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# Leadership Tools

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## LEADERSHIP TOOLS...

...Is divided into four sections:

1. Foundations
2. Relationships
3. Systems
4. Balance

These four topic areas contain all the skills a leader needs to be successful. It is important to continue to expand the skills in each of these areas. Since it is the beginning of a new year, this is a great opportunity for taking inventory of your skill set and determine the new skills needed or which of the skill areas need to be improved.

In this edition of Leadership Tools we have contributions from skilled leadership trainers with tools that will be helpful to leaders in a variety of situations.

- Jerry Browning shares tools for handling transitions
- Glen Rediehs helps us to remember how important listening skills are for leaders
- Sally Morgenthaler gives us some ideas to check up on our leadership skills
- An I have some thoughts to help you find balance through planning skills

Send us your thoughts, comments or ideas for topics to address in future issues.

Enjoy!

# FOUNDATIONS

## Identity in Transition

By Jerry Browning

Identity impacts our life everyday. We are all that we have been in our past, along with the budding aspects of who we want to be next. Yet when we are in transition we often feel confused and less secure in our identity.

Let's examine common aspects of identity and learn how to support our identity when we are in transition – to preserve what is staying the same while making room for new growth and changes and how to stand in our strength and power amidst uncertainty.

Identity is self-concept – the mental and conceptual awareness and persistent regard we have for our own being. Components include physical, psychological, and social attributes and can be influenced by attitudes, habits, beliefs, and ideas.

Many of the successes and failures that we experience in our areas of life are closely related to the ways that we have learned to view self and our relationships with others. Our identity or self-concept is:

1. **LEARNED** - We are not born with self-concept or identity. It gradually emerges in early months of life and is reshaped through repeated perceived experiences. Faulty thinking patterns, such as over-generalizing, can create negative interpretations of oneself.
2. **ORGANIZED** - Our self-concept is organized consistent to our personality. Basic perceptions of oneself are quite stable, so change takes time.
3. **DYNAMIC** – The active nature of self-concept is continuous and dependably points to the “true north” of a person's perceived existence -- shaping the way a person views oneself, others and the world and also serves to direct action. Self-concept development is a continuous process of assimilation of new ideas and expulsion of old ideas throughout life. If self-concept must constantly defend itself from assault, growth opportunities are limited.

Transition is what happens inside of us when change occurs. Change can happen in an instant, however it takes longer for us to adapt fully to the new situation. Without transition, we often show up in the change with little or no acceptance, understanding, commitment, or passion. Phases of Transition: Ending, Neutral Zone, and Beginning.

### Ending

The end of something that used to be. Let's consider the current reality of where you are and identify what is ending for you. Have you talked about this? Are you ready to let go? What kind of closure do you need to let go? What kind of support do you need to let go?

### Neutral Zone

A time between the ending and beginning when there is great uncertainty and ambiguity. Acknowledging that it is a natural part of change and transition can help to glean from this phase the insight about the specific motivation and drive for beginnings that will emerge. Communicate with others often. This enables you to stay connected to resources and alleviate some of your concerns. Communication with others also helps your innovative ideas during this time. How can you utilize support during this time? What are some resources of support for you?

### Beginning

We can start any new thing any time. However, a beginning is a time in which we are comfortable with our new identity and have rebuilt our world. When you know what you desire – you begin.

What are some Beginnings in your life now?

Endings and the internal critic ...

Identity can be both intrinsic and extrinsic, what you believe you are and what others perceive of you. There is even the layered perspective of what you believe others think of you. However, the most powerful affect on our identity really is that self-talk. Our brain and bodies believe what we tell it in our internal dialog of self-talk.

The internal critic can cause harm to identity at any time. Especially in times when identity is impacted by unforeseen challenges such as job loss or divorce, the value of self can be fragile. American culture seems to equate some aspects of identity to job and profession. In social settings the first question can be, "What do you do?" For those who are between jobs, this is bewildering.

When relationships end often identity is challenged. For long-term marriages where roles have been developed, identity includes shadows of the other person. Uncoupling is a transition involving undoing the co-dependency of close relationship and living together. Through the undoing, often an identity never before known can emerge.

Transitions are often messy and may not follow clear patterns. Providing support in times of transition is important.

