

Incident Leadership

*Applying the art of command and control in
changing environments*

Pre-Work Reference Guide

MCS

Mission-Centered Solutions

© Mission-Centered Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved.

Questions regarding authorized reproduction or distribution of these materials can be addressed to:

Incident Leadership
Pre-Work Reference Guide version 9.0.1
Mission-Centered Solutions, Inc.
P.O. Box 969
Franktown, CO 80116
303.646.3700
303.646.3720 fax
email: LMcDonald@MCSolutions.com
<http://www.mcsolutions.com>

Contents

The Foundations of Leadership	1
The Art of Leadership	1
The Leadership Environment	4
Communication—The Tool of Leadership	5
The Incident Leadership Challenge	7
Composition of a Leader	9
Studying Decision Making	9
Decision Making Model	10
Tools for Making Decisions	16
Experience and Memory—Making Slides	18
Memory Systems	19
Values	21
Character	22
Leadership Principles	23
Leadership Responsibilities	25
Leader <i>Must Knows</i>	25
Provide Purpose	28
Provide Direction	29
Provide Motivation	30
Situational Leadership	31
Sources of Power	31
Leadership Styles	32

Human Error	35
Framing Error	35
Building the Resilient Team	39
Stress	41
The Stress Curve	41
Stress Reactions	43
Fear	47
The Mechanics of Fear	47
Fear and The Leader	48
Influencing Behavior	51
Understanding Resistance to Change	51
I Message	53
Active Listening	54
Active Listening Techniques	55
Resolving Conflict	63
Preventing Unhealthy Conflict	64
Strategies for Resolving Conflict	66
Professional Ethics	69
Ethical Responsibilities	69
Ethical Dilemmas	70
Making Ethical Decisions	71
Leadership Values, Principles, and Tools	73
Appendix A—Suggested Reading	75

The Foundations of Leadership

Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible.

Colin Powell

Former Secretary of State and
Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Failing organizations are usually over managed and under led.

Dr. Warren G. Bennis

Business and government professor at Harvard, MIT, Boston University, and University of Southern California. Award-winning author of dozens of books about leadership and management.

The Art of Leadership

Incident commanders have the core knowledge and skills that enable them to respond to emergencies, but they also have something more: *art*—a mastery of how knowledge, skill, and technique work with and within the environment.

You understand equipment and rescue techniques. You also have skills acquired through training and field experience as well as guidelines for handling different types of situations. You have control over many of these factors.

However, you do not control many variables. You cannot control weather or its effect on the situation. You cannot control all the people involved and affected by the situation.

How you use your tools and knowledge, when and where, within the situation—this is the art. With mastery of the art comes wisdom—an intuitive understanding of the interrelationships among these factors and variables—and with it, perspective and judgment.

The art also includes being able to view the larger picture of the environment, with the understanding of the movement of the situation—where you can influence it, how you can turn a weakness into a strength, and where best to spend valuable resources.

Just as you must change and adapt your tools and techniques as required by the nature of the emergency, you must likewise use the right leadership tools—at the right time and in the right way—to accomplish your goals as a leader.

If a leader cannot adapt tools and techniques as the situation requires, he or she will fail, and failure can jeopardize the well being of people or result in a career fatality.

What does a leader do?

*The strength of the wolf is in the pack,
The strength of the pack is in the wolf.*
- Rudyard Kipling

- **Leaders influence others by providing purpose, direction, and motivation.**

You can't force people to do things. Ultimately, subordinates choose to act because they perceive the benefit of doing a task is greater than the cost of not doing it. Leaders influence others to accomplishments that further the organization's goals as well as the subordinate's personal goals.

- **Leaders lead up: influencing their leaders and peers.**

Influencing team members and subordinates is typically seen as the first responsibility of leadership; however, in furthering an organization's goals, leaders also must influence leaders above them and peers.

No one can afford to assume that anyone—including those at the top of the chain of command—has all the answers. Everyone, at every level, can make mistakes or feel pressure to make decisions without adequate information or make decisions based on outdated information. Good leaders provide unvarnished truth in all situations, offering unbiased and viable alternatives.

