

**FIND YOUR
VOICE**

— *as a* —

LEADER

PAUL N. LARSEN

Find Your Voice as a Leader

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my loving family, my focused life partner, my devoted friends, my inspiring colleagues, and my engaging clients...all who have helped me find my voice as a leader.

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PREFACE

WHY AM I WRITING THIS BOOK?



I believe that our “footprints” are not made of sand. We leave a permanent impact on the world. And, thus, our voices are not made to be silent.

My “jazz-hands” sister had a voice which she used to create her legacy as a true leader of her community, her faith, and her family. Her voice was one of purpose, grace, and wisdom which engaged all who came in contact with her.

And even though her voice, technically has been silenced by cancer, it can still be heard by her followers who have put into practice her teachings, her musings, and her general zest for life which was as contagious as her welcoming personality and engaging quips.

Like most people, I have had a lot of work experiences in my life. Some good. Some not so good. Stellar jobs. Fun jobs. Crappy jobs. Jobs that paid the bills. Jobs that I counted the minutes to 5:00 PM beginning at 8:01 AM. And I have certainly had jobs where I never wanted the workday to end. Yes, I was that content with my role.

I have worked for some great leaders. I have worked for some good leaders. And I have worked for people who should never lead a team again in their lives. I have followed leaders who were not bestowed with that title but knew how to inspire and motivate all the same. And I have chosen to follow leaders even when I knew the outcome would be disastrous.

My life has also been blessed with a large and wonderful family, supportive friends who I can count on to tell me the truth, and a long-term strong and steady personal relationship. I have had my share of setbacks and personal loss. And I have had more than my share of wins, true fulfillment, and many, many heartfelt moments that stay with me through my life's journey.

I truly believe that what we learn from our experiences and how we apply that learning to our life is directly related to

how successful we will be in our life. Do we constantly compare ourselves to others? Do we point fingers when things go wrong? Are we a victim? Or do we adapt to what life throws at us and use our resources and gifts to propel us forward?

And all of this matters in how we lead in life. No matter what our role is, we find ourselves in a leadership role every day. Besides the traditional organizational roles and titles of leadership, we need to lead ourselves through our personal lives with the same clarity, direction, and accountability that leaders display with their team within a company.

In my role as an executive coach, I work with a variety of people who identify themselves as leaders. Some work in traditional organizations. Some work in non-traditional environments. Some are trying to figure out what their next role in life will be. Some have been in the same role for a long time but want to develop new skills that will provide new potentials for them to realize. But all have one thing in common... they realize that they want to find their voice as a leader. They want to craft their unique message for themselves and for the world to hear.

As an executive coach, I have found many times in my past where I have said to some of my clients, "You're in an influential role...you have a gift...so find your voice...and use it." It didn't take me long to take my own advice and create my unique VOICE model which I now use exclusively with my clients in my role as a leadership coach and consultant.

There are many voices in the world, but how can you hear the good ones through all the noise? The leaders I work with find their voice and use it for creating the legacy and impact they desire to have on their community. I'm honored to do this type of work.

I wrote this book because, as my sister represented, we all have a voice. We all have a story. We all lead in our lives. We all create our footprint. We all create a legacy. We all have something unique to give as a leader no matter what our role is in life. I want people to find their voice as a leader and use it. Remember, you make an impact on everyone you meet. Don't squander that opportunity to make a difference. Use your voice and your jazz hands to create a lasting impression on your world.

*“If you are not self-reflective, how can you know yourself?
If you do not know yourself, how can you lead yourself?
If you cannot lead yourself, how can you lead others?”*

— **Harry Kraemer**

INTRODUCTION

TO FIND YOUR VOICE AS A LEADER



“Find your voice and inspire others to find theirs.”

— Stephen Covey

ARE LEADERS BORN OR MADE?

There are a lot of voices in the world, so how can you make sure your voice stands out? “Leaders are born, not made” goes the cliché. But according to a *Forbes* magazine study,

only 10 to 15% of leaders are naturally inclined to leadership. The study maintains that while about 10 to 15% of people will never be leaders as much as they want to be, the vast majority—the other 70 to 80%—can be trained or coached to be effective leaders. I agree.

Contrary to urban myth, good leaders are trained and developed over time. That means no matter what your background or previous experience has been, you can learn to be an effective and powerful leader. Even those with a natural leadership ability can hone their innate skills to become an even more successful leader within their organization...and their life.

Leaders come in all types and styles: Company President or CEO, business owner or entrepreneur, community or civic leader, politician, teacher, or PTA president. You may even be a leader in your personal life with family and friends. Where some may have been groomed for leadership over time, some are simply born with the charisma they require to forge ahead with a natural passion that makes them become a role model for others to follow.

INDIVIDUALITY MATTERS.

Whether you have natural leadership inclinations or need to be trained, in order to maximize your potential as a leader, you need to find your individual V-O-I-C-E. Finding your voice as a leader doesn't mean talking louder...or faster...or using big words. *What is your voice as a leader?* My unique

definition of VOICE is: Values, Outcomes, Influence, Courage, and Expression.

Find your V-O-I-C-E as a leader means:

- Discovering your core **Values**
- Creating a compelling vision to obtain the **Outcomes** you want
- Building relationships with **Influence** and credibility
- Making decisions that reveal your **Courage** and confidence to take a stand
- Communicating your overall **Expression** for lasting impact

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FIND YOUR VOICE?

It means standing tall and strong, even when you may be the only person in the room supporting your project, your employee, or your budget amendment. That may seem obvious, but standing tall as a leader is not as common as one might imagine. According to Smartblog on Leadership, most leaders start out with the best of intentions but get derailed over time being influenced by the predominant ideas in their organizations. After all, it's much easier to "go with the flow" than to "fight the system."

A leader can be developed to live his or her beliefs and to find and keep his or her unique voice. To find your voice

means incorporating the five essential elements of voice into your life:

- **Values** – To be an effective leader, you need to discover your core leadership values and clearly define those ideas that are the most important to you.
- **Outcomes** – To be a good leader, you need to create a compelling vision to get the outcomes you need and want. You'll want to envision your goal before starting a project and set up the necessary steps and processes to reach that goal.
- **Influence** – As a true leader, you build relationships with influence and credibility. You want to be someone team members, superiors, and members of the community respect and admire.
- **Courage** – Leadership isn't always easy. You'll need to make decisions that demonstrate your courage to take a stand. You need to have the confidence, guts, and strength to defend your ideas—and your team—even when your ideas may be unpopular.
- **Expression** – Good communication is essential to being a valuable leader. You need to be able to express your goals and ideas to others in an impactful way that they'll understand and support.

The Find Your Voice as a Leader model is truly a simple yet powerful coaching framework for building leadership quali-

ties that yield immediate and sustainable results. Let's look at each element in V-O-I-C-E in more depth:

DISCOVER YOUR VALUES OR WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

Finding your voice as a leader enables you to discover what really matters in your life, that is, discovering your values. *What's important to you and why?* This doesn't just mean your work values but everything that matters to you in all aspects of your life: your passions, your talents, your strengths, your family, your faith, and your community. Living your values means understanding why these are important, finding balance, and integrating your values with your career and your life. To live your values, you need a clear, well-defined idea of what they are.

CREATE YOUR OUTCOMES OR WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

Finding your voice as a leader involves creating outcomes that are critical to your success. *Where are you going and how will you get there?* You declare your vision, establish your goals, build a roadmap, enroll those around you, and measure the results. You want to ensure that the resulting journey is one worth taking. Charting your map of outcomes sets you up so you can handle the smooth or bumpy roads with detours along the way. Good leaders leave little to chance and have specific goals. They know the results they want their team to achieve.

EXERCISE YOUR INFLUENCE OR HOW DO YOU ENROLL OTHERS?

Finding your voice as a leader means developing, flexing, and building your influence muscle. Once you've identified your values and outcomes, you need to influence yourself, your environment, your team, your colleagues, your family, and those around you to maximize your opportunities and results. No leaders thrive by staying behind their desk or hiding in their home office. Effective leaders get out and talk with team members, adjusting their style to meet the needs of others in the group. Whether at work or in the community, good leaders use their influence to remove obstacles to achieving the goal, to encourage skilled members to join the effort, and to sell the team's goal. This is most easily achieved by being a living, breathing role model. Recognizing and developing your spheres of influence are key to being successful in using your voice.

DEMONSTRATE YOUR COURAGE OR HOW DO YOU STAND OUT WHILE STANDING ALONE?

Finding your voice as a leader necessitates demonstrating the courage to do what you know is right for you. Being courageous means not always taking the easy way out. To be a great leader, you need to have the courage to move forward and take a risk to step out of your comfort zone no matter how small a step that may be. This includes having the courage to take

on new behaviors, to speak up (even when you know your views will be unpopular), to change directions when needed, to stand alone in a crowd, to get comfortable with being uncomfortable, and to believe in yourself. Every decision you make reveals your courage. As you incorporate your values into your life, you may feel as if you're the only person willing to live your beliefs. However, good leaders don't let those feelings stop them, and they're not afraid to stand alone, to speak up, and to change direction if necessary—with courage.

COMMUNICATE YOUR OVERALL EXPRESSION OR WHAT'S YOUR BRAND?

Finding your voice as a leader means creating your overall expression of who you are to yourself, your business associates, your community, and the world. You owe it to yourself to communicate your needs and wants. Key aspects of conveying your lasting expression are: becoming a stellar communicator, creating followers, contributing your talents and capabilities, and building and re-inventing your personal “brand” so you remain renewed and refreshed. Your expression is the culmination of finding, creating, and using your voice to make a difference in your career and your life. The result of living your values is leaving a lasting, positive impression on the people around you. Through expressing their values and beliefs, powerful leaders naturally draw others to them.

WHY ADD YOUR VOICE TO THE NOISE OF THE WORLD?

Because everyone's voice is critical. Everybody should have something to say...to contribute. Developing your V-O-I-C-E is the backbone, not only to your success as a leader, but for your contribution to improving your community, your country, and the world—and creating your legacy as a leader. But you want to ensure that your voice adds and not detracts from the impact you desire. Your voice should be deliberate and purposeful in conveying your message of who you are as a leader.

Too many leaders get lost in the noise of today's chaotic business environment. They remain quiet instead of speaking up, even when they have an opinion. They follow someone else's decision instead of doing what they really want to do. They let the chatter in their head get the best of them, and they end up second guessing every action or step they take. Or they remain with the status quo instead of taking any action at all. They hide behind others instead of making their own decisions.



GO WITH THE FLOW...OR NOT?

I hear a lot of talk about mindfulness these days. And while many conferences and seminars tell us how mindful we should be, I wish people would just stop talking and start practicing. Seriously, the more I hear about mindfulness, the more forgetful I become. Finding your voice is a simple avenue for you to stop, take a breath, and really think about your role in life—the impact you have with others. You may need to challenge your traditionally held beliefs and empower yourself to recognize new opportunities.

ARE YOU A LEADER IN NAME ONLY? AND HOW DO YOU KNOW?

That's the question everyone in a leadership position needs to ask themselves at regular intervals. If you want to be a true leader, you need to get out from the shadows and lead. Whether you're a CEO, a civic leader, or the PTA president, being a true leader requires more than just securing the job. It means to find your voice and use it.

If you're in a leadership position, you owe it to your team, your organization, your followers, and yourself to speak up. Take a stand. Don't hide. Don't point fingers. Stand for what you believe in. You're not being paid to blend into the woodwork or ride the coattails of other leaders. So get out and lead. Or get out of the way.

NO YELLING.

When you're developing your voice as a leader, you need to speak without yelling or raising your voice. Some leaders are under the misguided impression that they need to shout to be heard or to emphasize their presence when entering a room or conducting a meeting. This isn't what finding your voice is about. Although they must possess the skills, experience, and intelligence to have been placed in a position of leadership by their peers, they may lack faith in themselves and their ability to be heard above the passionate noise of conflict.

Shouting doesn't mean you'll be heard. In fact, shouting makes it harder for people to understand what you're saying. It also elicits a variety of feelings, especially from those to whom the yelling is directed—feelings of anxiety, suspicion, anger, fear, or resentment. When intense emotions interfere with a leader's ability to communicate, the leader fails to perform the duties expected of him or her. You should lead with a quiet, powerful sense of self-confidence, compassion, and intuitive insight. I think that the more you shout the more it's reflected in the size of your ego. Don't let your ego get in the way...let your confidence speak up with a quiet voice.

YOU DON'T LEAD ALONE.

To be an effective and trusted leader, you have to realize that excellent leadership draws its strength from other people, not just from the leader. Although you may think you can lead as

a single entity by being “bigger than life” and shouting to get everybody’s attention, you really can’t be a good leader without respecting other people, most of whom don’t like being yelled at or treated like toddlers in timeout.

As I’ve said, few are leaders by birth. A successful leader is one who starts from scratch, goes on to change the world, and inspires people along the way. Since success is not just a destination, your struggles (and the outcomes) are also a part of your continuing success.

INSPIRATION 101.

When it comes to inspiring people, here’s what you need to know:

- **Your struggles inspire others:** This can’t be said in simpler terms. Your determination, persistence, and courage lead others. If you keep your struggles and success story to yourself, you can’t provide a role model for your team to follow and compare their performance against.
- **Giving credit motivates others:** As a leader, it’s essential for you to give credit to your team when they deserve it. From achieving a small monthly sales target to bringing about a new piece of legislation, your team members need recognition to motivate them if they’re to continue achieving the organizational goals.
- **There’s no “I” in team:** But there is a “me.” Therefore, be aware of when you need to deliberately recognize individual successes and when you need to recognize

team successes. People are always looking for “WIIFM: What’s In It For Me?” So learn to enroll everyone.

- **Be a leader versus a manager:** Understand the difference between the two. Leaders lead, managers order. Incorporate more leadership virtues in yourself, and strive to lead by example instead of barking orders at your subordinates.

PERSPIRATION 101.

Finding your voice as a leader (in whatever role you play in life) is not necessarily something you’ll think about every day. It does require discipline and commitment to find your leadership voice and use it appropriately. It’s hard work being a leader. And if you’re not cut out for it, get out of the way. Don’t be a leader who complains and points fingers. Own your role. Own your impact. Own your voice.

IT’S YOUR CHOICE.

Our competitive 24/7 lifestyle demands leaders who can see beyond today’s sound bytes, are able to envision goals, and can influence those around them in an engaging way. Today’s fast-paced environment needs leaders who live their values and have the courage to stand up for their beliefs, even when those beliefs are less than popular.

Discovering your Values, creating your Outcomes, sharing your Influence, developing your Courage, and communicat-

ing your overall Expression are the vital ingredients to find and use your voice as a leader. Finding your unique voice is often the difference between being a bland bureaucrat and becoming a dynamic, influential role model. Start building your legacy as a leader by voicing your confidence, courage, and commitment. Life is too short to not use your voice.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK.

I wrote this book with the intention of appealing to a variety of different readers. Some people like to start at the beginning...some in the middle...and some like to start at the end. Whatever works for you is fine.

The five main chapters are aligned to the five elements of my VOICE model: Values, Outcomes, Courage, Influence, and Expression. And each chapter is packed with a “healthy body of content” relating to that specific element. I authored the content within the framework of “WIIFM: What’s In It For Me?” In other words, why should you as a leader focus on this specific component of the model? What’s your purpose? What’s your outcome? And what will you get out of it?

