

“Whether we’re talking about companies, teams or our own lives, the central themes of leadership are based on a foundation of ethics, vision, courage and reality.”

Do You Have the WILL to LEAD?

Using the Leadership Diamond® as a Model and a Methodology for Expanding Leadership

A presentation by

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September 29, 2004

Synopsis by Rod Cox

“Can we all agree that the world is totally unclear? That things are occurring that have great impact? Dancing all around us are catastrophes in oil; in international relations; in deficits in the public treasury; in Africa being a disaster in every way; in increasing pollution and decreasing conservation; in fragmented families; in the increasing difficulty of making a living. Perhaps the ultimate expression of the chaos of our times is the worldwide proliferation of street people.”

A normal person waking up seeks to organize and understand this mess. Unable to do so, the tendency is to close our eyes and pull the pillow over our heads. In all of these situations, the central issue is lack of leadership. But when we’re pinned down, we can’t define exactly what leadership is. We do know what it isn’t, and we have Sorbanes-Oxley to sober us up and remind us.

“We are at the right time in world, local and business history to make leadership our #1 concern. The question is not, do we have leadership minds; but rather, can we put what we know about leadership into context and into action? What is keeping us from being fully here now?”

In this presentation, Koestenbaum notes that you hold the keys to taking control of how you lead; but asks, do you have the will? He points to his Leadership Diamond® with courage at the foundation as a model for examining and initiating the themes of effective leadership. One generation in the making, the diamond model (actually, a diamond within a diamond) answers fundamental leadership issues. The outer diamond points to essential leadership orientations. The inner diamond points to the “dark side” or counter-orientations that may get in the way. By teaching us how these two diamonds function as interlocking components, Koestenbaum shows:

- how to apply leadership philosophy to your toughest business issues
- how to use this model to identify and cultivate the eight fundamental leadership attitudes that can make or break any organization.

Having the Will to Lead is meant to help business people do better business, but it works equally well to help elective officials achieve their goals instead of being pulled this way or that way by their constituencies.

With degrees from Stanford, Harvard and Boston Universities, Dr. Peter Koestenbaum has helped develop leaders at IBM, EDS, Ford, Ciba-Geigy (now Novartis), Citibank, Volvo, Amoco, Xerox, and others. He is the author of several books, including *The Philosophic Consultant: Revolutionizing Organizations with Ideas* and *Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness*. Dr. Koestenbaum’s education is in physics, music, and philosophy. He taught for 34 years in the Philosophy Department at San Jose State University and received the prestigious Statewide Outstanding Professor Award. In his books and in person, he is a highly interesting, insightful and compelling presenter.

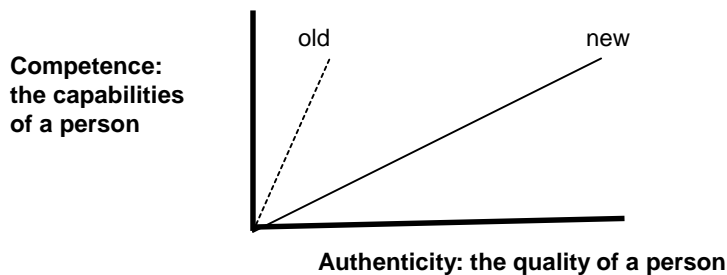
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Where are we right now? Why hasn’t leadership worked out? What is the heart of the leadership matter? In the past, it was taken for granted that we hired people for competence. This has dramatically shifted. The authenticity part – the quality of the person you are – is now being sought. In interviews recently conducted by the University of Michigan and Purdue to determine essential leadership criterion, four characteristics consistently headed the lists:

- communication and interpersonal skills - 89%
- ability to work well within a team - 87%
- personal ethics and integrity - 85%
- analytical and problem solving skills - 84%

Graphically, the shift looks something like this:



In the past two decades, business has moved through ROI (Return on Investment) to ROM (Return on Management) and is now poised at ROL (Return of Leadership).

This is vital information for people interested in making progress in leadership. Companies are placing respect for the dignity and value of individuals on par with technical prowess. They are looking for leaders who manage to get along when surrounded with difficult people, and who know how to function within the company and society. This crosses all geographies and societies whether we’re talking about Europe (socialized, quality, distribution); Asia (hierarchical, organized, providing security to those who obey); or the U.S. (a nation of individual freedoms).