- **A leader creates an environment for team synergy.**

The leader's goal is create a team in which the combined efforts of the team exceed the individual efforts of the team members. Synergy is the powerful force that allows the team to outperform itself—to accomplish more than the team members thought possible.

Synergy is the balance of strengths and weaknesses, known and unknown, controllable and uncontrollable, and dangers and opportunities in a way that makes the whole equal more than the sum of the parts.

Born or made?

The most valuable officer in a regiment is the sergeant. The true sergeant is born not made—he is a priceless gift from the gods.

- Colonel, U.S. Army, 1911

The one quality that can develop by studious reflection and practice is leadership.

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Often history books characterize a person as a born leader. However, if that were true, anyone who was not born with leadership skills would be out of the running.

If some leaders appear to be born leaders, it is often because at an early age they learned the critical lessons about influencing others. In many cases, they observed and learned from role models, perhaps someone in their family, who had mastered leadership skills.

Most effective leaders acknowledge that their success is the result of a lot of hard work: learning from mistakes, being open to new ideas, emulating mentors, and searching for new strategies. The best leaders display tenacity for self-improvement, flexibility in their approach, and a willingness to embrace opportunities to learn.

You have a duty to your crew to serve them by being the best leader possible. A component of your duty as a leader is to find ways to continually develop your leadership skills and techniques. This duty also includes understanding yourself—your strengths and weaknesses, your capabilities and limitations.

The Leadership Environment

A key factor in any incident is to understand the operational environment: the effects of weather, unexpected opportunities, hazards, and ongoing threats as well as political, economic, and psychological factors that impact decision-making.

Likewise, leaders must understand the components of the leadership environment:

- **The Led**
- **The Leader**
- **The Situation**

The one predictable element of the leadership environment is that any or all of the components will change.

People comprising *The Led* change. All people exhibit differences in behavior and personality. Their motivations differ and often change over time. The make-up of teams changes over time with some people leaving the team and others joining.

The Situation changes. Whether a change in weather or political context, external variables change the definition of the mission or goals or change the context within which people work.

A leader's success hinges on their ability to be adaptable in face of changing requirements. Being able to assess the components of the leadership environment and adapt accordingly is called *Situational Leadership*.

The essence of situational leadership is making judgments about which leadership skills and techniques are appropriate for each unique situation.