The main content is then followed by specific questions you can ask yourself, and others, to elicit your development around that specific element of the VOICE model. By reflecting and answering the questions, you’ll boost your self-awareness around your values, your outcomes, your influence, your courage, and your expression.

Each chapter also contains a coaching case study extracted from my experience as an executive coach. These “live” examples demonstrate how I have used that specific VOICE element to further grow and develop leaders within our global community.

Finally, the chapters conclude with a “Comparison of Leaders” between those leaders who utilize the specific VOICE element versus those leaders who do not. This is followed by declarative statements you can use as part of your daily goal setting. I’ve created a 5-Day Weekly Planner to kick start your journey and commitment to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.

So, what are you waiting for?

“Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.”

— **Steve Jobs**

“Speak with intent so that you can lead with vision.”

— **www.PaulLarsen.com**

DISCOVER YOUR VALUES OR WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?



*“When your values are clear to you,
making decisions becomes easier.”*

— **Roy E. Disney**

*What do you stand for? What do you live by?
What are your values?*

Your values are your GPS...they guide and direct you through unknown territory. Knowing who you are and what you stand for in work and in life requires you to find and use your voice. And that first step to find your voice is to discover your VALUES.

WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO DISCOVER YOUR VALUES?

Without knowing your values, how do you know what's crucial in your life? How do you determine your priorities? How can you make decisions? What you think you value and what you actually value might be different. Is there alignment or misalignment with what you value and what you do? Do you explicitly state that you value something because it sounds good or looks good, but inside you know you really don't value it? Do you say one thing and do another? It's important to not only identify your values but to be true to what they are.

For example: I say I value a team environment when I would rather not work in a team. I say money isn't a priority when looking for a job, but it's actually the #1 priority.

WHAT ARE VALUES?

Your values are the ideals you believe are important in the way you live and work. They should determine your priorities, and, deep down, they're probably the measures you use to tell if your life is turning out the way you want it to.

When your actions and beliefs match your values, life is usually good—you're satisfied and content. However, when actions and beliefs don't align with your values, life feels out of sorts and it's a real source of unhappiness. This is the primary reason identifying your values is so important. Values exist, whether you recognize them or not. Yet, life can be much easier and joyful when you know and acknowledge your values and when you make plans and decisions that honor them.

VALUES IN CONFLICT.

If you value family but have to work 70 hours/week, you'll feel internal stress and conflict. If you don't value competition and you work in a highly competitive sales environment, you're not likely to be satisfied with your job. In these types of situations, understanding your values will really help. When you know your values, you can use them to make decisions about how to live your life, and you can answer questions like these:

What job should I pursue?

Should I accept this promotion?

Should I start my own business?

Should I compromise or be firm with my position?

Should I follow tradition or travel down a new path?

When you take time to understand your life priorities through knowing your values, you'll be able to determine the best direction for you and your life goals.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THIS?

Identifying what really matters to you is critical if you want to live a life of true alignment. Not understanding or knowing your core values is like a ship without a rudder—listless and floating along, bumping into rocks, needing a tug or a push,

and drifting without purpose or direction, allowing the chaos or calmness of the sea to dictate its success or failure.

In your daily life, whether you know it or not, you're constantly in situations where how you react, how you feel, and how you engage with others are all determined by your core values. Maybe it's somebody saying or doing something you agree or disagree with. Or maybe it's someone asking you to do something you don't want to do but you do anyway. Any of these scenarios call upon your values and beliefs to determine how you react and feel.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOUR LIFE IS ALIGNED WITH YOUR VALUES?

Have you ever felt conflicted about doing something? Or wanted to speak up because you didn't agree? Or felt tired and drained after a certain experience or after engaging with a certain person? Or got a feeling deep inside that you knew something was wrong? Or even felt regretful about something you said or did?

This list could go on and on, and you can probably add a few; however, these may all be signs that you're running up against your values and that something is out of alignment.

If you work in an office setting, you may be surrounded by stated values—the organizational values that tell you how you're supposed to act or think. These values are sometimes on framed posters around the office, or you carry them on a laminated card.

Have you ever worked in an environment where the values of the organization were not aligned with your values? I bet you have. How did you feel? Each day thousands of people go to work at a place they don't trust or respect—not the best place to do your best work, I would think. Have you ever felt like that at a company you worked at?

As I mentioned earlier, your values are your inner GPS, your core belief system that guides your decisions and behaviors. Most of the decisions you make on a daily basis derive from your values, whether or not you're aware of it. Think of the different roles you play in life. As a parent, a student, a leader, a partner—each role has a set of values that determines how you act out those roles.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUES ENABLES “YOU TO BE YOU.”

Push yourself to remain genuine to who you are and what you represent—it's not that hard. It's much harder to maintain a facade and not be true to your values and your purpose. Living a life that's aligned to your values can mean living a life with purpose and commitment. It doesn't mean everything will work out splendidly all the time or that you won't have obstacles in the way or challenges to deal with. But if you're aware of your core values and live your life true to them, you'll be much better prepared with the confidence and muscle to get through and thrive from any challenge life throws at you.

COACHING CASE STUDY: VALUES IN ACTION

Here's an example of what happens when your work life is not aligned with your core values. Ryan, an executive at a tech company, was in an influential senior role, but after many years on the job, he found himself disengaged from his organization. He noticed he lacked the passion he once had—for work, for his role in the company, and for life. He was feeling discouraged and frustrated but couldn't figure out why. He had been with his company a long time; he'd grown up and evolved with the organization. While he was recognized as a quality leader on the outside, he felt like a fraud on the inside.

When I started working with him as his coach and asked him about his values, he looked at me quizzically. "What do you value as a leader," I asked him. "What are your top three values?" Apparently he had never gone through a values identification process. So I guided him through prioritizing his values, explaining that what he valued as a leader should be consistent with what he valued in life.

In my coaching, I use an in-depth six-step process to identify values which you can find on my website. It involves answering questions, looking at value statements, and selecting words that represent values.

After I took Ryan through the process, he emerged with what he valued in terms of who he was in life and what he valued as a leader. He discovered that he valued being an advocate for his team, removing obstacles, and being motivational. He

wasn't always that way for himself, but he wanted to be an inspiration to others and to be recognized as a leader who made a difference in people's lives. Similarly in his personal life, he was a new father and wanted to make an impact on the lives of his children.

Before determining his values, Ryan couldn't articulate what kind of leader he was or what his legacy was. *After* the values assessment, he could see himself more clearly as a highly communicative leader who showed support for his team.

Now that he knew what he valued, we worked on how he would lead and live from his values. What did he need to do more of? What did he need to stop doing? And what did he need to continue doing in order to demonstrate his clarified values?

We looked at the roles he played, his peer group, the management structure, and how the organization had evolved. The company he started with years ago had changed, and now its values were no longer congruent with his values. The company now used tactics that were more of a street fighter mentality and of a "banging your fist on the table" to get your point across.

This was apparent in observing that those leaders who got promoted and recognized were the ones who were louder and banged their fists on the table. The more Ryan became aware of his values and the behaviors he wanted to demonstrate, the more it became apparent he was out of alignment with the organization. From a timeline perspective, it wasn't clear along the way, because he'd been there so long and didn't see the subtle changes over the years. The values that brought him

into the organization were not the ones that were going to bring him into the future.

He wasn't getting validated from his peers or superiors for using his methods with his team; there was now a huge gap. He was often told he needed to be more aggressive, even though he said he's not that type of leader. And he didn't want to change.

In coaching, we worked on his course of action. Ultimately, he left the company and found one that was much more aligned with his values. He never thought he would leave that organization, but if he had continued on he wouldn't have been able to do his best work. It wasn't who he was anymore.

Before he discovered his values, Ryan had a lack of engagement and lack of contentment, yet he couldn't connect the dots as to why he felt discouraged and disengaged. Once we looked at the gaps between his values and the company's values, he knew if he stayed he would have had to compromise his values and behavior. The organization wouldn't change for him, and he didn't want to change for it.

Presently, he's flourishing in his new company. Discovering his values gave him direction and tapped into the other aspects of the voice. He could now articulate who he was as a leader and a man—and what he aspires to be. It's the legacy he wants to leave in work and in life.

(If you're interested in the Values Identification Activity I used with Ryan, please contact me and I'll send it to you with my compliments.)

HOW DOES IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES SET YOU APART FROM OTHER LEADERS?

Having a confident leadership voice is your key to being a successful leader. You make decisions based on what you value. From the clients you engage with to the employees you hire, your values are reflected in every facet of your leadership style—and your life. By identifying and living your core values, you lay the foundation for a grounded and confident leadership approach. Your values encompass your passions, talents, and strengths. By defining your values, you determine what matters most to you. And you can determine how your values align, (or not), with those of your community (family, friends, neighbors) and your organization (employees, employers, associates). How else does discovering your values impact your leadership and your relationships?

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF TRUST.

Many discussions about leadership have focused on the leaders themselves: their personality traits, their motivation, and how to develop team members with potential. Recently, this focus has shifted from the personality traits of a leader to their ability to inspire confidence and build a foundation of trust within their team. As an executive coach, I know that nothing builds trust more than leaders who live by their values. Not everyone may agree with your beliefs or how you put them into practice, but you'll garner trust and respect by leading via

a consistent and core set of practices and values. Your team will have a better appreciation for your decision-making process. They'll understand how you communicate your thoughts, insights, and feedback. Think of the leaders you've had in your life. Those who lived by an open set of values were consistent in the way they managed and dealt with people and situations.

ESTABLISHING YOUR CREDIBILITY.

Effective leaders who lead according to their values make an effort to open up and be genuine with their team. Sometimes that's easier said than done. By letting your team know who you are and what you value, you can build and evolve trust and credibility. Share your values with your team, and let them know how your values will impact the decisions you make. Give brief, concrete examples of how your values have guided you in the past, and share your expectations of the team's performance going forward. Once you begin sharing what's important to you, you create an environment of engagement, mutual trust, and respect. You don't need to divulge everything, but by communicating what's most significant to you and what you expect of others, you enable your team to understand your motivation and eliminate misinterpretations. This isn't about building a team based on "friendships;" it's about building a team based on mutual trust, respect, and credibility.

PROVIDING DIRECTION.

When you identify your values, you establish a framework by which you make choices. In today's social and digital marketplace where there's so much competition for your attention, being able to prioritize what's important to spend your time on is critical. Discovering your values provides you with an inner GPS to make decisions and assess situations, enabling you to effectively prioritize and focus on the issues that matter most. You're guided in the direction you need to go to live your values as you reach for your goals.

REVEALING WHAT YOU STAND FOR.

Self-discovery is an important aspect of effective leadership. A leader without an identified, clear-cut set of values will be directionless and thus, ineffective—like a rudderless ship drifting at sea. By defining your values, you allow your team members, your clients, and more importantly you, to know what you stand for. This enables you to lead from a foundation comprised of integrity, consistency, and accountability. While we live in a society that makes it tempting to pretend to be someone we're not, not living your values will prevent you from gaining the trust of your team, your organization, and your clients.

So you see, discovering your values and living your values automatically sets you apart from other leaders. Your values are what make you unique. Discover them. Lead with them. Own them.



WHAT HAVE YOU BUILT LATELY?

A couple of years ago, I was fortunate to be able to journey to Peru. I found the country to be beautiful and the people welcoming and open. The food was incredibly fresh, and the landscape varied from mountains and rain forests to jungles and beaches. While there, I was captivated by the wonders of the Inca civilization, including the ruins of Machu Picchu. Hiking (and walking) around this iconic Inca settlement, I was consistently amazed at the strategic planning and implementation that comprised the construction of the site. Thousands of years ago, the Incas had a vision of how to not just survive but thrive as a culture. Through meticulous planning, sharing, knowledge, and execution, they were able to create a culture we can marvel at and a civilization in which many of its artifacts are still used by the local Peruvian farmers to this day. What an amazing legacy.

WHY NOT TODAY?

Bringing this full circle to modern day made me wonder: what was it that the Incas were able to do that many leaders in today's world are not able to? With every conceivable technology and resource available to us, why do leaders get stuck in creating a vision? Why do leaders have such a hard time implementing a vision? What gets in the way of leaders just getting stuff done?

Sure, times back then were much simpler—which is a good excuse—but one thing the Inca Empire did really well was to *identify and articulate their values*. The Inca leaders were very explicit and clear about what their values were and what their values stood for. Thus, the community understood and aligned around those values and were able to implement the vision easily.

So to find your voice as a leader you need to take control of your destiny and your leadership legacy. Don't hide behind someone else. Speak up. Take a stand. Clearly articulate what's important to you. State your values. People want to hear from you. Don't waste another second. The Incas certainly didn't.

NOT ALWAYS EASY.

Making value-based choices may not always be easy. However, making a choice you know is right because you know your values is a lot less difficult in the long run. Once these highly important values have been identified, you need to put them to the test in your day-to-day decisions. For example, if one

of your core values is adventure, see if you can add a bit of adventure to one of your daily tasks, such as eating at a different restaurant whenever you go out for lunch. Take a small risk and watch the results unfold before your eyes. What type of result did you achieve? If it was a good one, this is one value you'll want to apply to your work and life, but if it was a negative result, it's time to test something else. Once you've found the perfect combination of daily values, you'll be ready to spread your wings and soar as others keep their feet on the ground and watch you succeed.

WHY IS LIVING YOUR VALUES IMPORTANT?

All leaders seem to have an inner compass or instinct that guides their actions securely into the unknown and helps them keep life, work, and relationships on track as others follow. This inner compass is a fixed set of values acquired over time that places leaders above others and drives them to lead. The most important goals for leaders are their personal improvement and the betterment of the entire team. Under this premise, the main goal then is to direct the actions of the many towards the gain of the whole.

THE VALUES OF ONE LEADER MAY NOT BE THE SAME FOR ALL.

With the limitations of language, one word can be used for a wide variety of expressions of a certain value. With loyalty, for example, the way one leader expresses his/her loyalty on

a daily basis in every action—whether work-related or personal—may be the polar opposite of what it means to another person. This is what makes all leaders and their leadership style so unique and also what gives everyone the possibility to become leaders in their own way. The values that define leadership are personal and reflect who the leader is deep down. It's what others see when they decide to follow, and it happens this way because their core values are similar to those of the one who's been chosen to guide the way.

Honing your skills as an effective leader is more important than ever: to improve your employees' morale, to increase your company's efficiency, to provide a good example for your kids, and to motivate your neighborhood and community to help others. Merely taking charge isn't enough to be an effective leader in today's fast-paced environment. To truly be a leader, you need to be the embodiment of your values, not just another mouthpiece. We have enough of those.

Living your values is a key element in the VOICE model of leadership. Simply giving lip service to a set of values isn't likely to gain you many followers or much support. To truly motivate people, you need to leave them thinking: I want to be like that person. It's a lofty goal but not at all impossible. Successful leaders of today have to clearly define and live their values, plainly see where they're heading, and use their influence to both motivate others and to sell their ideas.

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS: QUESTIONS TO HELP DISCOVER YOUR VALUES

1. What are my hot buttons? What gets me going? What inspires me? What stirs me?

2. What do I spend most of my time talking about passionately? What subjects interest me consistently?

3. What are my strengths? Talents? Abilities? What is effortless for me that I notice is often difficult for others? What do others admire about me?