In some ways, this respect for human freedoms mirrors the intentions of the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, one of the great documents of all time.

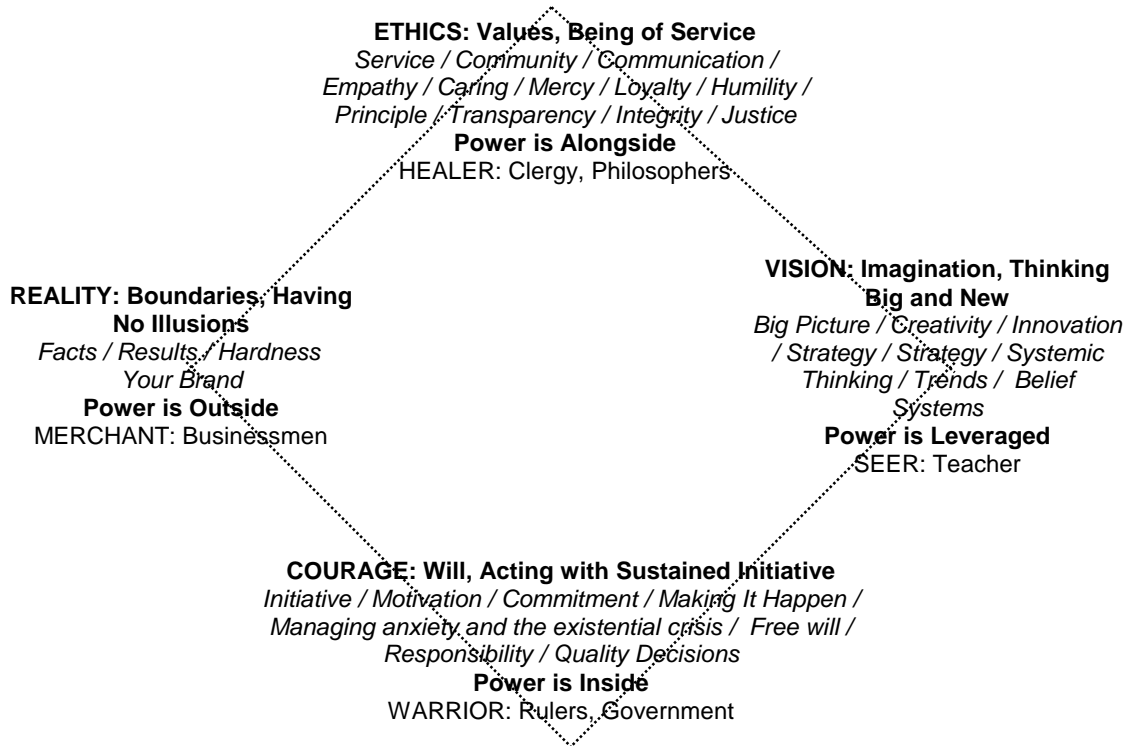
The Leadership Diamond®

The Diamond concept pulls from the largest database possible: the history of civilization. It is a business-based organization of the history of thought, and as such it is gentle, elegant, and powerful. The model is not Pollyanna, nor is it a magic pill. Exercising it requires hard work. But if you understand the diamond, you can use it for ALL difficult issues; i.e., to build value and character and inner strength to handle the vicissitudes of life as well as the complexities of business.

Leadership capacity begins with having understanding and proficiency in all four of the diamond’s orientations: Ethics, Vision, Courage and Reality. These are critical success factors: you cannot be an effective leader without all of them. Because they contain two sets of polar opposites, we need to be ready to implement and balance them when they’re needed. This is our initial education in authenticity. The four orientations are aspects of society leaders in general. Historically, they have been identified by the priesthood, teachers, rulers and businessmen.

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Each of these orientations must be viewed as clusters of questions about the attributes, needs, motivation and concerns that involve others. Ethics is about people. The question is, how are you wired to deal with people issues? Vision is about thinking and creativity. Are you wired for that? What about acting with will and commitment (Courage) or with cold, hard facts (Reality)?