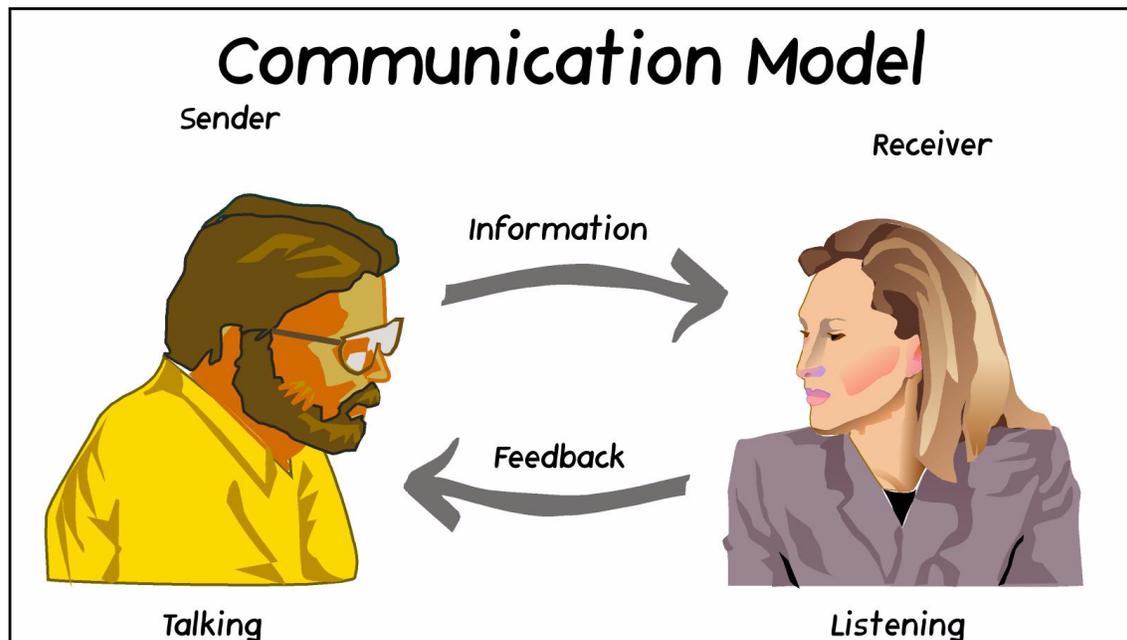
Communication—The Tool of Leadership

Leadership is the art of influencing and directing others to an assigned goal in such a way as to obtain their obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation. Military leadership is the same art demonstrated and applied within the profession of arms.

**Leadership for Commanders of Divisions and Higher Units,
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1949**

Communication represents the *how* of leadership. You cannot lead unless you can communicate. Communication is to the leader what water is to the body.

Communication is the exchange of information and ideas. Effective communication occurs when others understand precisely what you are trying to tell them, and you understand exactly what they are trying to tell you.



NRC -09-03_006a

Communication and the Team

Effective communication creates the kinds of bonds that allow your team to follow you and act appropriately during an emergency. It is the glue for all teamwork and team activity.

For communication to be effective, the role of the sender and receiver must switch frequently. After receiving a message, the listener acknowledges the message by providing feedback. Feedback can be sent verbally or non-verbally.

The message that you communicate is not just the words you speak. The packaging of your communication—your tone, voice, body language, and gestures all combine to communicate your message to the listener.

You must win your team's trust and confidence before, rather than on, an incident. How and what you communicate can enhance or damage the strength of the relationship between you and your team. Team discipline and cohesion depend on the strength of this relationship.

Effective communication implies that your team listens to and understands you. Because people listen to leaders who listen to them, you must work hard at listening to your team. Becoming a skilled listener is hard work and takes constant practice.

The Five Communications Responsibilities

In high risk environments, the best level of protection against errors and accidents is effective team communication. This means that everyone, regardless of rank, rating, or position, has an obligation to communicate critical information.

The Five Communications Responsibilities are common doctrine in one form or another in almost all high risk environments.

- **Brief**
- **Debrief**
- **Communicate hazards to others**
- **Acknowledge and understand messages**
- **Ask if you don't know**

All team members have a duty to understand and practice these communications skills until they are constant, ingrained behaviors.

The Incident Leadership Challenge

Factors in the leadership environment constantly change, creating new challenges, but nowhere do they come into focus more sharply than during emergency incidents. Stress, danger, exhaustion, dehydration, fear, and confusion can erode performance and your leadership ability.

Several factors increase the challenges of all high risk environments, creating barriers to effective leadership. Do they apply to you?

- Time pressure
- High stakes
- Inadequate information
- Ambiguous objectives
- Poorly defined procedures
- Rapidly changing conditions
- Requirement of team coordination

Other factors also produce challenges to cohesion and leadership:

- **It's come as you are.** There's no train-up time at during an emergency.
- **Continuous operations** become the requirement when responding to disasters and large-scale emergencies. A leader must know when the team is beyond acceptable risk.
- **Luck plays a role.** Any incident can present serendipitous moments. Leaders must recognize and exploit those opportunities to be successful.
- **Low tech and high tech are interwoven.** In case of a failure in technology, a leader must always be ready to return to the lowest common denominator. In addition, the availability of technology at the incident command level can cause a perception mismatch between the view of the Incident Commander and the view of the ground observer.

With all these challenges, strong leadership emerges as the most critical element. In this context, your duty to become the best leader that you can be translates into a solemn responsibility. Lives are on the line, and your leadership skills can be the deciding factor.

This training program is a starting point and not an end. As a leader you must continue to develop your art for the rest of your life through study, introspection, and practice.

Composition of a Leader

As a leader, you must motivate and supervise people. These are very human—not technical—tasks. To do this well, you must understand how you and other people work, both generally and individually.

You have a responsibility to understand human behavior, teach it to others, and integrate it into your operational environment.