4. How do I spend my time and money?

5. Why is knowing my values important to me and my role as a leader?

6. How do I think living from my values will affect my relationships with others? How will it affect my personal and business success?

7. How can I tell if I'm living a life aligned with my values? Have I ever felt I was living in conflict with my values?

8. How have my values changed over the years?

9. As I discover my top values, how will I incorporate them more into my life? What actions, thoughts, and associations do I need to change to be more in alignment with my top values?

10. How will I mentor this knowledge about discovering my values on to others?

WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

This Leader Who Lives Their VALUES:

You Are Confident

You Have A Clear Purpose

You Are Clear About What You Want

You Are Anchored In Your Ethics

You Appear “Awake At The Wheel”

Your Thoughts Are Organized

You Are Strong As A Leader

You Are Convincing As A Leader

You Are Committed As A Leader

Your Decisions Are Aligned With Your Values

– OR –

This Leader Who Does Not Live Their VALUES:

You Are Insecure

You Change Your Mind A Lot

You Are Not Sure What You Want

You Behave Based On What Others Think

You Appear “Asleep At The Wheel”

Your Thoughts Are Cluttered

You Are Weak As A Leader

You Are Discouraging As A Leader

You Are Uncommitted As A Leader

Your Decisions Are Based On How Others Perceive You

5 DECLARATIONS FOR LIVING YOUR VALUES

- I deliberately create candid and trusting relationships by treating others fairly and consistently based on my values.
- I express my leadership values to my organization and my community by the actions I take and the performance I deliver.
- I live my life based on the deliberate choices I make which are directly influenced by my core beliefs.
- I will recognize when my values are not in alignment with my environment and take steps to ensure re-alignment.
- I will discover my genuine values and not identify values I think others want me to possess.

ACTIVITY:

5-Day Planner to Find Your Voice as a Leader

Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.



DAY 1: MONDAY “VALUES” PRACTICE

Monday Declaration: I deliberately create candid and trusting relationships by treating others fairly and consistently based on my values.

Monday Question: What is one value I possess as a leader, and how do I display that value today?

Monday Awareness: Observe when you're demonstrating your values throughout the day and when your values may not be in alignment with a specific situation.

“I had chosen to use my work as a reflection of my values.”

— **Sidney Poitier**

CREATE YOUR OUTCOMES OR WHAT IS YOUR VISION?

“Winners make a habit of manufacturing their own positive expectations in advance of the event.”

— **Brian Tracy**



What's your vision? What are your goals?

What are you striving for?

Knowing where you're going and enrolling your team to help fulfill your vision to get you there requires you to find and use your voice. And the second step in finding your

voice is to create your **OUTCOMES**. Now that you've discovered your **Values**, you have a better compass for creating a compelling vision to get the **Outcomes** you desire.

Outcomes. Goals. End results. Vision. No matter what you call them, the next step in finding your voice requires action. It requires creating and clarifying outcomes that are aligned to your values.

OUTCOMES ARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR VISION.

Every organization and project creates outcomes, whether or not it plans or measures them. Your **outcomes** (results) are different than your **outputs** (the services or products you deliver) and your **activities** (the tasks you do to produce your outputs).

A focus on outcomes helps with planning, ensuring that services are designed with their purpose in mind, not just their practicality. Introducing an outcomes focus into your organization means:

- Identifying what outcomes you want to make happen and then providing the right outputs to bring the changes about.
- Monitoring what outcomes are actually occurring.
- Reporting these results to internal and external audiences.

WHY IS IT VITAL TO CREATE YOUR OUTCOMES?

This sounds like common sense. Without knowing your outcomes, how do you know where you're headed and how to get there? How do you determine your actions? How can you prioritize your day? Are you moving in the direction of your chosen outcomes, or are you following the dictates of others? Are your team members aligned with your vision, or are they unfocused or after their own agendas? It's important to not only create your outcomes but to rally those around you to achieve your vision.

HOW DO YOU CREATE YOUR OUTCOMES?

Finding your voice as a leader involves creating the outcomes that are critical for your success. You start by setting your vision and establishing your goals, then enrolling those around you, building the roadmap to get you there, and finally measuring the results. The resulting journey will be one worth taking for you and your community. What's critical is that once you establish outcomes, you need to move from the intent to achieve them to actually taking action.

YOUR LEADERSHIP VISION MUST BE VISIBLE.

Cogito ergo sum. This Latin expression, which translates to "I think, therefore I am," was composed by René Descartes in 1644. Though Descartes was correct to assume that critical

thinking is essential for effective planning and management, is thinking enough? Of course not. It's interesting to note that while Descartes was a thinker, he translated his thoughts into words, (i.e. his actions) and thus became one of the most influential philosophers of all time. No matter what you call it, when you want to take action on something, your intention is only the first step.



GET OFF “INTENTION ISLAND!”

Unfortunately, many of today's leaders get stuck on their intent and never move forward to action. They stay in the “safe harbor” of their own “Intention Island” and have a fear of sailing forward towards a desired action. Having stated outcomes is great, and so is having the intention to achieve those outcomes. However, unless you take action, unless you take that first step toward the outcomes you want, your intention

is like a useless piece of land surrounded by deep waters of fear and anxiety. You want to do all you can to swim away from “Intention Island.”



WHAT IS YOUR “I/O RATIO?”

How many times have you heard a leader utter these words: “I *had* the best of intentions”? As a leader, having the best of intentions doesn’t matter if you don’t follow up with action. Action that’s purposeful. Action that’s aligned to an outcome...a vision. Thus, your intent as a leader needs to be measured by your outcomes as a leader. They go hand-in-hand, one with the other.

All your intentions should align with an outcome. Leaders who’ve discovered and live their values are in the perfect position to align their values with their intended outcomes... their vision. The key is to consistently align your Intentions as a leader with your desired Outcomes for your organization—what I call your “I/O Ratio.” Your I/O Ratio as a leader should be in balance—it should be equalized and integrated.

All your stated intentions should match your outcomes one-for-one. Intentions are nothing but empty promises, void of any trust, credibility, or accountability if not tagged with solid goals, outcomes, and action to make your intentions a reality.

IS YOUR I/O SCALE OUT OF BALANCE?

Intentions without aligned outcomes create missed expectations and an unrealized potential that can discount and dilute your leadership brand and legacy faster than anything else. The world is full of “leaders” who pontificate their intentions but are short on follow-up. These leaders have an I/O Ratio that’s completely out of balance, and they wonder why they’re unable to engage with a community of trust and credibility. Your intent as a leader should always have an appended outcome that you paint for your followers. You need to bring them along.

Making sure your I/O Ratio is in balance enables you to keep track of your progress towards your desired end results no matter the detours your life may take. Build your bridge... learn to swim...float on a raft...but don’t stay marooned on Intention Island like other leaders.

As you find your voice as a leader, charting your outcomes aligned to your values is critical in moving from intent to action. As a leader, it’s necessary for you to re-design Descartes’ philosophy into “I **do**, therefore I am.”

COACHING CASE STUDY: OUTCOMES IN ACTION

Here's a real-life example of a leader with an out-of-balance I/O Ratio. Paige was VP of marketing at a Fortune 20 company, a large healthcare organization. Her reputation was that of being approachable, and her likeability index was off the charts. She was empathetic with staff, engaged with the company, committed to the mission, and had a passion for helping to brand the company from a marketing perspective.

However, although she was full of great intents, she had far fewer outcomes. And those she did have were not being expressed to her staff and superiors. Thus she was not delivering and not expressing outcomes based on her intentions. The outcomes she actually produced were solid and tangible and in alignment with where the organization was going, but she wasn't expressing them.

I was brought in as her coach because while she was good as a manager, she was not as effective as a leader. She would express her multiple intents, but few were backed up by outcomes—action and results. Her credibility took a slide. Her promises became inflated and fluffy, because her strategy and next steps weren't there. So people began to tune her out since they knew she wouldn't follow up to an outcome.

When I came in as her coach, Paige and her superiors weren't clear what the issue was, just that she wasn't demonstrating results/outcomes. Was it lack of delegation? Poor planning?

No follow through? She was somewhat aware of her problem but not clear about how she was being perceived. I started working with her by going through a feedback analysis with her, her peers, and her manager. It became clear she wasn't all she purported to be.

Next we did an intent assessment by keeping an intention diary, and I asked some of her peers to keep tabs on her as well. I asked her how many times she told her team she had an intention so I could determine how many times she intended something but had no results. After a day and a half of tracking, she noticed she was over-promising but under-delivering. She counted 30 intentions proposed, and maybe six were backed up by outcomes. And even with those, the outcomes weren't communicated to her employees. She was only communicating intent; she stopped at the promise. She didn't know how to articulate that piece in a succinct story.

I asked Paige why she thought this was happening. One answer that emerged was that she needed and wanted to be liked. This is fairly typical for people in marketing as they want the brand to be likable, so this translated into how she led. She also discovered that she put pressure on herself to be effective, so her reaction was to promise more intentions, whether or not she achieved them. And even for those outcomes she did achieve, for some reason she couldn't share the results. She thought perhaps she was afraid of critique; you can't critique an intent, but you can critique a result.

We worked together on how she manufactured her promises and used the same construction and wording to apply to communicating outcomes. Every intent needed to be linked to a vision, outcome, or strategic result. One model that works well for articulating goals or outcomes is the SMART model of goals. Paige learned to use this framework to show the results of her visions. She needed to practice in meetings and one-on-one situations, and she did so for the several months I coached her.

I helped her communicate intents, and action items followed with vision and outcome: where she was going with her intentions and what her plans and strategies were. She learned to put the whole piece together: intent + action = result. She just needed to change a habit that was deeply rooted. But over the course of a few months, she gained traction on creating more tangible outcomes aligned with her vision. I coached her on starting with outcome first in some presentations which built her confidence.

• • • •

Compelling visions have always revolutionized the world. Be it Bill Gates's dream of creating Microsoft or Mark Zuckerberg's concept of Facebook, a vision defines you and determines your success. To be a leader, clarity of vision is essential. Without a clear vision with clear objectives, you're likely to end up where you started.

Creating a new vision takes commitment and discipline. Here are a few techniques that might help:

- **Where do you see yourself?** Before setting a vision, ask yourself this fundamental question. What do you want to achieve? How? Is the vision attainable? Is your goal congruent with the organizational goal?
- **Break it down into smaller targets.** If your objective is clear, this is the next step. Analyze your resources and team composition. Divide your vision into small-term and achievable (periodic) targets.
- **Think critically.** Your vision will define you, your organization, and your team. So look before you leap. Consider all the variables. Brainstorm. Discuss new ideas with your team, and evaluate their feedback before working out a proper strategic plan.
- **Ask for help.** There's no harm in that. Say you want to launch a new product line in the market. Conducting market research and seeking the advice of market experts beforehand helps.
- **Maintain your integrity.** No matter what vision you set, NEVER compromise on honesty and objectivity. Your organization is unlikely to thrive, and your team is likely to be disgruntled if your vision violates the basic principles of integrity.

Consider these ideas before you create your vision and outcomes, and test as many as you can. Additionally, you could think about a time you weren't successful with your outcomes.

Why not? Then think about a time you were successful with your outcomes. *Why were you successful?* Review your thoughts and discuss them with other team members. Together, you'll create the best vision and outcomes for your organization.

Remember that negative begets negative and positive begets positive. Most importantly, realistic begets realistic. Aspirational is good, while realistic is better. When you create positive, realistic outcomes, you're ensured a greater chance of success.

YOUR GOALS AND OUTCOMES CAN CHANGE (AND SHOULD).

Organizations change. Your life changes. Things happen—sometimes expected, sometimes unexpected. You need to be able to evolve, to bend, to be flexible. Yet you still need to keep your eyes on your targets, your goals, and your outcomes. And you always need to measure your progress toward your vision, as well as to measure your results.

Charting your outcomes on an Outcome Map enables you to keep track of your advancement toward your desired end results, no matter what challenges you face. As you find your voice in whatever role you play, charting your outcomes aligned to your values is critical in moving from *intention to action*.

HOW TO DRIVE YOUR VISION BY MOLDING YOUR OUTCOMES.

Knowing your outcome isn't as easy as it appears. It's not always possible to see beyond what's right in front of you. In addition, it's easy to be distracted by false goals. To really know your outcome, you need to:

1. **Create a compelling vision with specific goals.** To make your outcome a reality, you need not only a compelling idea to motivate your team members but a broad strategy that can be divided into clear intermediate goals and action plans. According to a *Forbes* magazine article, one of the best ways to achieve your goals is to break them up into more manageable pieces or mini-goals.
2. **Ensure your values are in continual alignment with your vision and outcomes.** It's not enough to have a clear goal for yourself. To be an effective leader, your vision needs to be aligned with your company's, your civic organization's, or your church's mission statement and general values.
3. **Create a nurturing environment.** The next step to achieving your vision is to create a work environment that's conducive to a good team effort. If you have conflicts, team members distracted by other work or personal issues, or ego problems, it's much more difficult to focus on the team goal. A good leader knows how to create a non-threatening work environment as well as encourage team members to set aside their personal agendas. This goal-oriented work environment often includes offering small "rewards" for team members who reach assigned

mini-goals, as you provide direction and promote continuous forward momentum for you and your team.

4. **Use your experience and knowledge.** The final piece necessary to being a leader who can establish outcomes and reach your team goals is to be able to channel past experience and knowledge to help the team. This experience doesn't have to even be a positive one. Being able to learn from failure is one of the signs of a good leader and a necessary part of human growth. Being able and willing to share the lesson learned from your failure with your team is also a part of being an effective leader.

WHY IS MAPPING YOUR OUTCOMES ESSENTIAL?

It seems easier to not have goals and outcomes, since it requires accountability and responsibility to achieve and measure them. And some leaders hide from anything that requires accountability. Yet, having an outcome strategy or map will allow you to set targets and measure your progress. You'll make mistakes, and some days will be better than others, but the key is to have stated goals and outcomes on your map. Then, when you want to take action on something, you'll know what steps to take.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE ARRIVED IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?

Even as a leader with the best motivational skills, you'll ultimately be ineffective if you don't know where you want to go.

A leader without outcomes is like a person lost in the desert. You can expend a lot of energy and effort, but it's unlikely you'll end up where you want to be.

Being a successful leader takes practice and patience. One of the true hallmarks of a quality leader is to establish outcomes by breaking the final goal down into achievable action steps, making sure your goals and outcomes match the values of your organization and your life. This way you create an environment that's conducive to success and you use your knowledge and experience wisely. Always make sure to align your outcomes as a leader with your outcomes in life—and always tied to your values.



*“In order to carry a positive action we must
develop here a positive vision.”*

— **Dalai Lama**

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS: QUESTIONS TO HELP CREATE YOUR OUTCOMES

1. Where do I want to get to? What do I want to achieve? What is my conscience directing me towards? What learning goals should I set? What are the organizational goals in which I can make a difference?

2. When do I want to achieve these outcomes? How will I get there?

3. What will having the outcomes get me? What kind of person do I want to become? What abilities do I want to develop? What knowledge and skills do I need to focus on to deliver both my personal objectives and benefits for my organization?

4. What is my strategy, my action plan? What learning and development actions do I need to undertake? What resources will I need to perform them?