ETHICS refers to the importance of people and integrity. It means caring about people; being sensitive and of service to them; and behaving in accordance with moral principles.

- Valuing and developing teamwork
- Striving for meaningful work
- Prioritizing good communication and mature commitment
- Acting with integrity and in accordance with your principles

VISION means applying analytical skills, thinking big; looking at situations in new ways; and being inspirational.

- Exercising abstract reasoning
- Cultivating a strategic and systemic perspective – providing direction and seeing the interrelationships within the big picture
- Engaging your creativity
- Practicing reflection

COURAGE is defined as taking charge; using power wisely; acting with sustained initiative; managing anxiety; and being free and responsible.

- Advocating and standing for something
- Being willing to stand alone
- Constructively experiencing anxiety
- Taking responsibility for your choices and accept being free

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REALITY refers to a no-nonsense approach to facing life without illusions; relying on data that is factual rather than emotional; and being tough, task-oriented and results-focused. It also means being able to understand other people's perceptions of what is actually true.

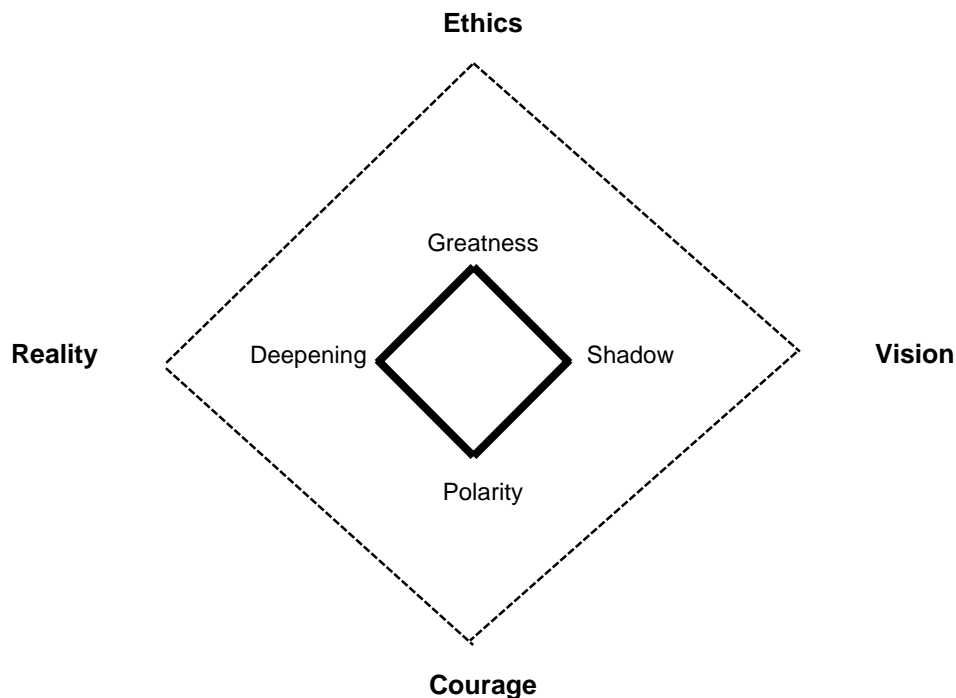
- Paying attention to bureaucratic detail
- Being objective and well-informed
- Doing what it takes to survive
- Seeking shared reality

(The four preceding paragraphs are quoted from Koestenbaum's website: www.PiB.com)

These four interdependent orientations are inner resources that are available to help us *if we will access and actualize them*. “The relationship among the four orientations determines the shape and size of the space in the Leadership Diamond.”

The foundation of the diamond is courage. The day that maturity begins and innocence ends is when we embrace courage. Insecurity is foundational so seek ways to find security. Science and technology are the biggest escapes from the challenges of security. They make things appear as if they’re causes; and by doing so, they provide us with scapegoats. Our society is built by using the scientific method, but we abuse it in order to run away from the enormity of the role of courage in this life.

At the center of the Diamond lies another Diamond, in many ways the opposite of the Leadership Diamond, identified by Greatness, Shadow, Polarity, and Deepening orientations. These inner orientations illuminate all of the outer orientations. They may give us depth and authenticity (Greatness and Deepening), or lead us away from leadership readiness (Shadow “The Dark Side”, and Polarity.) The space within the combined Diamonds is your leadership capacity.