Studying Decision Making

Metacognition refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes or anything related to them.

Professor John Flavell
Stanford University Department of Psychology

Being a leader means that you must be willing and able to evaluate your own decision process and learn to improve it. Talking about decisions with the team and being able to analyze past decisions are important means of developing an error-resilient team.

Analyzing the decision making process is one form of *metacognition*. In simple terms, metacognition is the process of thinking about how you think.

For decision making, it means developing knowledge about how you process information when you make decisions. The better you understand this process, the easier it is to improve your abilities.

Understanding how you make decisions has far-reaching benefits:

- By breaking down individual components of a decision, you learn how to better analyze your own decision-making and target specific areas for improvement.

- It provides a mechanism, vocabulary, and context for discussing performance issues that relate to decision-making. This benefit is particularly useful for debriefings.
- An analysis of past decisions helps you learn how to do things better in the future.

The best way to look at the mental process of making decisions is through a model. Using a model offers several benefits:

- **Provides visualization for a mental process**
- **Shows sequence as well as cause and effect**
- **Shows human machine in ideal conditions**
- **Enables you to isolate and understand elements that cause problems**

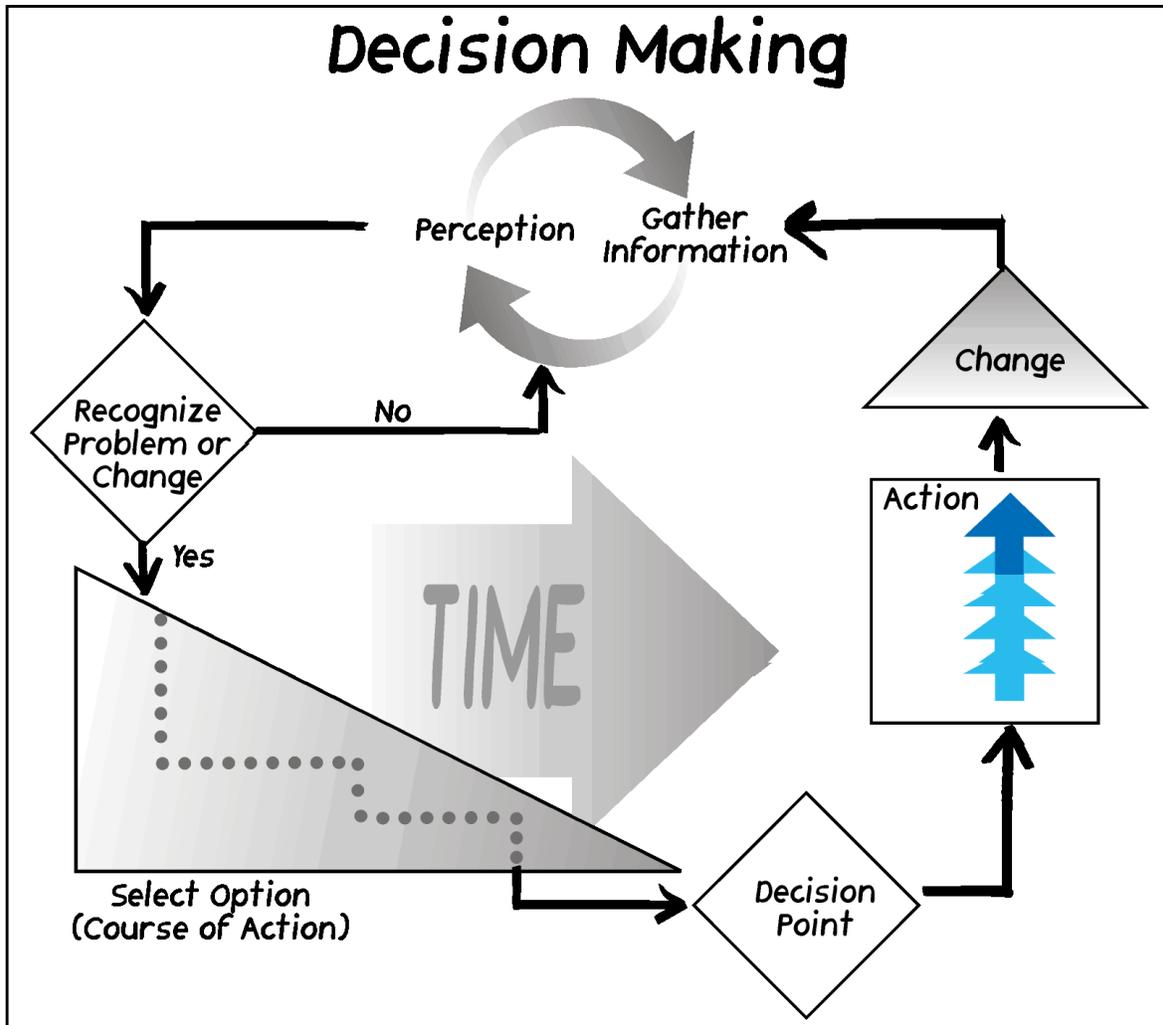
The scientific community has developed numerous models to describe decision making. The one used here is a distillation of the work of many scientists, particularly Judith Orasanu, Gary Klein, and Dr. Mary Omodei.