5. What are my potential obstacles? How will I overcome obstacles to my learning?

6. What's holding me back? What's stopping me from doing what I want to do? Why am I stuck?

7. How can I take the lead in what I want? How will I enroll others in my vision?

8. How will I know if I've arrived, if I'm successful? How do I measure achievement of my outcomes?

9. Who can help me? Who can teach me? From whom can I learn?

10. How will I mentor this knowledge about creating my outcomes on to others?

WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

This Leader With A VISION:

You Are Accountable For Your Results

You Are Grounded

You Are Clear With Your Intentions

You Are Someone People Want To Follow

You Declare Your Direction

You Are Realistically Positive

You Are Aligned To Your Vision

You Are Passionate And Committed

You Possesses A Depth Of Experience

– OR –

This Leader Without A VISION:

You Point Fingers At Others

You Are Flakey

You Are Unclear With Your Intentions

You Are Tiring To Be Around

You Are Direction-less

You Are Consistently Negative

You Are “All Over The Place”

You Lack Passion And Commitment

You Are All Fluff

5 DECLARATIONS FOR CREATING YOUR OUTCOMES

- I create a purposeful and compelling vision and translate my broad strategies into clear and aligned goals and action plans.
- I ensure that there's a continual alignment of my leadership values to the organization's overall vision and outcomes.
- I invent a "goal-oriented" environment for myself that provides direction and promotes continuous forward momentum for me and my team.
- I apply broad knowledge and seasoned experience to address complex/critical issues.
- I cultivate a personal commitment to my leadership vision framed by my values and beliefs.

ACTIVITY:

5-Day Planner to Find Your Voice as a Leader

Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.



DAY 2: TUESDAY “OUTCOMES” PRACTICE

Tuesday Declaration: I create a purposeful and compelling vision and translate my broad strategies into clear and aligned goals and action plans.

Tuesday Question: What do I want to achieve as a leader, and what are my next three steps to make this vision a reality?

Tuesday Awareness: Observe the opportunities you have throughout the day to enroll people to your vision.

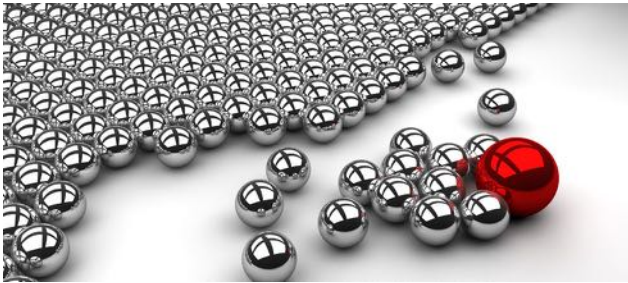
“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.”

— **George Washington Carver**

EXERCISE YOUR INFLUENCE OR HOW DO YOU ENROLL?

“Leadership is influence.”

— John C. Maxwell



How do you influence?

How do you motivate?

How do you inspire?

The leader who can influence successfully is a leader who never has to remind people who the leader is. Finding your voice as a leader requires the mature development and flexing of your INFLUENCE muscle. Once you've identified your **Values** and **Outcomes**, the third step to find your voice as a leader is to build relationships with **Influence** and credibil-

ity. How do you influence and align yourself and your community to maximize your opportunities and results? Recognizing and developing your communities of influence is key to being successful in finding and using your leadership voice.

Influence. Persuade. Coax. Convince. Sway. Motivate. Whatever you call it, the next step in finding your voice is to use your influence to get what you want or need. Your team. Your organization. Your communities. Your relationships. Yourself. Using your influence means building relationships with those around you and yourself. It's about encouraging, motivating, and getting people to follow you. To be successful in influencing your outcomes is to be congruent with your beliefs.

BELIEVE.

You need to have the ability to believe in yourself, your values, your goals, and your outcomes, and to tell your compelling vision and story in a way that influences those around you. When you use influence successfully, you get people to trust and respect you—no matter what role you play. Influence is not about your title or role. Manager. Parent. Owner. VP. You don't need a title to influence. As I mentioned earlier, finding your voice as a leader is not about TALKING LOUDER, YELLING, OR SHOUTING. That only makes you look weak, not persuasive. You don't need a voice on STEROIDS to influence.

THE QUIET VOICE.

Much has been written lately about the “quiet leadership voice.” Influencing successfully within a global environment while increasing team engagement via the ever-changing landscape of our vibrant social technologies are just some of the opportunities leaders are challenged with when they find and use their unique leadership voice.

Many times, those who have the most influence are not the ones with the most power or authority. They have a tranquil voice which is used as an influential force, not only for their needs but for the needs of others. Being a successful influencer means that you put your attention on what you can influence versus what you can't influence. In other words, you need to determine your “spheres of influence” so you can focus your values and outcomes on what you can change and what you can influence. Don't waste your time and energy on outcomes and people you can't change or influence.

WHY IS IT ESSENTIAL TO INFLUENCE AS A LEADER?

How do you know if you have influence? Influence is having people follow you because of what you represent—your values, your outcomes, what you stand for, what you achieve. Influence is vital because you need to have influence on your team to achieve your outcomes. You know you have influence when you see your team working together to achieve success. You see results.

ANYONE CAN INFLUENCE.

You might not yet be a leader who thinks you can have that kind of influence. You may not give yourself permission to influence your team, or if you fail, you may not try again. The secret to having influence is to offer to help. It's easy to do in today's environment with so many tools at your disposal. Still lots of people are bogged down by responsibilities and in such a hurry that they forget to offer help and/or they forget to ask for help. If you don't ask your team for help, you'll have less success at reaching your outcomes. And if you don't offer help, your team won't have the direction and leadership it needs to attain your goals, vision, and outcomes.

See if some of these thoughts come to mind when you think about influencing your team, your community, or whomever you need to build relationships with to accomplish your ends:

- How do I exert influence when I have no authority?
- How do I want to use my influence?
- How do I establish credibility?
- How do I influence those with different values and priorities?
- How do I become a more influential leader?

COACHING CASE STUDY: INFLUENCE IN ACTION

Not everyone who needs to exert influence is a leader in their company. Steven was a project manager I worked with recently. He didn't have his own staff, but he did have to report to certain people to get projects done. In this capacity, he needed to use his influence. However, his problem was that he seemed to focus on what he couldn't influence, rather than what he could. He would think, "I can't do that" or "I don't know them" and other unproductive thoughts.

When I worked with him as his coach, we talked about his range of influence. I used the metaphor of radio stations. For example, FM and AM stations have a certain range. In the closer ranges you hear clear, crisp talk and music. As you move further out, you hear less and it's full of static, until you're out of range and you can't hear anything. *(And hopefully all of you can remember AM and FM radio stations.)*

Steven was focused on those who weren't his audience, who were out of his range. So he assumed he didn't have an audience because he couldn't influence those out of his range. I suggested he focus on who he could influence and then determine how he would go about it.

With Steven, we found it was best to take small steps so he wouldn't get overwhelmed. He would grow his audience locally, and then that audience would carry him further out to a larger audience. To build his influence he needed to select five

key people. We looked at those he chose and saw that three were out of his range, that is, he normally didn't interact with them. So I reminded him of the "six degrees of separation" concept. *Who do you know who knows the people you want to reach? What communication channels can you tap? Who do you need to influence who will give the greatest results?*

Next we looked at how to go about influencing people after they'd been brought into his sphere of influence. *How could he engage them to listen to him?* Establishing trust and credibility is definitely one way to encourage others to listen to what you have to say. Additionally, taking the stance of someone who believes he has something valuable to say is crucial. If you don't believe in yourself no one else will.

Steven had somewhat of a victim mentality, so we needed to change his presence of mind that said he was not influential or worth listening to. His "I can't do that" belief blocked him and it needed to be released. I started by having him ask himself these questions: *What are my key points around my influence? What is my value added? What are the critical points in this project? Why do people need to pay attention, that is, WIIFM? What are the results, outcomes, and values?*

He already knew his values and vision/outcomes; he just didn't understand how he could influence people he wasn't connected to or even those who were under his influence already. Once he changed his belief that he couldn't influence certain people, he next needed to look at how he could package his ideas in a way that could be heard. I found it worked

best to break his ideas up into a one-on-one scenario where he would influence one person at a time. This was much easier for him than working with a large group. And anyway, you really build influence one by one, just as a radio station grows one listener at a time.

Steven started building traction by meeting people one at a time. He set goals on his calendar, and each day he did something to move him toward his vision as an influencer. It might be an email, a voice mail, short meetings, drafting an update—whatever he needed to do to establish his influential presence.

In a little over 30 days he began to build the momentum. He mapped out what I call the Influence Map. It showed who he wanted to influence and who he could and couldn't influence. I told him there will always be those he can't influence, that are out of his control. I made sure he understood what he could and could not do; that he needed to be deliberate in how he influenced people; that he had to be targeted and take deliberate action that had a cause and effect; and that he had to take responsibility and be accountable and disciplined in doing what he said he would.

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INFLUENCE ISN'T ONLY ABOUT POPULARITY.

It's more about being trusted and respected and building credibility. However, being likeable can certainly improve your ability to influence, as people will be more open to listen to those they enjoy being around. So how do you improve your likeability factor?

First, there's a difference between being liked and getting along with people. To get along with someone requires you to figure out how to balance meeting your needs with that of the other person until the two of you arrive at a resolution. As for being liked, it works best when you go along with the desires of others even if it means sacrificing your personal goals. The idea is to have others connect positive associations with you, so when they see you or think about you, it's with a mental smile.

Now you may not particularly care about being liked. Well, you do have a job to do: achieving outcomes by influencing certain people. And that involves making tough decisions that possibly cause some to resent you or stay out of your way. When they think of you, it might be with the sense that being with you will cause them more pain than pleasure. However, even in these situations, you don't have to be saddled with a bad reputation. You can do your job and still be regarded positively by the people you supervise, as well as your bosses, your peers, and your community.

DO YOU LIKE ME?

Being disliked may not seem as significant as staying true to your ideals and values. Ultimately, being liked really does matter. The way you're regarded by others can affect your mental and physical health and ultimately how you wield your influence. People who are liked have larger social networks which, in turn, provide them with more social support during times of stress or crisis—in addition to more people they can influence. So when you're liked, people will go out of their way to help you when you need a favor, an act that can greatly reduce your sense of emotional isolation, and concretely, give you assistance in achieving your outcomes—something you may not be able to do alone.

The desire to be liked gets a bad reputation when it's associated with giving up your principles or manipulating people so you can get them to do what you want. You may feel it's phony to show interest in people you don't care about. In the worst case scenario, it's what politicians do when they're trying to win votes. They'll promise anything to get you to like them, a process they figure is central to getting you to vote for them. If we like particular politicians, we may be more likely to vote for them, so appearing likeable works to their advantage. You can decide whether or not this would work for you. Because ultimately, people will like you for being true to who you are and living in integrity. That goes a long way toward being influential.

HOW TO ESTABLISH YOURSELF AS A TRUSTED, RESPECTED, AND LIKEABLE LEADER:

Don't overemphasize your successes. You may have to shine your light under a barrel to avoid being too overt with your wins. You don't need to lie about your record of successes, but there's no need to make it overly apparent to everyone in every situation.

Show genuine interest in others. Wanting to be liked gets a bad reputation because it's associated with phoniness. There's no need to put on a false front just to get people to like you, though. When you show a genuine interest in others, you benefit by learning from them as well as getting them to think positively about you.

Make sure you're a constructive presence. Do your best to be positive so you don't make others uncomfortable when they're around you. It's fine to be critical once in a while or when it's appropriate for the situation, but if you're constantly whining and complaining, people will find you unpleasant to be with—hardly a formula for gaining people's trust and respect.

Be genuine and honest. When you lie, you seem both unlikeable and untrustworthy—not valuable traits for an influencer. Being caught in a lie, which is more likely than not to happen, will cause people to be suspicious and they'll avoid being with you for fear of being entrapped or cheated. And they certainly won't listen openly to what you have to say.

Don't build your brand as a gossip. People not only avoid liars but they avoid people who they think will tell tales about them that aren't true. Lies, or at least distortions, are the primary substance of gossip. If you gossip to person A about person B, person A will figure you'll gossip about him or her to person C. To get people's trust, show that you can keep secrets and not spill inappropriate personal details they reveal to you.

Bring useful resources to your relationships. You can demonstrate you're a competent person without being an unlikeable show-off. If people believe there are helpful actions you can take, they'll ask you for support. When you show you're a helpful person, you also become more likeable.

Act in a mature way. People respond awkwardly to immature antics of the socially inept or jokester. Being temperamental or silly can make you both unlikeable and irritating—and difficult to take seriously as an influencer.

Don't be judgmental. When you advocate for the successes of your co-workers, friends, or family, you get admiration in return. When you show your snarky side, you don't seem particularly likeable. Over time, you may become so jaded that you lose your ability to appreciate people for who they are, foibles and all. You don't need to build your reputation on the failings of others; instead let your stellar qualities stand out. Leave the criticism and judging to the professionals, and you'll seem both kinder and gentler—and more likeable.

Even though you may not realize it, you may never escape the junior high mentality of wanting to be in the “in crowd.” If you’re the type who’s usually passed over for the invitations you want, don’t be discouraged. Take one small step at a time to build your trust and respect as a leader, and soon you’ll be reaping both the emotional and social benefits of your new and more positive reputation.



ARE YOU INFLUENTIAL OR INVISIBLE?

If you’re on the path of find your voice as a leader, you know that defining your values and establishing your outcomes are essential parts of becoming an effective leader. And you know that values and outcomes aren’t enough to see you to the finish line. That’s where influence comes in. You need to be able to influence and motivate your team to work as a cohesive unit to achieve your goals and outcomes. In other words, you need to step out of your comfort zone to be influential, not invisible.

BEST PRACTICES TO BE INFLUENTIAL AND NOT INVISIBLE:

Cultivate an extensive and respected network. Networking may be a catch phrase from the 1980s, but the concept is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. No one person has all the answers or all the ideas, no matter how intelligent they are. Sharing ideas and goals with others is key to being an effective and influential leader.

Sell ideas and enroll support. Even the best ideas will languish if you're the only one who supports them. An influential leader needs to also be a good salesperson—to garner support from management, investors, team members, and the community. If you sell your ideas persuasively, others will get on board with your vision.

Identify and remove obstacles to the team's success. Lead as a facilitator. Another essential part of being an influential leader is clearing away any potential obstacles to success before they can get in the way of your team's efforts and the successful realization of your vision. These obstacles might be funding issues, personality conflicts, or logistic problems. Removing these roadblocks early means your team can sail right through the project without losing momentum over unrelated issues. *Entrepreneur* magazine refers to breaking down barriers between team members and leaders as being crucial to leadership success.

Be flexible in your leadership style. The best—and most successful—leaders know how to adjust their style to fit the needs of diverse individuals and teams. One of the most influential leaders I've ever met was an airline pilot. As captain of a modern jetliner (and father to this author), he possessed the “position and title of a leader.” But he didn't lead using his “rank” or his ego. He would treat all his airline colleagues as one cohesive team whose purpose was to fly the passengers to their destination as safely and as comfortably as possible. He regarded all the team members with respect and trusted they would be accountable for carrying out their specific job responsibilities. He believed each individual knew best how to perform his/her unique role, and collectively they comprised a team that was focused and committed. He would listen to their insights and feedback with a genuine spirit of collaboration before any important decision was made concerning the operation of the aircraft and the carrying of its passengers. Thus, he was viewed as a trusted and respected leader, in the air and on the ground and was missed greatly when he retired after 30 years of flying. Adjusting your leadership style to fit all situations and personalities is essential to influencing your team members to produce successful results. And then watch them fly!