Because the corners of the Diamond are polarized, the orientations may be in conflict with the others. The key is to hold and integrate these polarities rather than think of them as problems to be solved. You reach success by balancing and synthesizing polarities, and by thinking differently because you are adjusting root polarities. Said another way, the issues of life are not problems to be solved, but polarities which we have to transform if we are to live fully. (*Executive Forum Note: Readers familiar with Myers-Briggs will note the common message of our being hard-wired to certain polarities, yet situationally attuned and flexible to other polarities.*)

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Polarity change requires a personality transformation. Note that Reality and Vision are opposing mindsets. We tend to be oriented to one – i.e., strong in one area or perhaps too timid to deal with it another way – at the expense of its polar opposite, and therein lies a leadership dilemma since all four orientations are necessary.

When you find yourself in a dilemma, you’ve probably ignored one of the four, so the solution is to use the ignored one to get back on track.

- In which of the orientations do you tend to operate most easily? Which are more difficult to access?
- When you have your next crisis, which of them are you likely to need?
- Are you capable of activating all of them? At the right time?
- At any given time, which practices should you stop? Start? Continue?

In business, Reality is often the corner of choice – or so we think. But individuals in most organizations aren’t that realistic. Still, all Vision, Ethics and Courage issues must be focused on Reality. When you want to achieve something in the real world, expand your Reality. Be aware of facts, results, and hardness. Without Reality, you won’t make the required personality adjustments. But if you truly want to achieve things, you also need the personality to achieve it, and that requires tapping into the other three orientations.

Koestenbaum suggests that you reorganize your life, reorganize your company, reorganize your career, and reorganize your family to make things happen, perhaps using military training as a model. In the military, training focuses on reorganizing personalities to make it possible to win battles. This doesn’t necessarily make nice people (Ethics) but it does make things happen (Courage).

Consider that the best way to predict the future is to help create it. To this end, the expected consequences of installing Leadership Diamond® methodology into our lives and our organizations’ lives makes it worthwhile. We gain:

- Alertness - being conscious, active, fully present, aware, awake
- Hardiness - being tough, bullet proof, strong, powerful, rich in inner resources, adaptable
- Trust - connecting, being seen as reliable, helpful, inspiring, guiding, believable, credible
- Hope - generating the capacity to promote solutions, feeling good, energizing, finding answers, pointing to a future, having fun.

Since all of these are directions of thought that deserve our attention, how are you doing in each area? At work, are you in tune with your company in each area? What changes are required of you? Are you willing to make these changes? How will they affect you personally? Your business life and your personal life should include experiences of rejuvenation.

As mentioned above, we tend to want to go to one corner and stay there, but effective leadership requires a multi-corner approach. The corners strengthen and balance each other. Polarity issues are most often seen in Ethics where we are often nice and pleasant to a fault. This is counter to Courageousness; ironically, it leaves us unable to deal ethically with situations. Consider the Diamond to be a multifaceted talisman: each corner of the talisman helps us get to the next phase of life.

Use the Diamond as a practical way to design products and services as well as help people overcome their insecurities. There is great need for us to be compassionate in understanding people. Make it clear that the way you offer business will take care of the concerns of people who are often fragile, easily injured, emotional and physically delicate. This is a wise use of the diamond. It has to do with coaching to lead better lives, gain greater insights, and get through difficult times better.

In business, we are paid to do a job for other people; thus, the wisdom is defined by the customer. Your strategy, your messages, your operations, your marketing and sales, and your customer service all need to support this. By integrating the Diamond into our leadership, we ingrain the balance of orientations necessary to pull this off successfully.

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Applying the Diamond to the 9/11 Commission Report

“Across the government there were failures of imagination, policy, capability and management.” Can you see the correlation to the corners of the Diamond? Of these, the most important omission was imagination (greatness and vision).

Vision (Imagination) “We do not believe leaders understood the gravity of the threat. Vision and imagination were lacking. No one anticipated the gravity of the event. It didn’t fit into our ‘categories’.” Polls continue to validate that the #1 issue today is security. The concept of attacks on U.S. soil was numbing; it didn’t compute. Awakening is required for greatness.