The model shows a process that people already do naturally. Everyone generally goes through this process when making decisions. You don't think about what you are doing—you just do it.

Decision Making Model

This model consists of five primary processes:

- 1. Situation awareness**
- 2. Recognition**
- 3. Analysis and selecting a course of action**
- 4. Decision point**
- 5. Action**



FLC-09-00_008

Situation Awareness Cycle

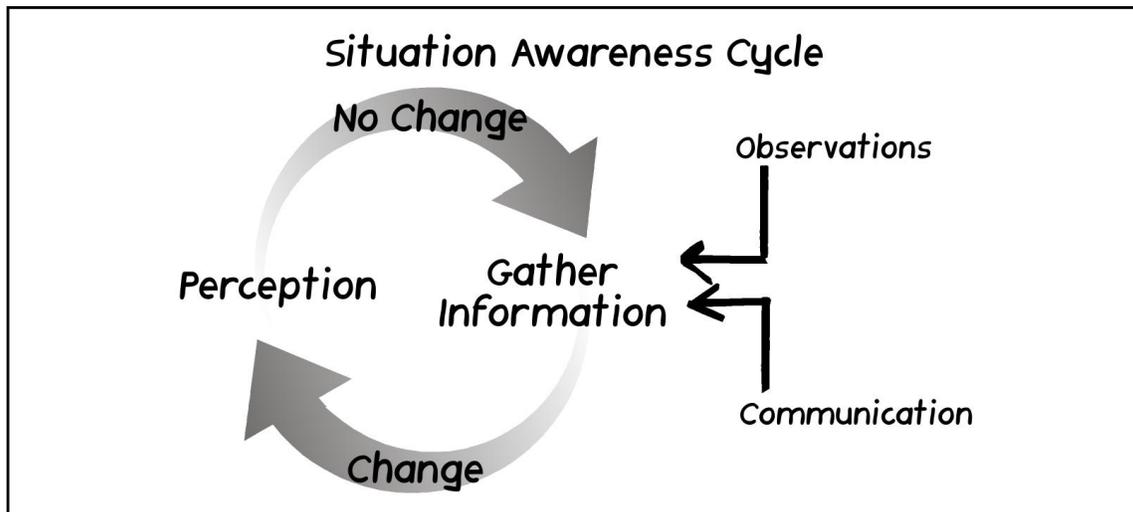
The first qualification in a general is a cool head—that is, a head which receives accurate impressions, and estimates things and objects at their real value.

Napoleon Bonaparte
Maxims, LXXIX, 1831

How well your perception matches reality is called Situation Awareness. If your situation awareness is high, you have an accurate perception of reality.

The idea is that your perception doesn't change the reality of the situation, so you must make sure that your perception closely matches the situation. In the end, when you pit perception against reality, reality always wins.

The first process in the decision making model is the Situation Awareness cycle. It is a cycle because Situation Awareness is dynamic—constantly changing and getting updated. This cycle continues as long as you are awake.