As a successful leader you need to be more than just knowledgeable. You need to be able to influence team members, management, and those in the community—to accomplish your vision. Improve your influence by networking well, establishing trusting relationships, clearing obstacles, and being adaptable to your environment.

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS: QUESTIONS TO HELP EXERCISE YOUR INFLUENCE

1. How do I become a more influential leader?

2. How do I want to use my influence? Do I encourage others toward my position by communicating a sense of shared mission and exciting possibilities?

3. How do I establish credibility? How authentic am I? What am I practicing that builds my credibility? Do I keep my word?

4. How connected am I to others? Do I attempt to influence outcomes by uniting or connecting with others? Do I rely on reciprocity, engaging superior support, consultation, building coalitions, and using personal relationships to get people to agree with my position?

5. How do I influence those with different values and priorities? Do I insist that my ideas are heard and considered, even when others disagree? Do I challenge the ideas of others when they don't agree with mine? Do I debate with or pressure others to get them to see my point of view?

6. How do I influence? Do I rely on my personal confidence, rules, law, and authority to influence others? Do I use logic, facts, and reasoning to present my ideas? Do I leverage my facts, logic, expertise, and experience to persuade others? Do I look for compromises and make concessions in order to reach an outcome that satisfies my greater interest?

7. Do I use inspirational appeals, stories, and metaphors to encourage a shared sense of purpose?

8. How do I measure the impact of my influence?

9. Am I serving as an example others want to follow?

10. How will I mentor this knowledge about exercising my influence on to others?

WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

This Leader Who INFLUENCES:

You Enroll People To Your Vision

You Have An Impact

You Are Persuasive

You Are Credible

You Are Strategic

You Are A Connector

You Are A Storyteller

You Are Persistent

You Are An Advocate Of Others

You Build And Cultivate Trusting Relationships

– OR –

This Leader Who Does Not INFLUENCE:

You Go With The Flow

You Are Bland

You Are Unconvincing

You Are Unreliable

You Are Reactive

You Are A “Silo-Builder”

You Have No Story To Tell

You Give Up

You Stand In The Way Of Others

You Bring Distrust To Your Relationships

5 DECLARATIONS FOR EXERCISING YOUR INFLUENCE

- I cultivate and engage a broad, intentional, and respected network to exchange ideas and advocate support for my ideas.
- I collaborate and sell my ideas persuasively to my communities so others are enrolled with my vision.
- I act as a facilitator by identifying and removing obstacles that will inhibit the successful realization of my vision and the success of my team.
- I adjust my leadership style to meet the needs of diverse individuals, teams, and my community.
- I recognize and unleash the full potential of those around me by providing the needed resources, coaching, mentoring, experiences, and advocacy.

ACTIVITY:

5-Day Planner to Find Your Voice as a Leader

Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.



DAY 3: WEDNESDAY “INFLUENCE” PRACTICE

Wednesday Declaration: I cultivate and engage a broad, intentional, and respected network to exchange ideas and advocate support for my ideas.

Wednesday Question: How do I influence key relationships, and how do I communicate a sense of shared purpose and exciting potential?

Wednesday Awareness: Observe the opportunities you have throughout the day to influence individuals with a clear purpose and outcome, and notice how others will attempt to influence you.

*“Setting an example is not the main means of
influencing others; it is the only means.”*

— **Albert Einstein**

DEMONSTRATE YOUR
COURAGE
OR
HOW DO YOU STAND OUT
WHILE STANDING ALONE?

*“What would life be if we had no courage
to attempt anything?”*

— **Vincent van Gogh**



How do you define your comfort zone?

How often do you step out of your comfort zone?

Finding your voice as a leader involves making decisions that demonstrate the COURAGE to stand up for your values and your team, even when your views or projects may be unpopular or unusual. You also need the ability to adapt, voice difficult views, and embrace change when necessary. That's why the fourth part of the voice leadership model is Courage.

To find and use your voice takes Courage. Once you've discovered your core **Values**, established your **Outcomes**, and determined what and who you can and can't **Influence**, it will take **Courage** to step out of your comfort zone and use your voice for impact. When you're clear on your values and your outcomes and you practice at being influential, then being courageous will become less of a risk. You owe it to yourself and you owe it to the world to step into your courage.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COURAGEOUS?

As you exert your *influence* to rally your team to your *outcomes* aligned with your *values*, finding your voice as a leader necessitates developing the *courage* to take steps forward, no matter how small the steps. Courage takes many forms. To stand up for what you believe. To speak up when no one else will. To test new behaviors. To change directions. To alter your opinion. To be visible. To stand alone in a crowd. To get comfortable with being uncomfortable. And the courage to believe in yourself. Though we most often associate courage with the

battlefield, according to the *Ivey Business Journal*, courage is essential in the boardroom as well.

Although some may have a greater aptitude for it than others, courage isn't something you're born with. Anyone can learn to be more courageous. Some say courage is like a muscle—the more you use it the stronger it becomes.

GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH BEING UNCOMFORTABLE.

I think most people would like to believe they live a life that stands for something. That they have a job that makes a difference. That if push comes to shove, they would stand up for what they feel is right. In reality, those words and phrases are always easier to say but not always the easiest actions to take.

Not everyone is willing to be courageous if they fear any repercussions. It means taking a risk, no matter how small, being in an uncomfortable place. Did you know that when you feel uncomfortable, there might be an opportunity for growth? But with human nature being what it is, the minute we feel uncomfortable, we immediately seek an escape path back to our safety zone, our “zone of comfortableness.” So the next time you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, stay in it, and become aware of why you feel uncomfortable. There might be something for you to learn. To try on a new skill or a new behavior. To challenge yourself. To seek a new path. To explore a new opportunity. To develop a new capability. To find your voice.

Not being afraid of discomfort is one of the key ways to learn to be more courageous, according to *Forbes* magazine. Not being afraid to “rock the boat” makes it much easier to stand up for what you believe. As a courageous leader, you need to have more than just a good vision and a good plan. You need to be brave enough to stand up for your team and your beliefs even when they may go against the accepted norm. You may need to challenge your traditionally held beliefs and those of others to empower yourself and your team to recognize new opportunities.

THINK ABOUT THIS.

When was the last time you remained quiet when you knew you should have spoken up? When was the last time you had an idea but didn't say anything only to hear that same idea come from someone else later on? How many times have you wanted to speak up but didn't? Why? What excuse did you use? Have you been feeling stuck in a rut but continue to do the same things? How does this make you feel: frustrated? disappointed? inadequate?

NOW THINK ABOUT THIS.

When was the last time you stood up for what you believed in? When did you voice an opinion that was contrary to what the majority of other people were saying? When have you taken a risk and did something new: a new skill, a new ac-

tivity, a new behavior? How did this make you feel: scared? excited? uncomfortable? satisfied? Probably a combination of all those and a few more feelings mixed in there. What was the outcome?

Do you want to follow or lead? Do you want to remain quiet when you should speak up? That's what courage is about: taking small, baby steps into the unknown, making yourself known, giving your opinion, asserting your feelings for what you believe is right, having an impact—having a voice.

COACHING CASE STUDY: COURAGE IN ACTION

Exercising courage is a challenge for many leaders. Erin is a senior VP in a financial services organization who had this obstacle. I was brought in as her coach because she appeared to not be stepping into her courage—mostly around looking into herself. She needed to be open to take down the barriers she had for looking at herself as a leader. She was reluctant to be courageous—to adapt new behaviors or skills, such as speaking in front of groups of people.

She also lacked the courage to listen to feedback from her peers and not take it personally. To start working with Erin, I used a 360-degree interview tool where I interviewed some of her peers, direct reports, senior leaders, and her manager. I asked questions about her leadership style and her presence—what does she need to start doing, stop doing, and keep doing in her role as a leader.

I received a lot of good information and feedback; the interviewees were very open. Erin not so much. When I gave her a report of my findings, she was typically defensive. Most people generally don't take feedback well, whether it's solicited or not. Human nature is to take it personally and get defensive. So I knew it might be difficult for her to interpret and accept my findings which could potentially block her from moving forward with some of the skills she wanted to work on.

My report was categorized by communication style, how she makes decisions, her visions, her weak spots and opportunities, and her strengths and skills. However, when we went through it together, she didn't look at her strengths, even though there were about 70% strengths to 30% weaknesses. No, she zeroed in on the weaknesses. A typical human response.

I worked with her to chunk up the information so it wasn't overwhelming. I would take one strength and map it to a weakness to show her how the strength could help the weakness. For example, a strength was her storytelling, primarily about the organization and where it came from—its legacy—as she'd been there for 12 years. The feedback suggested she needed to be more visionary as a leader. Since she has the innate ability to tell a story and to be captivating and engaging, she just needed to stop telling stories about the past and move into future. In communicating her vision, she would be telling stories about the future.

We created actionable steps to allow her to match her strengths and weaknesses. She became more able to muster the courage she needed to reach into herself to see how she truly was being perceived as a leader. This took great courage for her—to see the perceptions of others as feedback for improvement and not a personal affront.

The feedback we got was thoughtful and Erin became more thoughtful as well. She allowed herself to be vulnerable to listen to what others perceived about her. She needed to be

ready to receive the views of others, and she was more ready once she was in the coaching relationship with me. And really, all she had to do was some minor tweaking. Her courageous action was to do something different—to not ignore the feedback like she used to and to not take it personally.

Courage usually comes from within, and in this case it required Erin to go within. It wasn't necessarily numerous outer steps she needed to take to become more courageous. It was her choice to take feedback and use it to improve herself. I told her she didn't have to agree with everything, but she knew she had to dive deep to see the truth of what was said about her. Once she understood that the feedback was useful, she got more comfortable taking small steps to make outer changes. People reacted positively, and that gave her the validation to keep moving forward.

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WHY IS IT VITAL TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR COURAGE?

Leaders without courage are invisible. They stay in the shadows. They hide behind other leaders. They ride the success of other leaders without contributing their own thoughts, insights, and thus, their value. We know these leaders. We've all experienced them. We don't want to be them.

Throughout history, various men and women have been called courageous with vastly different accomplishments. Neither

their circumstances nor their goals have been the same, so defining the type of person who's courageous is nearly impossible. Martin Luther King was seen as being courageous for his unwavering commitment to ending the oppression of his people. Helen Keller had the courage to live her life, in spite of being blind and deaf. Businessmen are courageous, as are soldiers on the battlefield.



10 STEPS TO LEAD MORE COURAGEOUSLY

We all have the capacity to be courageous. To bring it out, we need to be put into a situation—whether personal, professional, or social—where to act with courage would result in the greater good. It's in our actions, rather than in our nature, that courage resides. Here are 10 ways to apply courage in

your life both personally and professionally. Read each practice and then write out your commitment to take action after each step:

- 1. Be guided by your values.** Some of the most courageous people in the world have become so because their conscience wouldn't allow them to ignore what was happening around them. Nelson Mandela endured great personal strife in order to elevate his people's position in South Africa when the reigning regime was subjecting them to acute oppression. He did so without violence, however, choosing instead to use passive resistance by not reacting to anything, but also refusing to back down. What made this courageous was that had he ignored the plight of his people, he would have lived a comfortable life. He chose not to ignore it, and instead, was tormented for his resistance. When allowing your conscience to guide you, the key is to see the injustice, whether at work, in your country or town, or in your personal life—and do something about it. While ignoring this type of situation, particularly if you're not directly affected, is certainly easier, taking a stand is far more courageous.
- 2. Feel and own the fear, and act anyway.** Courage is not the absence of fear; it's feeling fear but doing what needs to be done anyway. This could be anything like approaching your boss for a raise if you feel you deserve it or speaking in front of large groups. Anything that makes you afraid, or nervous, but still needs to be done, requires courage. Of course, the tradeoff is that by having courage, by speaking to your boss, or doing

whatever else scares you, you come that much closer to achieving your goals and outcomes. Never plucking up the courage to do or say what you want will mean that instead of being an active participant in your life, you become a bystander, driven and steered by others.

3. **Never give up.** When you truly want something, and it seems unattainable, getting it—whatever it may be—will take both courage and determination. In fact, the perseverance to carry on when all seems lost, and your goal seems impossible to reach, is a form of courage. Imagine, for example, that you lose your job. You fail to find work, through no fault of your own, and slowly, the life you've built begins to crumble beneath your feet. The easy option would be to give up, to decide that life is conspiring against you and allow whatever will happen to happen. The courageous choice would be to keep getting up every morning and going out there to find a job, knowing that eventually, one day, your luck will change. Even in this simple example, it's easy to see that courage need not always be a deed or word but merely a state of mind. If you can cultivate a courageous state of mind, and never give up on what you want, eventually, you'll reach your goals.
4. **Embrace the unknown.** When you think about why we fear the dark, the answer is simple. Darkness removes sight, leaving everything that lies within it unknown. It's this fear of the unknown, rather than the darkness itself, that leads children to imagine monsters under their beds or in their closets. Of course, while most of us outgrow our fear of the dark, we remain scared of the unknown

in our everyday lives. We stay in jobs we hate because they're secure, rather than pursue our dreams. We stay in unhappy relationships because the prospect of being alone in an unfriendly world makes us afraid. In fact, we willingly accept many situations, as long as nothing in our lives is changed or too different from what we're used to. It is, however, in the unknown that the greatest discoveries are made, and having the courage to embrace the unknown—and to accept and welcome change, even when it's scary—will almost certainly lead you to a more fulfilling and happy life. Maybe you can't quit your job or leave your marriage, but you can certainly do new things, learn new ideas, and experience more of life. Can't you?

5. **Practice, practice, practice.** Aristotle once said, "Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts." What this means is you don't have to first be courageous in order to show courage. You do need to act with courage and not just think, speak, or dream about being courageous. Even if you're quaking in your boots, if you can pretend to have courage, you'll seem courageous. Of course, once you've pretended to be courageous for a while, and discovered that your world does not, in fact, collapse around your ears, you'll be able to stop pretending. You'll have found courage.
6. **Truly believe.** If you're not totally committed to something, and you don't believe 100% that what you're doing, saying, or dreaming is worth it, you'll never find true courage. There's a saying that goes: "If it's worth

doing, it's worth doing right." This applies to being courageous too. If you're not completely sure that you're doing the right thing, you'll find that somewhere along the line your courage will fail you. You'll decide that it's not worth fighting for anymore, and that will be it. If, however, the thing you require courage for is something you truly want, and believe in, finding the courage to do it will be easy. You won't have to think about it, or if you do, the answer will come to you quickly. Save your courage for those times. If you fight battles that aren't really worth it, you'll use up your energy and courage before you even get to the ones that are.