Ethics (Policy) “Terrorism was not the overriding national security concern for the U.S. government under either the Clinton or pre-9/11 Bush administrations.” We were not alert and committed enough.

Reality (Capabilities) “Before 9/11, the U.S. tried to solve the Al Qaeda problem with the capabilities it had used in the last stages of the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. These capabilities were insufficient. Little was done to expand or reform them.”

Courage (Management) “The 12/04/98 CIA George Tenet memorandum: “We are at war. I want no resources or people spared in this effort.” This memorandum had little overall effect in mobilizing CIA or Intelligence communities.

Polarity (General Findings) “Since the plotters were flexible and resourceful, we cannot know whether another single step or series of steps would have defeated them.” People comfortable with polarity are resourceful enough to seek and find solutions.

These failures of government leadership are in no way a negative reflection on the brave people who were involved in 9/11 and in Iraq -- those who are serving or those who have died. We owe something to all them.

The Importance of Leadership Freedom of Choice

Inherent in the Leadership Diamond is the concept of freedom of choice, and it is a matter of considerable anxiety for most of us. As Kirkegaard tells us, this is not bad; properly recognized and handled, choice is at the core of leadership issues because it drives us to move upward. It thrusts us into taking good leadership actions.

Freedom of choice began in the middle ages when the concept of free will arose as a result of the conflict between Athens (City of Reason) and Jerusalem (City of Faith). Leaders of that time had to make an ultimate commitment as to which creed to follow. Like them, a foundational understanding of who you are is essential in understanding how you will lead and what choices you will integrate into your leadership.

By choosing which orientations you will allow or disallow into your life and your leadership, you can be “the lowest of the low, or the highest of angels.” (Giovanni Pico della Mirandola *Oration on the Dignity of Man*) Pico’s *Oration* is a powerful reminder of how much we’ve lost by assuming a cause and effect foundation to our lives. What we actually have is a choice foundation, and the Diamond provides a graphic model of the choices which confront us. It is not a matter of whether or not you want to choose; choose you must.

But note that we all have a fundamental choice not to make a choice. 80% of people, including leaders, operate by not making choices. In doing so – often because they are afraid of making a mistake – they deceive themselves and they sabotage others. However, a mistake not a violation of free will. As leaders, we may not have understood or we may have had bad judgment, but we cannot be cavalier about taking ethics seriously, nor can we abdicate our responsibilities.

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The Diamond is a way of being. To understand life takes initiative and courage. *“To be (to assume responsible for freedom) or not to be (to end it all), that is the question.”* Wm. Shakespeare. Freedom – in this case, the freedom to make choices about how you will integrate the orientations of the Diamond – is the most important discovery that has to be made, and it needs to be discovered daily.

Lifting yourself up and dealing with reality of life is real leadership. This transformation will be earned only at great expense; you have to take reality seriously to deal with it. Hence, don’t look just for root causes, but for root polarities. Start the diagnostic process now. It’s fundamental.

If you see that you aren’t perceived as you’d like, it’s not a problem to resolve, it’s a personality structure to revise. If your own perception of reality doesn’t mesh with changes in the organization, create a strategy appropriated to circumstances, then execute it.

Start by living your own authentic reality and by leading yourself before you start leading your organization. Make a decision to listen to the messages of life and to make changes in response. React in such a way that you come out of it a better leader and a better person.

Additional Resources

- Koestenbaum’s book, *Leadership: the Inner Side of Greatness; a Philosophy for Leaders* is replete with expanded Leadership Diagram concepts and case-studies. We recommend it highly.
- Also look at *The Philosophical Consultant - Revolutionizing Organizations with Ideas* - Peter Koestenbaum
- Peter Block’s *Freedom and Accountability at Work - Applying Philosophic Insight to the Real World* adds yet another philosophical foundation to helping you understand the complexities of effective leadership
- Consider taking time to assess your own Leadership Diamond orientations. Available free-of-charge on www.PiB.net, it takes only a few minutes to “capture your perceptions of your Leadership Diamond profile so that you may hone in on your opportunities for growth.”