FLC -09-00_007

Perception, New Information, Filtering

Everyone starts with an initial perception of any given situation.

New information potentially changes the initial perception. We gather information through observation and communication.

Observation—Gathering information through the senses—what we see, smell, hear, taste, and touch all fall into this category.

Communication—what people tell you, what you read, answers to questions you ask.

Paying attention is one part of situation awareness, but even more important is knowing what to pay attention to—knowing what is important. How well do you extract the salient points from your environment?

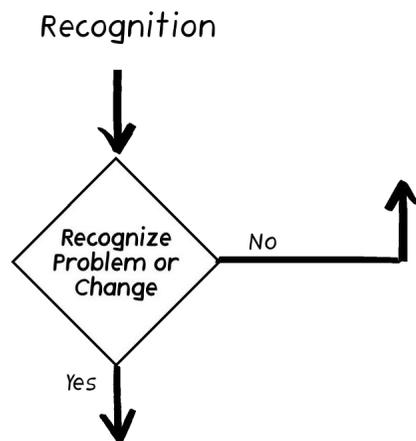
Your initial perception and subsequently updated perception are subject to filtering and focusing.

We constantly filter information. Our senses constantly search the environment, picking up things such as the temperature, background noises, wind, odors, voices, and words. We also produce a lot of internal information: thoughts about what to do next, what just happened.

Your experience level in the environment heavily influences your ability to filter out distractions and unimportant details and focus on the most salient points.

The more experienced you are in a situation, the better you can filter the most important cues in the environment from those that are secondary. This ability to filter gives experienced people a natural edge in situations that are confusing, complex, or time-critical because they can more quickly gather the critical information, recognize the need for a decision, and move forward in the decision-making cycle.

Recognition

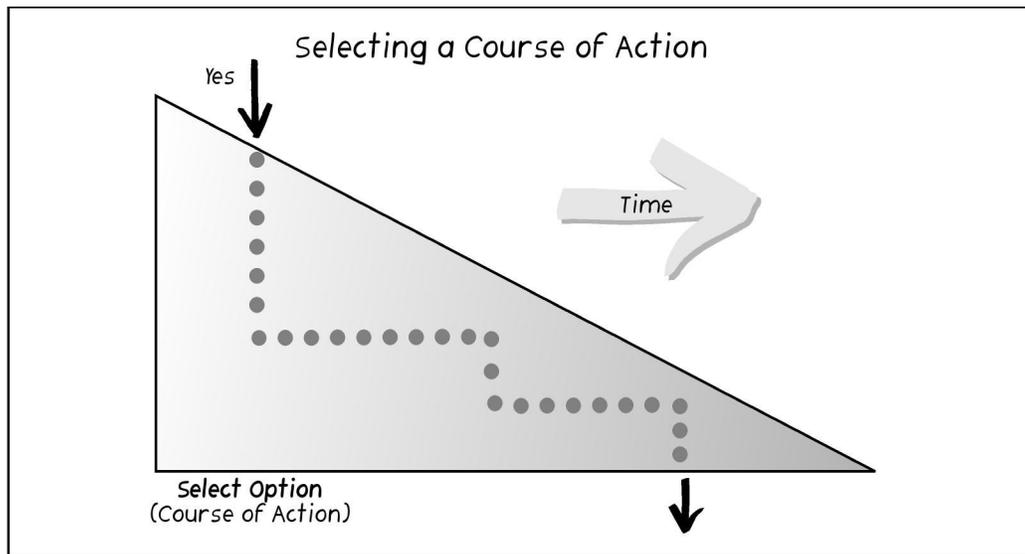


Most decision making entails responding to or adapting to a changing environment. Recognition is when you determine that something needs to be done and you want to impact your environment in some way.

A variety of situations warrant action: a realization of a problem, recognition of an opportunity, a need for change in tactics, or a change in priorities.

Selecting a Course of Action

In any action you must balance the inevitable cost in lives against the objectives you seek to attain. Unless the results to be expected can reasonably justify the estimated loss of life the action involves, then for my part I want none of it.
General Matthew B. Ridgeway



FLC-02-00_011

Selecting a course of action involves understanding the factors, options, and risks associated with those options. You select a course of action based on your experience and perception.

