. (Field et al., 2023, p. 205)

For a biblical reference, Proverbs 16:11 (*New Living Translation* [*NLT*] Bible, 2004) tells readers that "the Lord demands accurate scales and balances; he sets the standards for fairness." Kitterman (2023) acknowledged the difficulty that is associated with creating a workplace environment that reflects fairness based on everyone's perception of fairness: "Fairness is a top driver for employees to give extra effort in their job, a key element for innovation and productivity" (para. 7).

Coaching plays a role in driving fairness; it bridges the disconnect between the skills individuals possess and the skills needed that contribute to a change in action. This leadership development model utilizes the Leadership 360 Leadership Development Needs Assessment to identify strengths and to assess the needs of leaders. Stoltzfus (2005) echoed, "Coach training is about upgrading your conversational and relational

skills" (p. 45). This is the heart of coaching, and it is at the heart of the effective leader who demonstrates fairness.

Tier 3: The Effective Leader is Strategic™

Strategic is more than a buzz word and entails clear and forward thinking that will develop futuristic and long-term stability strategies, assess systems and structures and their relationship to success, build teams with equipped leaders who understand needs and growth, and develop a succession plan versus a replacement plan. Branding happens within this third tier. A business leader must learn from the past (possess hindsight), live in the present (possess insight), and think towards the future (possess foresight) while remaining true to the core of the organization's identity if success and sustainability is the overall goal. A leader who is strategic understands that change is inevitable. As I often express, it requires focus to build while shifting. Strategic thinking makes it possible for leaders to build (work, remain connected, operate, function, etc.), while shifting (thinking about and moving towards what is next), and deploy strategic actions.

Additionally, there is a level of customer focus that is present when leaders are strategic. A leader who is customer-focused is often prepared for crisis moments. Look at Chick-fil-A. This franchise leads with the guest (their term for *customer*) in mind. They implemented double-line ordering that included crew members waiting outside to take the guest's order as part of their restaurant's day-to-day service delivery. The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a change in business practices because of social distancing. Chick-Fil-A was one of few restaurants that did not have to scramble to change because of strategic thinking and strategic implementation beforehand. An inability to think strategically hinders flourishing. Strategic thinkers utilize both sides of their brains to make action steps.

Leaders who are strategic use the logic and analytical thinking associated with left-side brain functions and marry it to creativity and imagination that are associated with right-side brain functions to be trailblazers. Often, leaders who are strategic view the world differently and introduce concepts that are foreign and prematurely rejected. Take note that the rejection is usually not based on the effectiveness of the concept but mainly because it is a new concept. Innovation is stunted by leaders who are not strategic.

Life experiences have proven that one thing is true as I quite often convey: It is human nature to rebel against a new concept instead of embracing it. Nehemiah teaches that change creates opposition, and resilience is built when we remain focused through times of distress. Nehemiah 4:17 specifically tells us that the laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. The power

of ignoring the opinions of others, the strength to move forward, the wisdom to be watchful, and the power to keep building speak to the actions of strategic leaders.

Coaching unlocks the greatness within and prepares the way for flourishing to sprout. However, there is a prerequisite I refer to as *Unlearning 101*. This requires a mindset shift from certain belief systems that stunt growth.

> Without strategic leadership, companies have a weak foundation. As the business grows, there is no strong structure rooted to the ground to prevent things from caving in. If your company isn't practicing strategic leadership, you're putting everyone in harm's way. (Baker, 2022, see para. 6)

Several well-known companies were forced to close their doors because of an inability to shift business practices and services to meet current trends and customer needs. Epifano and Ross (2024) revealed nine companies that failed to adapt, which caused their demise. In 2008, Blockbuster's CEO referenced RedBox and Netflix and commented that they were not even on the competition radar screen. An online business presence and digital transformation were both beginning to heighten, and Blockbuster failed to use insight and foresight to make a strategic forward shift. Within 2 years following the CEO's comment, Netflix was taking pieces of Blockbuster's profit, and the company filed for bankruptcy with $900+ million debt. To attest to the value of strategic leadership, Baker, 2022, see para.1) stated,

> Strategic leadership happens when a leader shares a vision and goal with their team and inspires them to work together to reach it. A strategic leader often acts as the motivating force for an organization, letting individuals know their role in achieving the vision.

Coaching assists leaders with clearing their individual vision and sharpening their vision of the organization's next step and directions. Goldsmith et al. (2012) shared that coaches aid in helping leaders to position themselves to identify future organization strategic issues. A strategic leader can benefit from coaching because strategic influence is an ongoing process that requires continual revision.

Tier 4: The Effective Leader is Balanced™

At this point within the coaching process, the leader has increased understanding of one's leadership style and the correlated leadership impact, has developed skills to operate equitably and fair, has shifted one's mindset to think and thus act strategically, and has the tools that are necessary to excel as an effective leader who is balanced. A balanced leader is at the brink of flourishing. This leadership development model analyzes balanced leadership from a personal and professional perspective. We begin with personal balanced leadership. Self-awareness and self-concept as introduced in the

first tier connect with self-worth in this fourth tier to teach leaders how to set healthy boundaries around things that are important to them by beginning with oneself.