Supporting IDENTITY IN TRANSTION:

YOUR READI NESS:

The first step is to take a few deep breaths, smile, and think about assessing where you are right now. You have the value of being a veteran of your own life; full of rich experience that took you though changes before. Your new realities represent a shift from what used to be in your life. These changes also bring opportunity for your renewal, your evolution, and the next version of you.

Step One: Recognize your internal critic. This is your internal dialog with yourself sometimes represented in self-put-downs, defeatist, perfectionist, or workaholic behavior.

Step Two: Challenge your internal critic and stop the hurtful messages. Utilize affirming messages that identify and sharpen your strengths.

Step Three: List your positive traits and identify how they continue to serve you well.

Step Four: Understand and accept your weaknesses; accept the past. Utilize your weaknesses to define your character in positive ways.

SEEK SUPPORT RESOURCES THAT ARE POSITIVE FOR YOU:

- Be open and honest with yourself about what you can accomplish and where you need help.
- Get as much help as you possibly can and accept it with warmth.
- Learn to ask for what you need.
- Receiving is an important component in transition.
- Find any kind of help you need including for your health and well being.
- Allow others to provide insight about what positives they experience in you.
- Take seriously what others find in you.
- Write down those things about you that you also like about yourself.
- What are some possible resources to help you in your transition?

When is the time for the best version of you?

Since our identity evolves through changes we experience, each new version of us emerges with the next challenge. Some have said that, "What does not kill us makes us stronger." Whether we become stronger or softer is not the issue as much as whether we adapt. Adapting to change requires that we manifest something new, which was never a part of us before. That new part helps us to be shiny and full of self, ready to engage with the environment, people, and what comes next.

When we are shiny and full of self we are strong, resilient, and in high performance mode. Having gone through the neutral zone after an ending, we've healed and restored self. The new version of self is ready for the beginnings that may be new work, new relationship, and new discoveries of the shiny full self.

Ready, Set, Go...

Beginnings can have inertia that pulls you forward once you are in late stages of transition. Shedding the old ways of the past makes room for new things and new energy. You've experienced this before when you've come through some challenge and look back at it, glad that it is over. There is only one way to get past change, and that is going through change. Allowing transitions to fully process in ways that help you catch up to the change with all of your being is important. It also may mean that you are changed – the new version of you has emerged into an identity more fitting for you and where you are now.



Author, Jerry Browning, MS, LPC, is an organizational consultant, coach, and professional counselor who has been helping organizations and individuals for over 25 years. She facilitates positive change for companies and people and helps build skills for resilience and success. She often says, "Your success is our business." You can find out more about Jerry Browning at [Chiron Company: Organization & Personal Development](#)

## RELATIONSHIPS

### How Well Do You Listen?

By Glen Rediehs

An anonymous saying caught my attention the other day: Conversation is a vocal competition in which the one who is catching his breath is called the listener.

There is a lot of truth in that saying. How often have you been in a conversation where both of you entirely missed what each other had to say. You went away mumbling, "He never listens" or "She didn't hear a thing I said."

## Competitive Listening

It seems to me that many of our conversations are competitive. We are mostly interested in arguing for our own position, making a witty comeback, poking holes in what the other person is saying, or telling our own counter-story to the story that the speaker is telling. We pretend to pay attention while we are mentally preparing our rebuttal, retort or counter-story.

## Passive Listening

A somewhat higher level of listening is Passive Listening. You are sincerely interested in what the other person has to say. You may be faced toward the other person and have eye contact. But, you don't give any other non-verbal cues that you are listening. You offer no head nods, no "Uh-huh's," no facial expressions or comments that let the other person know that you understand. You're just there. When people listen to you passively, you probably go away saying, "I might as well have talked to the barn door," or "Why doesn't he/she talk to me?" There's a big difference between merely hearing someone's words and really listening for the person's message or feeling.

Stephen Covey says, "Seek first to understand and then to be understood." I think he's right. Maybe you do, too.

## Active Listening

The most satisfying and helpful form of listening is Active Listening. The speaker gets the idea that you are really listening because you are face to face and eye to eye. You provide non-verbal movements that pace the speaker, you make brief comments that echo the person's message and you occasionally paraphrase what the person said to make sure you understand. It really feels good when someone listens to you that attentively.