7. **Ignore the naysayers.** No matter what you choose to do in life, whether it's study towards a degree, open a business, go into politics, or anything else worthwhile, there are going to be negative people around you who'll try to convince you that you can't achieve your goal. If you really want to get to where you want to be, you're going to have to block out their negativity and just get on with it. By all means, take good advice when it's given, but always remember that no one but you determines your success or failure in life. You're the architect of your destiny, and if you allow others to influence you, you'll never find out what you really could have achieved. It takes courage to move forward even when others are attempting to hold you back.
8. **Be prepared to fail.** Winston Churchill once said, "Courage is going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm." What he meant is that on the road to success—whether personally, professionally, or in pursuit of

any goal—most of us will endure at least one failure. The trick is to get up after you fail, dust yourself off, and have another crack at it. Courage is realizing that each failure merely brings you one step closer to eventual success. So rather than fearing failure and allowing that fear to prevent you from even trying, look at failures as what they are: learning experiences. Find the lesson, think about it, take it in, regroup, and then go forward with a different tactic. If you look at some of the most successful business people in history, their ultimate success was preceded by a string of failures. Instant success is rare, if not completely unheard of, and whatever you're wanting to do, you'll have small failures on your way to ultimate success. So take them as what they are: steps. Remember: failure is not the end, it's just another step in the process.

- 9. Take small steps to make big ones.** Of course, looking for courage when you've never displayed it before is difficult if what you're wanting to achieve is so big you can't imagine how you'll ever do it. Finding your courage doesn't have to be about a grand gesture at first. You don't have to do something that will get your name in the history books to demonstrate courage. If you've never stood up for yourself, begin with that. Start standing your ground and asserting yourself. If you want to achieve business success, but you're scared to leave your job, work on your idea part time. If you see an injustice, even something small, and you're unhappy about it, speak up. Taking a step is what's important, and as your confidence grows, so will your courage, until eventually, you'll be completely sure that you're invincible and ready to take on whatever the world throws at you.

- 10. Enroll your advocates.** You can bet that if you look at the truly courageous people throughout history, there was at least one person who believed in them and stood by them. Whether a mentor, partner, or friend, there's always someone standing in the wings rooting for them. Finding the people in your life who believe in you is important if you want to find, and maintain, courage. They don't even need to truly understand your goals, although it helps. What they're there for is to help you get up when you fall, to remind you why you want what you want, and to tell you to keep going when all you want to do is give up. Having a support structure, no matter the situation, is often the difference between success and failure. Even one person who believes in you can give you the courage to carry on when you want to quit. So look around you—at your co-workers, friends, family, and acquaintances—and identify those who will be your allies. Tell them what you're doing and why. Use them as a sounding board, and ask them to stand by you. You're not looking for approval, just support to build your courage muscle.

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

Success begins where your comfort zone ends. This statement holds true in all spheres of life—from performing well at your job to improving your personal life. Taking initiative is crucial. As a leader, fear is not an option. Courage begins where fear ends. Your team relies on you for strength, motivation, and vision. To lead your team effectively to achieve the common goal, it's necessary for you to let go of those fears in your head: fear of the unknown, fear of the results, fear of failing.

SO HOW CAN YOU LET GO OF FEAR?

Remember, the key to being courageous is not only eliminating fear or acting in spite of it, but also analyzing your strengths and weaknesses before you decide to lead. Here are a few steps you can take:

Be innovative. Get creative and experiment with new skills and behaviors.

Be flexible. Don't be rigid in your beliefs and attitude. Be open to change and be spontaneous.

Don't be upset with setbacks. Not every day is sunny. Not every task is easy. Not all your team members are the same. Most importantly, you can't achieve success in everything at the same time. Keep telling yourself that failures/setbacks are only temporary. No need to be afraid of trying again if your first attempt wasn't good enough.

Let go of ego. It all comes down to defending your ego if things go badly. Critically analyze your performance and find out which area needs improvement.

Live your values. Be the living, breathing embodiment of your values and beliefs. It's difficult (if not impossible) to stand up for something you don't value or believe in. It's less risky and takes less courage to support what you believe in.

Ask for what you want. You'd be surprised how positively people react when you ask directly for what you want rather

than complain about not having it. Being assertive is not only courageous but the hallmark of an effective leader.

Expand your horizons. “You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience,” said Eleanor Roosevelt. That means getting out of your safety zone and meeting new people, exploring new ideas, and considering new ways to do things. When you have this depth of knowledge and experience from which to draw, it’s easier to be courageous.

Listen more than you speak. Most of us could be better listeners. However, this is much easier said than done, especially among leaders who sometimes have rather healthy egos. Taking time to hear what the other person is saying, not just planning your response, is key to being a courageous leader.

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS: QUESTIONS TO HELP DEMONSTRATE YOUR COURAGE

1. How do I stay in my comfort zone throughout the day?
How do I carry it physically? How do I carry it emotionally?

2. What will I find out if I step outside my comfort zone?
What have I got to lose? What am I afraid of?

3. How do I find the courage to do something new, take responsibility, live with integrity, be who I am, speak up, stand alone, step boldly into action, persevere, say no, let go?

4. How will I use courage to become the leader I know I can be?

5. What does it mean to me to be courageous? Why is it important? What does it look like to stand alone?

6. How do I stand out? How and when do I speak up?
How do I take a stand?

7. Does my community know what I stand for?

8. What fears are blocking me from being more courageous?
What am I afraid will happen if I step into my courage?

9. What steps can I take to step out of my comfort zone,
take more risks, demonstrate more courage?

10. How will I mentor this knowledge about courage on to
others?

WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

This Leader Who Demonstrates COURAGE:

You Stand Up For Your Opinion

You Are Not Afraid To Stand Alone

You Are Confident

You Move Forward

You Are Flexible In Your Style

You Demonstrate A Valid Assertiveness

You Are Always Growing

You Consistently Redefine Your Comfort Zone

– OR –

This Leader Who Does Not Demonstrate COURAGE:

You Stay In The Shadows

You Blend In With Everyone Else

You Are Insecure

You Stay Stuck In The Same Place

You Are Rigid In Your Style

You Are Timid

You Are Stagnant

You Consistently Stay In Your Comfort Zone

5 DECLARATIONS FOR DEMONSTRATING YOUR COURAGE

I create a purposeful environment for myself and my team that encourages invention and taking a chance.

I make strong decisions for myself, and I stand behind my decisions and the decisions of my team and community.

I demonstrate the continuous ability to step out of my comfort zone and try on new skills and behaviors.

I realistically appraise my strengths and weaknesses without my ego getting in the way.

I state my opinion even if it's not popular and I risk an adverse reaction.

ACTIVITY:

5-Day Planner to Find Your Voice as a Leader

Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.



DAY 4: THURSDAY “COURAGE” PRACTICE

Thursday Declaration: I create a purposeful environment for myself and my team that encourages invention and taking a chance.

Thursday Question: What step will I take out of my comfort zone today, and what have I learned from that experience?

Thursday Awareness: Observe throughout the day when you step out of your comfort zone and what it feels like as well as when you choose to stay in your comfort zone and why you choose to remain there.

“Life shrinks or expands according to one’s courage.”

— **Anais Nin**

COMMUNICATE YOUR
OVERALL EXPRESSION
OR
WHAT IS YOUR BRAND?

*“There is no greater agony than bearing
an untold story inside you.”*

— **Maya Angelou**



*What's your expression as a leader?
What's your brand? What's your legacy?*

Your leadership footprint isn't made of sand. Your impact matters. You were meant to do what you're doing when you're doing it. Finding your voice as a leader involves com-

municating your overall **EXPRESSION** for lasting impact. The fifth and final essential element of the **VOICE** model of leadership is Expression. Establish yours by creating open and consistent channels of communication, listening to input from others, instilling confidence and commitment, sparking curiosity, and handling emotionally-charged situations in a calm and professional manner. Only then can you truly be a successful leader.

It's not enough to live your **values**, know your **outcomes**, be **influential**, and have **courage** if you can't communicate these elements to others. The last, essential part of being an effective leader is being able to share your vision with your team, investors, management, and/or people in the community.

WHAT'S YOUR LEADERSHIP BRAND?

Finding your voice embodies crafting your expression of who you are as a leader to yourself and your community. Become a stellar communicator. Create followers. Contribute your talents and capabilities. Build and re-invent your personal "brand" so you remain renewed and refreshed. By taking that stand, voicing your opinion, making yourself known, and communicating what matters to you, you're expressing who you are with your voice.

Your expression is your presence, your footprint, the mark you leave on others, the legacy you create, the trail you leave for others to follow. It's the impact you leave on the world, your

community, your organization, your family, your friends... yourself. The world needs your expression. The world needs your voice.

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

Expressing yourself is not just about you. It's about the relationships you foster with your clients, customers, co-workers, and team. It's about the connections you make with people and the relevance of your message. It's about the way you carry yourself, the non-verbal language. It involves communicating the vision you've created for your organization and influencing others to come along on the journey.

EXPRESSION: PROJECTING A CREDIBLE AND CONFIDENT PRESENCE.

As important as good communication is, expression involves more than just good speaking, writing, and listening skills. Expression is establishing your personal brand as a leader so people know at an instant what you stand for and how you'll react in a given situation. To hone your ability to express yourself, consider adapting the following behaviors:

Create open and consistent channels of communication.

Previously you learned that one way to exercise courage is to listen more than you talk. That also applies to communicating your expression. When you listen, you get input and feedback

from others that can help you perfect your brand, your project, and how you interact with others.

Instill confidence and inspire commitment. When you live your values, know your outcomes, have influence, and are courageous, people will naturally want to participate in your programs and be on your team. In other words, they know at a glance what working with you will be like. Being consistent and confident through a persuasive personal presence is a key part of building your expression.

Spark curiosity and garner interest. Being an effective leader doesn't have to be boring—and it shouldn't be. By being creative and sparking interest in your values and your projects, you can encourage an ever-increasing number of people inside and outside your organization to share your vision and participate in your projects. You just have to express yourself with enthusiasm to catch their attention.

Handle situations calmly without becoming emotional. Anger, pre-judgment, and emotional outbursts can easily derail an otherwise strong leader. If you tend to be emotional, practice waiting until you're calm to address stressful situations. According to *Forbes* magazine, you can teach yourself to be prepared for any emotional situation. When you have confidence in your ability to handle confrontations calmly, they become less frightening, and people will actually look to you for your leadership when such a situation occurs. Don't express important ideas when you're not emotionally centered.

THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND.

Effective leaders are instantly recognizable. One of the hallmarks of the best leaders is taking their unique talents and creating a leadership style all their own. Think about leaders in your life who you admire and respect. Each of your examples instills confidence just by his or her “personal brand” and style of leadership. This branding lets others know what you expect of them and what they can expect of you as a leader and as a person. However, it’s important to allow your brand to evolve as you grow and as outside influences change.

WHAT DOES PERSONAL BRAND MEAN?

Your personal brand is a combination of your beliefs—both within and outside work—as well as your knowledge, experiences, and past performance. It’s what people say about you, as a leader and a person, when you leave the room. Strong leaders know what impact they make and how they’re perceived by people in their company, organization, and community.

When you communicate your values, your mission and outcomes, your influence and courage, you’re expressing your brand—the unique being that makes up who you are. It’s important to keep your brand current. What you did and what you believed in 10 years ago probably has little to do with the person you are today.

TO JUDGE OR NOT TO JUDGE?

Whether you like it or not, your brand and thus your legacy as a leader is being cultivated in everyone you come across on a daily basis. Quick judgments are made about your capabilities and impact as a leader. Your leadership brand enables team members, managers, clients, and investors to know what to expect from you and your organization. *Does your brand instill trust and integrity or inaction and sloppiness?*

WHY IS KNOWING YOUR BRAND A SIGN OF A CONFIDENT LEADER?

Branding aligns with our instant social media culture. With today's overload of information and personalities, having a well-established (and current) brand helps people know what you're about and how to easily find you. Assuming you have a Facebook page, Twitter account, and LinkedIn profile (and if you don't, you should), potential customers, team members, and investors can read about you at their own pace at a time that best suits them.

Branding establishes you as an expert in your field. One of the chief benefits of branding is that it establishes you as a leader in your field before you ever meet a person face-to-face. If you've branded yourself correctly, people already know what to expect and are prepared to like and respect you before that first meeting. Branding is a true instance of when perception becomes reality. And one of the advantages of personal

branding, according to *INC* magazine is that it goes beyond the company you work for to include your work in the community, your creative work, and your volunteer efforts.

Branding enhances your performance. It's not enough in today's multi-media environment to let your job performance speak for itself. While that may have worked in your parents' and grandparents' era, in today's information age, your message will get lost among your competitors' websites, social media pages, and email marketing messages if you don't reach out via as many channels as possible.

HOW TO QUICKLY TARNISH YOUR LEADERSHIP BRAND.

Establishing a strong brand takes time, commitment, and an ongoing effort. Unfortunately, compromising your leadership brand is far simpler. Discover four ways in which you can quickly tarnish your brand as a leader (and then do the opposite):

- 1. Not walking your talk.** Perhaps the primary way to quickly tarnish your leadership brand is by displaying a lack of integrity. As a leader, you set the standard for your team. Like it or not, you serve as a role model. Leaders who don't follow through on what they say they'll do, or whose actions don't line up with their words, can quickly become frustrated with a complacent and ineffective team. By not following your own advice as a leader, you send a message to your team members that they aren't important. Bye-bye brand. A confident leader is one

who models consistent behaviors. When your customers and team members see you adhering to the standards you've set, they're inspired to trust your brand.

2. **That's not my fault.** Ah, the blame game, one of the most destructive cycles in which today's leaders can find themselves. Whether you're blaming other people or blaming circumstances outside your control for the obstacles you or your team are facing, the unwillingness to take responsibility for your words, actions, and results will tarnish your integrity. Bye-bye brand. Perhaps you're a new leader who has inherited a less than ideal situation. Maybe your team members have long been in a pattern of poor leadership, poor communication, and poor results. While it may be true that creating lasting and sustainable change takes time, resist the impulse to point fingers. There's a reason you're the leader; the buck stops with you. Own it.
3. **Wallowing in wishy-washiness.** Don't be the Charlie Brown of leaders. One of the key causes of inconsistent results is an inconsistent leader. Unpredictability is disconcerting; when the members of your team can't trust you to display consistency in your moods, behaviors, and decisions, they're unable to perform with confidence. Bye-bye brand. Banish wishy-washiness by being honest about the reasons behind your decisions. Allow your team members to gain insight into how and why you make the decisions you do. When conflicts arise, encourage open communication by listening to both sides of the story before supplying a solution. If you want to be a more effective leader, focusing on consistency and

fairness is a great place to start. Display consistency with your practices and policies. Demonstrate fairness in your communication with and treatment of the members of your team. It's better to stand alone with your opinions and decisions than to be the "Charlie Brown of leaders."

4. **me or Me or ME!** The final way you can quickly tarnish your leadership brand is by making it all about YOU. By not being humble, and by constantly making yourself the center of attention, you sabotage your efforts to build an effective team. By insisting that you're always in the spotlight, you undermine the efforts of others and take away their drive to perform well. Bye-bye brand. A leader who displays humility and a willingness to allow others to receive praise for their efforts will be rewarded with a team of motivated and engaged thinkers and doers.

Your leadership brand is you. No one else's. Don't tarnish it. Keep it fresh and renewed so your shelf life doesn't expire.



COACHING CASE STUDY: EXPRESSION IN ACTION

Expressing their brand isn't easy for every leader. Joe was a senior director in a large Fortune 15 company. He had high potential, but it was easy to get lost in such a large organization, and he needed to set himself apart from the thousands of other directors. I was brought in as coach to see if I could help him craft his expression of who he was as a person and a leader.