Leaders are always expected to know the answer and to be readily available. Do you know that the issue does not reside within that expectation? Rather, it resides in the thought process of the leader who believes it and then acts upon that belief. The issue is that leaders often struggle with caring for themselves and attending to personal needs such as wellness and personal care. True self-care goes beyond taking a day off work once every quarter or beyond. It goes beyond treating oneself to a spa day or to something new. These are actions of self-love, which is the basis for self-care. As often as I hear leaders complain about not having time for self-care I respond in the same manner: If you don't make time to stop, you're making time to die. Love yourself enough to make time to live.

Self-care is not selfish; it is necessary, and it is a lifestyle. A balanced leader has adopted self-care as a thought process and is cognizant of the fact that their peace of mind is a driving force for human flourishing. This tier has been instrumental in helping numerous leaders with making changes in their daily activities that resulted in an increased ability to function and self-manage. Healthy boundaries are easy to establish yet difficult to maintain. Maintaining healthy boundaries creates a balanced life. I define a boundary as being a self-erected barrier that protects things that are of value. Personal balance includes getting adequate rest, eating a balanced diet, exercising, practicing assertiveness, spending time alone, attending medical appointments, decluttering one's home/office/car/personal space, utilizing positive coping skills, taking breaks in between tasks and obligations, learning to say no, refraining from telephone usage, etc.

Leaders often burn out individuals prior to burning out professionally. When leaders ask for assistance with preventing burnout, they are challenged within this tier to identify their activities before and after their workday duties. This holds importance because a leader's executive functioning is at its highest capacity when one's lifestyle choices promote holistic wellness. One skill set involved in executive functioning is organization. A leader who is tired, overwhelmed, stressed, and anxious could struggle with organization and clutter. One's professional duties require a level of almost every skill that encompasses executive functioning. A lack of ability to fulfill job duties that require executive functioning could result in workplace turnover. Coaching is extremely valuable to the leader who is balanced. It assists with creating strategies for integrating personal and professional duties that results in an increased ability to properly manage.

As a coach, I created the Personal Treatment Plan (see Appendix) to highlight triggers or mood shifters such as anniversary dates of the death of loved ones, certain holidays, weather changes, smells, inability to get needs met, being yelled at, violent behaviors,

and so forth. Leaders are asked to identify times when their mood shifts such as appetite fluctuation, disturbed sleep patterns, crying, yelling, pacing back and forth, etc. Leaders are assisted with identifying positive coping skills that have proven effectiveness such as taking a walk, meditation, deep breathing, journaling, exercising, etc. The identification of personal pressure points and following through on an action plan for holistic wellness increases one's ability to prevent emotional disconnection, thus transforming into a balanced leader.

The severity and duration of emotional disconnection can bring about burnout and job dissatisfaction. Coaches can use several tools and checklists to assess one's level of burnout. The challenge is to identify toxic workplace environments, broken systems, unrealistic expectations, organizational structure changes, lack of growth opportunity, and other things that impact one's ability to flourish and achieve fulfillment. A lack of fulfillment creates thoughts of despair, which forces one to make decisions that are sometimes irrational and unhealthy. The tendency to make unhealthy decisions is greater when individuals are emotionally and physically depleted.

Although employees do not have the power to make organizational improvements, one does have the power to alert executives about the work conditions and the impact of such conditions on their well-being. Coaching on the executive level teaches leaders how to respond to feedback in the second tier of this model. Implementing other learned strategies will assist in ensuring the effective leader is balanced. The balanced executive leader works at reducing structural tensions on the professional design that will create stress on the personal design such as "how to allocate work (differentiation) and how to coordinate diverse efforts once responsibilities have been parceled out (integration)" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 52).

Human Flourishing, Coaching, Business, and Leadership Concluding Factors

Messer (2021) reported that human flourishing occurs as the good purposes of God are fulfilled for our lives. In this way, human flourishing has several dimensions, which "includes the dimensions of relationship with God, relationships with others, living a physically embodied and integrated life, and living out a particular vocation in a particular place and time" (Messer, 2021, p. 285). We were created to live a life of purpose, fulfillment, and joy. "While you're living, don't forget to live" is something I always say as a reminder to others to tap into this life that was uniquely and individually created just for us! Jeremiah 29:11-14 (*NLT*, 2004) reminds us,

> For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be

found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.

There is a life of extreme impact that will start revolutions and movements because of coaching. Coaching not only empowers individuals, but it also equips individuals to gain the necessary skills for growth and development that lead to purpose and fulfillment. Jeremiah 29:11-14 unites human flourishing, coaching, business, and leadership. Verse 11 begins with an introduction of the flourishing life that was created for us. Human flourishing is connected to making purpose-filled actions versus fulfilling immediate needs. As humans, we fill based on how we feel. This means that we fill spaces in our lives based on how we feel emotionally. Human flourishing is birthed from purpose-filled actions.