If you're just "shooting the breeze" or exchanging social niceties, how you listen might not matter that much. When someone simply asks what time it is, it's hardly necessary to sit down face to face and listen for how the person feels about whatever time of day it happens to be. But, if there is any substance at all in the conversation – and often there is more to a comment than the surface meaning – then the most important thing you can do is to listen actively.

## How to Listen Actively

Here are some tips on how to listen actively:

- Position yourself to listen. Face the person, make an appropriate level of eye contact and use head-nods or facial expression to let the person know you are following what they are saying. Adopt an open posture.
- Focus on the person and conversation. Don't be sorting your mail, checking something on your computer or cleaning your glasses. This is not the time for multi-tasking.
- Steer the conversation toward the other person's interests.
- Let the person finish their thoughts before you respond. Refrain from interrupting and cutting people off.
- Help the person tell his story or express her message clearly. Use receptive language: "I see," "Oh, really," etc. Ask open-ended questions that probe the issue or allow silence so the person can say more.
- Occasionally paraphrase what the speaker said to be sure that you got the right message. Clear up misperceptions.
- Listen for what is not said – what's between the lines.
- Be respectful. Validate how the person might have the position or feelings that he or she has – even if you don't see it the same way. Validating doesn't mean that you agree with the other person.
- Suspend judgment and bias. If you listen carefully, you might learn something.
- If the situation doesn't permit Active Listening, tell the person that you want to be able to listen and schedule a time to do that.

## Benefits of Using Active Listening

There are some pay-offs for taking the time to listen actively:

- There will be fewer hurt feelings and misunderstandings.
- You will improve interpersonal relationships.
- You will gain more friends. People like people who really listen.
- You will learn more with your ears and mind open than with your mouth open.
- Other people will listen to your position more willingly if they feel they have been heard.
- Others will speak with you more frankly and openly if they know you will take the time to listen.

Develop your Active Listening skills. The benefits will come to you.

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Glen Rediehs is committed to helping individuals and organizations create their best futures. He has accomplished this since 1980 through training, organizational development and coaching for a wide variety of organizations. Glen's clients benefit from the rich blend of experience he brings from teaching in college and university psychology departments, providing marriage and family therapy, serving as parish pastor and owning his own business. He prefers to work from strength-based perspectives such as Appreciative Inquiry and the Solutions Focus approach to personal and organizational development.

Currently, Dr. Rediehs is Senior Consultant with The Kilgore Group, LLC. He and his colleague, Dr. Larry Webb, are transforming congregations with Healthy Church DNA™, a seven-step process for church growth and renewal.

Create the best future for your congregation and for yourself. Contact Glen at 704-788-9184 or [grediehs@thekilgoregroup.com](mailto:grediehs@thekilgoregroup.com)

## SYSTEMS

### A Leadership Check-Up

By Sally Morgenthaler

There are many ways to think about leadership: having a clear vision of what needs to be done. Acting authoritatively. Establishing a clear-cut strategy. Setting the right course and charging ahead (hopefully, there are followers in tow!)

After reading the book, *Finding Our Way: Leadership in Uncertain Times* by Margaret Wheatley, I was impressed by her alternative set of leadership practices. While she did emphasize something that sounded like vision, she described it as, "Helping people know who they are." And while she spoke of strategy, it was more about giving people the freedom to collaborate a future together instead of being handed a game-plan from on-high.

Here are some of the other leadership practices woven throughout her groundbreaking book:

- Process over product
- People-releasing and permission-giving over people-containment or management
- Resilient (a continuous and optimistic response to change, and looking at change as opportunity vs. enemy)
- Infectious curiosity

- A default of trust
- Presence (an emphasis on listening, discovering, and awareness of Nurturing (seeking an organization's good over power and control)
- Authentic (leading out of ones' failures as well as successes)
- Collaborative

This is not an easy list. These are not simple practices. In fact, most of them require a commitment to relationship that goes far beyond what many leaders are willing to make. While it may be easier and faster to issue edicts, the long-term result may be that we undermine exactly what we're trying to accomplish.