We went through the exercises on values, visions, outcome for himself and his team, and influence. When we got to the courage piece, he said he had done a few things that weren't really in his DNA, in his comfort zone, like speaking at meetings and standing alone in his expression. But he wasn't effective. He didn't stand out.

After Joe did the work for the V-O-I and C in "voice," the next step was putting it all together in his overall leadership expression and impact. He needed to learn to stand alone and express himself, to leave his legacy—and to stand out from his peers. To express his brand.

His core values were: to be viewed as a leader who was direct, to demonstrate he was knowledgeable, and to show empathy. To a certain extent he already demonstrated these traits. He was looked at as someone who built solid relationships with individuals. He already knew how to be direct in his one-on-one interactions. He was knowledgeable with his ideas and technical abilities, though he wanted to be known more as a trusted and respected leader. And as for being empathetic, his

Emotional Intelligence showed in his support for his team and his ability to learn from his mistakes and be humble. (I talk more about the importance of Emotional Intelligence and how it's related to V-O-I-C-E at the end of this book).

Where Joe needed to craft his expression was beyond his one-on-one interactions; it was in front of large groups of people at meetings and conferences. He wanted to be viewed as a thought leader, and his organization wanted this as well. He was responsible for several hundred people. When they held the town hall meetings for his division, he was always more in the shadows. He couldn't tell his story well in front of 350 people. He would lose the core of who he was, and he needed to improve his presentation style.

After the exercises in the V-O-I-C, he became more confident with himself and about who he was as a leader, and along with some presentation skills training, he became more comfortable in front of groups. Then he was able to appear direct, knowledgeable, and empathetic. In the past he would talk for only about five minutes or so, but once he was able to craft his expression, he could present a 20-minute story: what his purpose and outcome were, who he was, and what he represented. And he was in alignment with his three desired goals. As he got positive reactions that were aligned with his outcomes, he opened up to take more steps to create impact on a larger scale, and he was much more visible in this huge organization.

EXPRESSING IS TWO-SIDED.

The act of expression has two sides: the speaker and the listener. So even though it seems as a leader you should be the one doing the “expressing,” remember there are two sides of the coin: say what you want to say and then be quiet and listen—for questions, comments, or feedback.

How many times have you thought you were listening to somebody, but then realized you didn’t hear anything they said? Perhaps the most significant indicator of successful leadership is the ability to listen. Just listen. Great leaders are those who are able to proactively and intuitively listen to both their peers, team members, clients, and anyone else.

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

Having the ability to truly listen involves not only actively listening to those who support your ideas and actions, but also to those who confront and challenge you. When listening, focus on what’s being said rather than preparing your own response. Allow yourself to be challenged and to learn something new.

Have you ever said something in your role as a leader and immediately wished you could take it back? Your impact as a leader is influenced by what you say and how you say it. As a leader, you want to engage and influence your employees so they can exceed the expectations of your clients. What you say and how you say it are both vital when expressing your ideas

to your team members. It's just common sense, but sometimes common sense is missing from the way we communicate.

4 COMMON COMMUNICATION CRASHES TO AVOID.

Your expression is based on the way you communicate as a leader, and you can have a huge impact—or not. Communication is at the heart of everything you do: how you engage clients, how you engage employees, how you engage peers, and how you engage with your manager.

All leaders have a unique voice. The confidence and influence of how you show up as a leader is directly related to how you express yourself through communication. *How do you tell your story? How do you get people to follow you? How do you communicate your overall expression of who you are as a leader?*

I've come up with four ways to instantly “crash and burn” the impact of your communication. Put the brakes on now if you tend to want to use any of these “train wrecks.” In other words, do just the opposite if you want your communications to have impact:

1. **LOUDER is not better.** As I mentioned earlier, it has been a long misunderstood notion that amplifying your voice will make it easier for people to understand you.

“I WILL SPEAK LOUDER SO YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM SAYING!”

Teachers in school used to use this technique, and it rarely got them anywhere. Now we know that a quieter, more subtle approach to get the attention of people is more effective. The volume of your voice can be used as a form of intimidation. And if you need to intimidate, then you're a very small leader indeed. You don't have to rely on intimidation to motivate and influence people. Rely instead on your quiet confidence which communicates that you're someone who's in charge, without the need to raise your voice.

2. **Interrupting is disrupting.** *Say what?* Leaders have a lot to say, but there will be plenty of time to say what you need to after the other person has finished. Interrupting and getting in the last word demonstrates that you lead with your ego, and thus you think your opinion is the ONLY opinion. Exude quiet confidence by listening well, rephrasing what the person said, and responding to it. Don't interrupt and don't prepare your response while you're listening.
3. **It's all about me.** No it's not. Leaders who have a continual need to "one-up" others and make the conversation "all about me" demonstrate a lack of respect, and it shows a lack of confidence on the part of the leader. Grounded and successful leaders don't have to talk about their accomplishments. Your accomplishments can speak for themselves...they don't need your voice. Because of your role as a leader, you're often at the center of attention, so shift the focus away from you to shine the light on someone else who's deserving.

4. **Blah, blah, blah.** Many leaders like to hear themselves talk. Have a purpose in everything you say. Speaking just to fill the air or to show your leadership prowess is not a good enough reason. Have a direction, with a purpose and outcome, and be deliberate in your communication. You can capture the attention of more people in your organization by having fewer words in your talk and by using significant statements and relevance to what you want to say. Don't blow hot air.

NO! 6 PHRASES A LEADER *SHOULD NEVER USE.*

Don't be one of those leaders who is talked about at the dinner table as a fool, laughing stock, or worse, a leader nobody wants to work for. Eliminate these phrases from your toolkit:

1. ***"I don't know anything about that."*** Then what do you know? When someone says something isn't their area of expertise, it's another way of passing the job to someone else. Even though, in some cases, this statement may be true, people may take it as a way to avoid responsibility. Don't point fingers. Another way of saying this is, "I'm not as familiar with that program, but I'll find the best person for you to talk to."
2. ***"Gosh, Paul was supposed to get that to you."*** Who's Paul? This statement is meant to pass the buck to others and also denies your accountability as a leader. This lowers the degree of confidence people have in your abilities to take care of tasks and get priorities done. Don't point fingers. Another way of saying this is, "I'm sorry you didn't receive it. I'll get right on it and see what we can do."

3. ***“I can do that for you.”*** Okay then...please do it for me. This is a statement some leaders may think has a positive influence, because it implies taking control of a situation and getting the job done. Unfortunately, it also takes away responsibility from others and makes them feel you lack confidence in their abilities. Delegate effectively. Another way of saying this is, “I can see you’re having some difficulty with this. Let’s plan out your next steps together.”
4. ***“Don’t take this the wrong way.”*** By saying this, rest assured the person will take it the wrong way. Statements like this scream that you’re about to say something negative or “constructive,” and it’s an attempt to cushion a statement or blunt its effect. However, this kind of communication also attempts to manipulate the person into feeling a certain way about your statement and is an attempt to control others. Be direct. Another way of saying this is, “This is what I observed...” or “This is how it impacted me...”
5. ***“Because I said so.”*** Really? Well then I’ll get right on it. This kind of statement reminds us of parents using their authority to demand compliance. You’re not a parent to your team members. People respond best to leaders who allow them to think for themselves while still respecting the guidelines of the organization. And while it’s okay to want to have respect as a leader, it should be earned and not demanded. Using this phrase can frustrate employees and discourage them from seeking to understand why you’re making a specific decision. Another way of

saying this is, “Let’s look at some alternative ways of getting this done” or “What’s best for the client?”

6. ***“We’ve always done it that way.”*** Old school. Old ways. Like a classic hotel that needs a re-model but doesn’t want to change. Creaky and dusty. This statement implies that since you’ve always done things a certain way in the past, you must continue to do so in the future. You’re not open to change, and you seem incapable of adjusting to new ways of thinking. Innovative thought goes right out the door. Another way of saying this is, “Our current process has worked up to this point, so now we can look at some possible ways to improve it.”

YES! 4 PHRASES A LEADER *SHOULD ALWAYS* USE.

Confident leadership comes from a place within you that’s honest, transparent, and values-driven. Every word you express as a leader has impact. Make each one count. Be deliberate with your communication. Think of why you’re saying what you’re saying and the outcome you want to have. Your organization deserves it. Your team deserves it. Your clients deserve it. And you deserve to be heard.

As a leader, your words are among your most effective tools. You can construct strong client relationships, build an engaged organization, and create a lasting and robust legacy as a leader—with carefully thought out communications. Here are four easy phrases every leader should use daily:

1. ***“Thank You.”*** Demonstrating gratitude for a job well done is a key way for leaders to foster a sense of self-worth in the members of their teams. By acknowledging the team members’ efforts and expressing your appreciation, you not only give your team a morale boost, but you also inspire a greater dedication to team efforts. It’s been proven in many studies that team members who’ve received thanks from their manager significantly increased engagement and productivity. A simple “thank you” is an excellent, easy, cost-free way to build a happier, more effective team.
2. ***“I don’t know, but I’ll find out for you.”*** What sets a leader apart from the rest of the team? Would you assume that the leader is the one with all the answers? If not, how could he or she be qualified to lead? Every leader faces questions for which they don’t have answers. Every leader experiences periods of self-doubt. Admitting that you don’t have all the answers can be humbling (and for some uncomfortable), but it can also bring benefits. Demonstrating a willingness to not know everything and a willingness to seek out the answers will build your credibility with your team, help your team members relate to you, and allow you to gain trust and accountability as a leader.
3. ***“What do you think?”*** Confident leaders acknowledge that they’re not always right and are willing to ask for others’ opinions. By presenting your problems to your team members or associates and seeking help to develop solutions, you can benefit from the expertise of those around you. There’s a great deal of freedom in recogniz-

6 WAYS TO ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY AS A LEADER.

It's important to establish yourself as a leader, and credibility doesn't come automatically. You have to prove to others that you are in fact a leader, and how you express yourself is important. I've found this isn't always easy. However, there are a few quick ways to make a difference and begin to establish a following:

1. **Walk your talk.** If you tell people what needs to be done, that's what you need to be doing as well. There's no way to become a credible leader if you tell people to do one thing and then do something else. You have to follow your own advice before other people will follow you, and this is the first step to establishing credibility, regardless of your industry.
2. **Follow up.** If you say you're going to do something, then do it. This follow-up can be regarding a phone call, email, or anything else. Ultimately, it's a way of showing that you're good for your word. If you miss the follow-up, all the work you did face-to-face with someone will be lost, because they don't think they can count on you.
3. **Ask questions.** Ask questions about what other people are talking about. This shows you're interested in what they have to say, and the questions you ask can portray your level of knowledge. It can also help to get the conversation headed in a desirable direction so you can express what you need to.

4. **Listen.** It's often hard and I've mentioned it several times in this book, but you don't always have to do the talking—even though you're the leader. Listening to others can help bring issues into perspective and see where your colleagues are in terms of a certain topic. This goes hand in hand with asking questions, because once you ask the question, you have to listen to the response. Listen to understand versus listen to reply.
5. **Have a backbone.** Once you make a decision, it's important to have a backbone. Stand up for the decisions you've made, and don't allow others to sway your vote. There are going to be instances where you make a stand for what you believe in, and others are going to talk about what they think of the situation. If you don't waiver, it will demonstrate that you believe in what you're saying and people will value you for that.
6. **Admit mistakes.** Alexander Pope said, "To err is human." When you make a mistake, which you inevitably will several times throughout your career, it's important to demonstrate responsibility. Come forward and announce your mistake. It will show humbleness on your part, especially when you ask your followers and colleagues to forgive you.

**DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS:
QUESTIONS TO HELP COMMUNICATE
YOUR LASTING EXPRESSION**

1. How do I deliberately convey my leadership presence? How do I know if I'm effective in my expression? How do I "show up" and is it in alignment with my values and vision?

2. What's my message? What one word would describe my "brand?" What's my tag line? How do I evolve? How do I become new and improved?

3. How do I communicate? How do I tell my story? My vision?

4. How do I plan my communications with a purpose and outcome? How strategic am I about expressing myself?

5. What do I want to be remembered for? What's my legacy? What kind of impact do I want to have in my life and in the lives of others?

6. What's my reputation and how do I know? What do I want people to think/feel when I enter a room? What do I want people to think/feel after I've spoken?

7. Do I know the words people use to describe me? Are they the same words I want to be known for?

8. Can I clearly describe what makes me unique and different from those who seemingly do what I do? How do I express myself with people who have different values?

9. How do I compel people to follow me voluntarily?

10. How will I mentor this knowledge about communicating my expression on to others?

WHICH LEADER ARE YOU?

This Leader Who Has A Solid BRAND:

You Are Purposeful With Your Actions
You Make A Lasting Impact As A Leader
You Possess A Compelling Presence
You Constantly Renew Yourself
You Are Unique
You Create Your Legacy As A Leader
You Actively Seek Feedback
You Add Value
You Practice Deliberate Communication

– OR –

This Leader Who Has A Fragile BRAND:

You Drift On Automatic Pilot
You Just Mix In With The Crowd
People Forget Who You Are
You Stay Stagnant
You Are No Different From Anybody Else
You Let Others Define Your Legacy As A Leader
You Run From Feedback
You Just Take Up Space
You Practice Reactive Communication

5 DECLARATIONS FOR CREATING YOUR LASTING EXPRESSION

I create an open and consistent channel of communication, and I ask and listen for input and feedback.

I instill confidence and inspire commitment through a persuasive leadership brand based on my values, my outcomes, my influence, and my courageousness as a leader.

I consistently and actively listen to understand versus listen to reply.

I handle all situations without overreacting, becoming emotional, or displaying pre-judgment.

I proactively create the vision of my legacy and impact as a leader and take the necessary steps to make that vision a reality.

ACTIVITY:

5-Day Planner to Find Your Voice as a Leader

Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.



DAY 5: FRIDAY “EXPRESSION” PRACTICE

Friday Declaration: I instill confidence and inspire commitment through a persuasive leadership brand based on my values, my outcomes, my influence, and my courageousness as a leader.

Friday Question: How do I deliberately convey my leadership presence, and what is the leadership legacy I am creating?

Friday Awareness: Observe throughout the day the deliberate actions you take to convey your presence as a leader and the impact your presence has on others.

*“To have courage for whatever comes in life—
everything lies in that.”*

— Saint Teresa of Avila

IN CLOSING

HOW “INTELLIGENT” A LEADER ARE YOU?

“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.”

— Confucius



A book about how to find your voice as a leader would not be complete without mentioning the significant contribution of Daniel Goleman and his work with Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI is defined as the ability to understand and manage our emotions and the emotions of those around us. This quality gives individuals a variety of skills, such as the ability to manage relationships, navi-

gate social networks, and influence and inspire others. Every individual possesses different levels of EI, yet in order for individuals to become effective leaders, they'll need a high level of emotional intelligence.

In today's workplace, this has become a highly important factor in achieving success, operating efficiently, influencing productivity, and team collaboration. Daniel Goleman first brought the term "Emotional Intelligence" to a wide audience with his 1995 book of the same name. In his research at nearly 200 large global companies, Goleman found that while the qualities traditionally associated with leadership such as *intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision* are required for success, they're not enough.