As leaders, when there are times of uncertainty, God promises to respond. Coaches do not necessarily provide answers but rather encourage accountability, focus on the individual's place of destiny, build capacity within, foster change, and help to keep individuals accountable. "Coaching teaches people how to train for the race of life. Life runners need to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus" (Collins, 2002, p. 96). Figure 1 reveals a powerful message about the core of coaching. Coaches take joy in assisting individuals with fulfilling their destiny. One's destiny is worth the work of unlocking the potential within because potential equals power when it is unlocked.

Leaders should aspire to not only lead but to lead effectively. The Effective Leader is Leadership Development Model has been key in challenging leaders to answer the call to impactful, fair, strategic, and balanced leadership. This leadership development model is a value-driven model that aims to enhance motivation for developing trust, increasing leadership skill set and capacity, cultivating a growth-centered environment, establishing clear communication channels, promoting innovation, mobilizing others, positively influencing team-building efforts, aligning vision and goals with human abilities, and creating balance and high work performance cultures. An individual who is flourishing becomes a leader who leads with a mindset of growth, transformation, empathy, vision, self-management, and insight. Will you answer the call to human flourishing while preparing to be an effective leader?

Figure 1

The Key

About the Author

Dr. Lakeisha Walker is a sought-after speaker, leadership strategist, wellness advocate, and professional development facilitator. She is also an Ordained Evangelist, a Licensed Clinician Mental Health Counselor, and a Certified Trauma Practitioner. She earned a Doctor of Strategic Leadership with a concentration in Leadership Coaching from Regent University. She is the Executive Officer of Bridge of Hope Life Transformational Services and enjoys assisting leaders with increasing capacity, which is felt through the business motto Restoring Life to Seemingly Lifeless Situations. She is passionate about people development and purpose fulfillment as being manifested via mindset shifts, personal wellness, transformed behavior, and improved lifestyle choices. Lead Leader! "Don't lose hope! It's not beyond repair, it just needs restoring" as I often say to drive change.

Correspondence concerning this article should be submitted via mail to Dr. Lakeisha Walker, 114-B West Street South, Ahoskie, NC 27910, or via email at drk@bridgeofhopelts.net.

References

Altes, K. (2024). *The transformative power of trust in leadership.* https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2024/02/02/the-transformative-power-of-trust-in-leadership/#:~:text=Trust%20is%20the%20bedrock%20upon%20which%20successful%20leadership,duplication%20effect%20and%20even%20positively%20impacting%20mental%20health

Baker. (2022). *What is strategic leadership? And what does it look like?* https://leaders.com/articles/leadership/strategic-leadership/

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership.* Jossey-Bass.

Collins, G. (2002). *Helping others turn potential into reality: Christian coaching.* NavPress.

Epifano, M., & Ross, L. (2024). *9 companies that failed to adapt to disruption and paid the ultimate price.* https://www.thomasnet.com/insights/7-companies-that-failed-to-adapt-to-disruption-and-paid-the-ultimate-price/?msockid=16ebeacd920d64c835e9fbec930a652b

Field, E., Hancock, B., & Schaninger, B. (2023). *Power to the middle: Why managers hold the keys to the future of work.* Harvard Business School Publishing.

Goldsmith, M., Lyons, L., & McArthur, S. (2012). *Coaching for leadership: Writings on leadership from the world's greatest coaches.* Pfeiffer.

Kitterman, T. (2023). *Fairness leads to higher levels of well-being and productivity at the best small and medium workplaces.* https://fortune.com/2023/08/31/fairness-well-being-productivity-best-small-medium-workplaces-2023/

Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations.* Jossey-Bass.

Lewis, A. (2022). *Good leadership? It all starts with trust.* https://www.leadersway.com/post/good-leadership-it-all-starts-with-trust

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Flourishing. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary.* Retrieved October 15, 2024, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/flourishing

Messer, N. G. (2021). Human flourishing: A Christian theological perspective. In M. T. Lee, L. D. Kubzansky, & T. J. VanderWeele (Eds.), *Measuring well-being: Interdisciplinary perspectives from the social sciences and the humanities.* New

York (Online edn, Oxford Academic, April 22,
2021). https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512531.003.0011

New Living Translation Bible. (2004). Biblehub. www.biblehub.com

Roberts, R. (2012). *The well-balanced leader: Interactive learning techniques to help you master the 9 simple behaviors of outstanding leadership.* McGraw Hill.

Stoltzfus, T. (2005). *Leadership coaching: The disciplines, skills and heart of a Christian coach.* Booksurge Publishing.

Vaynerchuk, G. (2021). *Twelve and a half: Leveraging the emotional ingredients necessary for business success.* HarperCollins Publishers.

Appendix

_____'s
Personal Treatment Plan

Directions: There are no right and wrong answers so please take a moment to honestly learn and evaluate yourself.

Date:	Printed Name:	Signature:

Triggers

What are some things that shift your mood? What creates anxiety, stress, anger, depression, etc. for you?

Changes

How do you or someone else know that your mood has shifted? What changes within your body or behavioral patterns?

Positive Coping Skills

What are some things that help you with self-management? What calms you down? What helps to relax you?