I have to keep asking myself, "Do I lead for the profit of all, or do I lead for the benefit of my ego?" I need to keep checking my motives to see if my influence comes out of the desire to help people realize their potential and effect change, or out of my need to be in charge. Those who lead do so because, somehow, they have been given the power – the authority – to do so by others. How will I use that power?

Today, take a few minutes to do a "leadership check-up", and if you're willing, share some of the results with us. If you had a few areas that needed adjustment, just know that you're in good company.



Sally Morgenthaler is a nationally-recognized author and speaker. Her current work focuses on leadership trends in a changing culture and rekindling a soulful, authentic life as a leader. Her next book, *Leaders: Reclaim Your Soul*, will be published in 2009. Sally Morgenthaler is CEO of SJ Morgan Productions located in Denver, Colorado. She can be reached at [info@trueconversations.com](mailto:info@trueconversations.com).

Hear Sally Morgenthaler:  
Live Leadership Training  
"Reframing Great Leadership"  
Tuesday, June 10, 8 PM EDT  
FREE Registration [HERE](#)

## BALANCE

If You Can't Get It All Done: Look in the Mirror to See Who Can Help

By Hugh Ballou

(From [Taking Command of Time: Getting Things Done](#))

*We can be sure that the greatest hope for maintaining equilibrium in the face of any situation rests within ourselves.*

- Francis J. Braceland

Decide why you are doing every thing you do. Is it consistent with your vision and mission statements? If you do not really know why, then don't do it! Transform your life by eliminating unnecessary tasks!

Develop a reliable system

Develop a system and support for that system. Use paper or electronic means. Make a decision. Make a plan and work the plan. Have ONE calendar. Those who keep two calendars know that BOTH of them are usually wrong! Record all your data in one source and have a reliable back up! If you keep a paper system, attend a seminar on the effective use of the system. They will teach you the basics and then you can modify it to suit your needs.

The greatest help is to write everything in one system. EVERYTHING! When writing phone numbers or notes to call someone back, don't use those silly pink phone pads and have lots of little pieces of paper floating around. They are always in the way and you can't find the phone number when you need it! Scattered and disorganized people waste time that could be better spent in productive ways.

Don't take legal pads to meetings to record notes – use a meeting sheet in your calendar system. Time cue the action items on your calendar and refer to the appropriate page in your notes for the details. Your calendar page should have a section for tasks next to the times of day for appointments. Remember, only put items that require your physical presence on the calendar. Other items go on the task or project list.

Here's the basic idea: Record meetings in your date book. Record follow-up calls or actions in your task list. Connect the two in some way. Only put meetings that require your physical presence in your date book or calendar. That is a clear statement of where you are to be. Here's a good place to plan your personal time as well. If you don't schedule planning time, preparation time, study time, thinking time – then it most likely will not happen. Make a date with yourself and keep it.

Set a time of day to return phone calls. As the messages collect, put them into your task list for the time scheduled. The best time for calls is at the end of the morning or the end of the day. Do not interrupt productive time with phone calls, unless they are a priority. Plan your day the day before. Plan the major events of the week on Friday and review or refine and put in the details the day before, not on the current day. If you begin your day without a plan, much of the day will slip by without being productive.

Use your computer calendar program, PDA, or paper calendar system such as the Covey/Franklin planner. They have all the resources you will need and the training to go along with it. Keep everything in the system you use - phone numbers, addresses, e-mail, names, and other pertinent information. The beauty of this kind of consolidation is that you always have contact information handy when you need to follow up, and you can use extra time for planning or making notes. Extra time comes when you don't expect it, such as when waiting for a doctor's appointment or in the school line to pick up kids. By now, you've got the idea – now find a system and work it!

Transformational Leaders are disciplined and structure their time to get things done so that they have time to live.

Hugh Ballou has published books, articles and recordings to assist leaders in being more effective. Find the resources [HERE](#).

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## Conclusion

Arrive at your place of comfort utilizing the best of what you can learn from others. Build your foundation, maintain your relationships, utilize effective systems and keep a healthy balance in your life. Begin today. There's not an arrival point. It's simple a journey.

Grace and Peace to you in your duty and delight as a Christian leader.



[Hugh Ballou](#)