TOO SOFT?

Truly successful leaders are also distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence which includes *self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills*. These qualities may sound "soft" and un-businesslike, but Goleman found direct ties between EI and measurable business results.

Influential leaders are skilled communicators. No matter what kind of situation they and their team may be in, they always seem to know just what to say, and how to say it, so no one is offended or upset. They're caring and considerate, and even if they don't find a solution to the problem, they usually leave others feeling more hopeful and supported.

Some leaders are masters at managing their emotions. They don't get angry in stressful situations; instead, they have the ability to look at a problem and calmly find a solution. They're excellent decision makers, and they know when to trust their intuition, i.e., "their gut." Regardless of their strengths, however, they're usually willing to look at themselves honestly. They take criticism and feedback well, and they know when to use it to improve their performance. Leaders like this have a high degree of EI. They know themselves well, and they're also able to sense the emotional needs of others.

Since we know most leaders are not born but made, the same can be true for EI. I've included some best practices for developing emotional intelligence elements in yourself and your teams that segue nicely with my Find Your VOICE as a Leader concepts:

BECOME SELF-AWARE.

People with high emotional intelligence are typically extremely self-aware. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control. They're also willing to take an honest look at themselves. They have a clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses, and they work on these areas so they can perform better. If you're self-aware, you generally know how you feel. And you know how your emotions and your actions can affect

the people around you. Being self-aware when you're in a leadership position also means having humility.

What can leaders do to improve self-awareness?

- Keep a journal. Journals help improve your self-awareness. If you spend just a few minutes each day writing down your thoughts, this can move you to a higher degree of self-awareness.
- Initiate a process that will provide you with feedback on your leadership style from a “360 degree” perspective, i.e., from your manager, your peers, and your direct reports.
- Slow down. When you experience anger or other strong emotions, slow down to examine why. Remember, no matter what the situation, you can always choose how you react to it.

LEARN TO SELF-REGULATE.

People who self-regulate demonstrate the ability to control emotions and impulses. Normally they don't allow themselves to become too angry or jealous, and they don't make impulsive, careless decisions. They think before they act. Characteristics of self-regulation are thoughtfulness, comfortable with change, integrity, and the ability to say no. Leaders who regulate themselves effectively rarely verbally attack others, make rushed or emotional decisions, stereotype people, or compromise their values. Self-regulation is about staying in control of your emotions.

What can leaders do to improve their ability to self-regulate?

- Know your values. Do you have a clear idea of where you absolutely won't compromise? Do you know what values are most important to you? If you do, then you probably won't have to think twice when you face a moral or ethical decision; you'll make the right choice.
- Hold yourself accountable. Stop any tendency you may have to blame others when something goes wrong. Make a commitment to admit to your mistakes and face the consequences, whatever they are.
- Practice being calm. The next time you're in a challenging organizational situation, be aware of how you act. Do you relieve your stress by shouting at someone else? Write down everything negative you want to say in an email, and then delete it. Expressing these emotions and not showing them to anyone is better than speaking them to your team. What's more, this helps you challenge your reactions to make sure they're fair.

MOTIVATE, INSPIRE, ENCOURAGE.

People with a high degree of EI are usually internally motivated. They're willing to defer immediate results for long-term success. They're very productive, love a challenge, and are effective in whatever they do. Self-motivated leaders consistently work toward their goals. And they have exceptionally high standards for the quality of their work and their team's work.

How can leaders improve their motivation?

- Re-examine why you're doing this type of work. It's easy to forget what you really love about your career. So take some time to remember why you wanted this leadership role.
- Motivated leaders are realistic and optimistic, no matter what they face. Adopting this mindset might take practice, but it's well worth the effort. Every time you face a challenge, or even a failure, look for at least one good aspect about the situation. It might be something small like a new contact, or something with long-term effects like an important lesson learned. There's almost always something to learn from; you just have to look for it.

DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY.

Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly. For leaders, having empathy is critical to managing a successful team or organization. Leaders with empathy have the ability to put themselves in someone else's situation. They help develop the people on their team, challenge others who are acting unfairly, give constructive feedback, and listen to those who need it. If you want to earn

the respect and loyalty of your team, then show them you care by being empathic.

How can leaders improve their empathy?

- Put yourself in someone else's position. It's easy to support your point of view. Take the time to look at situations from other people's perspectives.
- Pay attention to body language. Perhaps when you listen to someone, you cross your arms, move your feet back and forth, or bite your lip. This body language tells others how you feel about a situation, and the message you're giving isn't positive. Learning to read body language—both yours and others'—can be a real asset when you're in a leadership role, because you'll be better able to determine how someone truly feels. And this gives you the opportunity to respond appropriately.
- Respond to feelings. Instead of citing logic, data, and statistics, always listen to the feeling and intent in the communication. And respond appropriately.

PLAY THE SOCIAL GAME.

It's usually easy to talk to and like people with good social skills, another sign of high emotional intelligence. Those with strong social skills are typically team players. Rather than focus on their own success first, they help others develop and shine. They can manage conflicts, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships. Leaders who do well in this element of EI are just as open to hearing

bad news as good news, and they're experts at getting their team to support them and be motivated about a new project. Leaders who have great social skills are also good at managing change and resolving conflicts diplomatically.

How can leaders improve their social skills?

- Learn conflict resolution. Leaders must know how to manage and resolve conflicts between their team members, customers, or vendors. Learning conflict resolution skills is vital if you want to succeed.
- Improve your communication skills. How well do you communicate? What do you need to work on and how will you go about it? Figure out where you'll get help to become a better communicator.
- Learn how to praise others. As a leader, you can inspire the loyalty of your team simply by giving praise when it's earned. Learning how to effectively praise others is a fine art but well worth the effort.

DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS: QUESTIONS TO HELP ASSESS YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Self-awareness:

1. Am I aware of and can I describe how my patterns of behavior impact others?

2. Can I articulate my strengths and weaknesses?

These questions address the leadership trait of being self-aware. If you answered “no” to either of these questions, you might want to strengthen your EI capability in this area.

Self-regulation:

3. In situations that are full of turmoil and confusion, do I stay calm and level-headed?

4. Am I willing to take calculated risks?

5. Am I comfortable with a certain level of disruption and conflict?

6. Can I operate in environments of uncertainty when guideposts are few?

These questions address the leadership traits of level-headedness and comfort with ambiguity. If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you might want to strengthen your EI capability in this area.

Motivation:

7. When pursuing a goal, do I maintain a positive, focused attitude despite obstacles?

This question addresses the leadership trait of persistence. If you answered “no” to this question, you might want to strengthen your EI capability in this area.

Empathy:

8. Do I empathize with other people’s needs, concerns, and goals?

9. Would staff members confirm that I show such empathy?

These questions address the leadership trait of caring. If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you might want to strengthen your EI capability in this area.

Social Skills:

10. Do I know how to use humor to relieve tense or uncomfortable situations?

11. Could I diagram for myself my organization’s power structure?

12. Can I articulate the concerns of my organization’s most powerful groups?

13. Can I identify those individuals within my organization who will support me when needed?

14. Do I know where to turn for the resources I need?

These questions address the leadership trait of social skills. If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you might want to strengthen your EI capability in this area.



IN CLOSING, FINDING YOUR VOICE AS A LEADER IS A CHOICE.

It's about discovering what's important to you: your core Values. Then using those Values to guide you as you create your vision and the Outcomes you want. Once your Outcomes are clear, you need to know who you can and cannot Influence, who your spheres of influence are, and how you go about influencing your communities.

Then it's time to take a risk, step out of your comfort zone, and take a stand to be Courageous. Without the courage to do anything with your voice, you won't take the necessary actions and you won't reach your goals. Now that you're courageous enough to take action, you need to Express your vision. How you express yourself on the outside needs to match who you are on the inside. There needs to be alignment with how you represent yourself externally to what makes you who you are internally. You need to be authentic in your expression.

As you go forward to Find your Voice as a leader, remember that you're on the path of self-discovery to become an effective leader in your own life, as well as leading your team—whether in your personal or professional life.

To build leadership qualities, you need to develop traits and values that show up in your daily habits and work ethic. This involves working hard and accepting responsibility for your life and your results. If you're not moving forward, you're stagnating. Stagnation is inactivity or laziness, or even a state of mind where you don't feel like getting out of bed, dressing up and going to work, or leading your team.

To find your voice as a leader and build your leadership skills, take one step at a time:

- Discover your critical leadership VALUES.
- Develop a common VISION for your organization and team.

- Provide powerful feedback to teams and colleagues to get the OUTCOMES you want.
- Communicate and connect with INFLUENCE and impact.
- Make decisions that demonstrate your COURAGE to stand alone.
- Continually EXPRESS your confidence and assertiveness.
- • Build trusting and respectful RELATIONSHIPS within the organization.
- Improve your ability to lead within a dynamic and virtual GLOBAL environment.
- Construct a model of COLLABORATION across all business units.
- Cultivate the NEXT LEVEL of leaders for your organization.

GET UNSTUCK AND GET MOVING.

If you want to be mediocre for the rest of your life and be bullied by your boss, learn to stagnate. Pull your blanket over your head and go back to sleep. However, if you want to be a powerful leader in your life and work, consider following these simple steps:

- **Get up and get going.** Wake up 30 minutes earlier than you normally do. Plan your day. Prepare a to-do list. Organize a “daily strategic plan.” Then just do it.

- **Make your own vision.** Sit for a minute and think about where you want to see yourself five years from now. If your answer is “in my boss’s place” then let go of stagnation and plan a strategy on how to make it to the top.
- **Learn to lead.** Start with something small. Volunteer to coach a junior baseball league or tutor some kids. Learn how to lead people effectively. Examine team diversity. Engage in conflict resolution and constructive dialogue, and take responsibility for your actions
- **Explore.** Engage in new activities. Demonstrate a different behavior. Do something productive with your spare time. Keep yourself occupied. Meet new people.

Take an active role in your growth and development. Adopt daily habits of leadership, and soon you’ll find yourself growing in your leadership abilities. Quality leadership involves performing a lot of things well: creating strategy, engaging people, communicating with impact, influencing towards a common vision, and garnering a high level of trust and respect along the way. All these factors must integrate so you can move forward towards success as a leader.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Finding your unique voice is often the difference between being a so-so leader and becoming a dynamic, influential “role-model” of a leader. If you want to be that dynamic, quality leader, you need to develop the skills of **focus and**

commitment. Leaders have an innate talent, an inner compass that helps them make the correct decisions over and over again. As if this weren't enough, they seem to have the rare ability to garner the commitment of others and create an influence powerful enough that entices others to follow.

What are you passionate about?

What's your legacy? What's your voice?

Life is too short not to Find Your Voice as a Leader.

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

*“It took me quite a long time to develop a voice,
and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.”*

— **Madeleine Albright**

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

So where do you start?

How do you begin to Find Your Voice as a Leader?



ACTIVITY:

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Instructions:

Start with small steps. Align each weekday with a V-O-I-C-E element, and select one declaration, answer one question, and perform one act of self-awareness. With consistent practice, this process will become a daily routine, and soon you'll be on your way to Finding Your Voice as a Leader.

DAY 1: MONDAY'S FOCUS - VALUES

Daily Declaration: I deliberately create candid and trusting relationships by treating others fairly and consistently based on my values.

Daily Question: What is one value I possess as a leader, and how do I display that value today?

Daily Awareness: Observe when you're demonstrating your values throughout the day and when your values may not be in alignment with a specific situation.

DAY 2: TUESDAY'S FOCUS - OUTCOMES

Daily Declaration: I create a purposeful and compelling vision and translate my broad strategies into clear and aligned goals and action plans.

Daily Question: What do I want to achieve as a leader, and what are my next three steps to make this vision a reality?

Daily Awareness: Observe the opportunities you have throughout the day to enroll people to your vision.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY'S FOCUS - INFLUENCE

Daily Declaration: I cultivate and engage a broad, intentional, and respected network to exchange ideas and advocate support for my ideas.

Daily Question: How do I influence key relationships, and how do I communicate a sense of shared purpose and exciting potential?

Daily Awareness: Observe the opportunities you have throughout the day to influence individuals with a clear purpose and outcome, and notice how others will attempt to influence you.

DAY 4: THURSDAY'S FOCUS - COURAGE

Daily Declaration: I create a purposeful environment for myself and my team that encourages invention and taking a chance.

Daily Question: What step will I take out of my comfort zone today, and what have learned from that experience?

Daily Awareness: Observe throughout the day when you step out of your comfort zone and what it feels like, as well as when you choose to stay in your comfort zone and why you choose to remain there.

DAY 5: FRIDAY'S FOCUS - EXPRESSION

Daily Declaration: I instill confidence and inspire commitment through a persuasive leadership brand based on my values, my outcomes, my influence, and my courageousness as a leader.

Daily Question: How do I deliberately convey my leadership presence, and what is the leadership legacy I am creating?

Daily Awareness: Observe throughout the day the deliberate actions you take to convey your presence as a leader and the impact your presence has on others.



*“The most influential person who will talk to you all day, is you.
So, you should be very careful what you say to you.”*

— **Zig Ziglar**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



As a former C-suite executive of a three billion dollar organization and now an Emergenetics and Certified Professional Performance Coach (CPPC) with over 25 years of experience, Paul Larsen has a proven and successful track record in building leadership strength within Fortune 100, start-up, high-tech, and non-profit environments. A leadership veteran of such iconic companies as Charles Schwab, Adobe Systems, and Bristol-Myers Squibb, he is now a trusted advisor and coach to many leaders via his innovative coaching programs.

A current sample of his clients include: Electronic Arts, Twitter, Mixpanel, Walmart, Charles Schwab, SAP/SuccessFactors, Kaiser Permanente, BNP Paribas, and PagerDuty.

In addition to a B.A. in History from the University of the Pacific and a M.A. in Human Resources Organizational Development from the University of San Francisco, Paul is certified in multiple assessment instruments such as the highly rated Emergenetics Profile. In his spare time, Paul combines his love of travel helping local communities worldwide as a project team member with Global Volunteers and “Together We Can Change The World” (TWCCTW).

Using his unique voice model, Paul coaches leaders from all organizations to find their voice, create their legacy, and lead with impact through his innovative coaching programs and consulting practice. He takes a pragmatic and straightforward coaching approach in that he understands what’s involved in leading teams.

Paul works closely with leaders across a variety of industries and within organizations of all sizes to build and expand their leadership strength with deliberate purpose aligned to clear and tangible outcomes. He provides an extensive portfolio of customized and performance-based coaching programs based on his voice model targeting:

- Executive-level Leaders via a one-on-one program
- Senior-level Leaders via a one-on-one program
- Mid-level Managers via a group coaching approach
- Intact Work Groups via a team coaching approach

Paul is a frequent conference speaker and workshop facilitator on “Find Your Voice as a Leader” for companies, associations, and universities and is also a member of a number of professional societies including the International Coach Federation, the Association for Talent Development, and the National Speakers Association.

In addition, Paul offers a creative collection of interactive workshops, conference break-out sessions, and engaging speaking experiences that focus on reinforcing vital leadership survival skills as outlined in his voice model.

To find out more about Paul’s programs and services, please visit www.PaulNLarsen.com.

“Be deliberate with your each and every word... your voice leaves a lasting impression on the world.”

— **www.PaulLarsen.com**