If time permits, the process can include formally weighing the cost and benefits of a variety of options. In time-critical situations, it requires a much quicker process.

How well and how quickly you select an option depends upon many factors, including your relative experience in the environment. An inexperienced person may not have many options and may lack the experience to evaluate them effectively.

You weigh the risks and select an option based mostly on your experience. In large measure, your experience and knowledge determine how many options you have and how well you evaluate them.

When you select a course of action, usually you mentally simulate how it might turn out—compare it with other similar experiences and give it a trial run.

The concept is a lot like having a set of slides depicting your experiences. You compare the current situation to the slides in your slide tray of experience.

When the time pressure is on, experienced decision makers have a natural advantage: they have more slides and thus more options. When they recognize a solution that—when simulated in their minds—provides a viable course of action, they usually select that option and stop the process.

Choosing a course of action based on previous experience is called Recognition Primed Decision-Making (RPD). Our ability to recognize situations is based in our old or *primitive* brain.

RPD is a *natural* decision process, which is also used by other mammals. Being more primitive and tied to our survival mechanisms, RPD is understandably very fast and it explains why experienced commanders rarely run out of time when making a decision.

RPD doesn't necessarily come up with the best solution for a given situation, just the first viable one. You can only make a recognition primed decision if you have a previous experience—a memory slide—that you can recognize as being similar to the problem or situation you face.

Decision Point

The final part of the decision process is moving to act. Time marches on. If you decide not to act, the environment does not change.

Sometimes you may not act on a decision because you determine that more analysis is needed. The cycle returns to SA, but with the benefit of the processing that you did up to this point.

Time and Decisions

He who gains time gains everything
Benjamin Disraeli

The window of opportunity for making a decision is based on time. The SA cycle is internal and runs continuously; decision-making is where you and the outside world interact. Therefore, all decision-making activity is on a backdrop of time.

The amount of time you have to make a decision depends upon how fast the environment changes and how much you need to change the environment. You cannot slow time, only speed your decision process.



Tools for Making Decisions

The following standard tools provide decision making guidelines for those operating in high-risk environments.



Risk Management Process

A standardized risk management process can assist you in making decisions that best balance risk versus gain. This process helps identify potential threats to or arising from a course of action. It uses a deliberate decisional process and risk framework that shadows and reinforces the individual decision-making process.

These are the primary components of a standard risk management process:

1. Situation Awareness
 - Gather information regarding objectives, communication, who's in charge, and incident status.
2. Hazard Assessment
 - Estimate potential hazards.
 - Identify tactical hazards.
 - Identify other safety hazards.
3. Hazard Control
 - Identify potential controls.
4. Decision Point
 - Make sure controls are in place for identified hazards.
 - Make sure selected tactics are in line with incident objectives.
 - Make sure instructions have been given and are understood.

5. Evaluate

- Assess experience level in context of local factors.
- Assess distraction level from primary tasks.
- Assess fatigue or stress.
- Assess indications of hazardous attitude.
- Assess changing factors in situation.

Following this process helps you make sure that you consider the primary components of the environment, identify the risks, and apply controls to help mitigate unnecessary risk. Using such tools helps reinforce good decision-making when barriers like stress and distraction start to get in the way.



Incident Command System

The Incident Command System (ICS) is recognized as an effective system for managing emergencies. ICS enables integrated communication and planning by establishing a reasonable span of control for leaders who have responsibility for different aspects of the incident.

ICS divides an emergency response into five functions essential for emergency response operations: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance and Administration.

ICS is a cornerstone of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), which has become a core component of the National Response Plan. NIMS was developed so responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines can work together better to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism.

NIMS processes call for resource and policy issues to be addressed at the lowest organizational level practicable, meaning that local agencies must be prepared to enact ICS and integrate resources within its structure.

Experience and Memory—Making Slides

What we learn with pleasure we never forget.
- Alfred Mercier

To make a good decision or select an option, you must have some form of experience—a memory slide—concerning the topic.

In addition to helping you make decisions, memory also helps to define who you are.

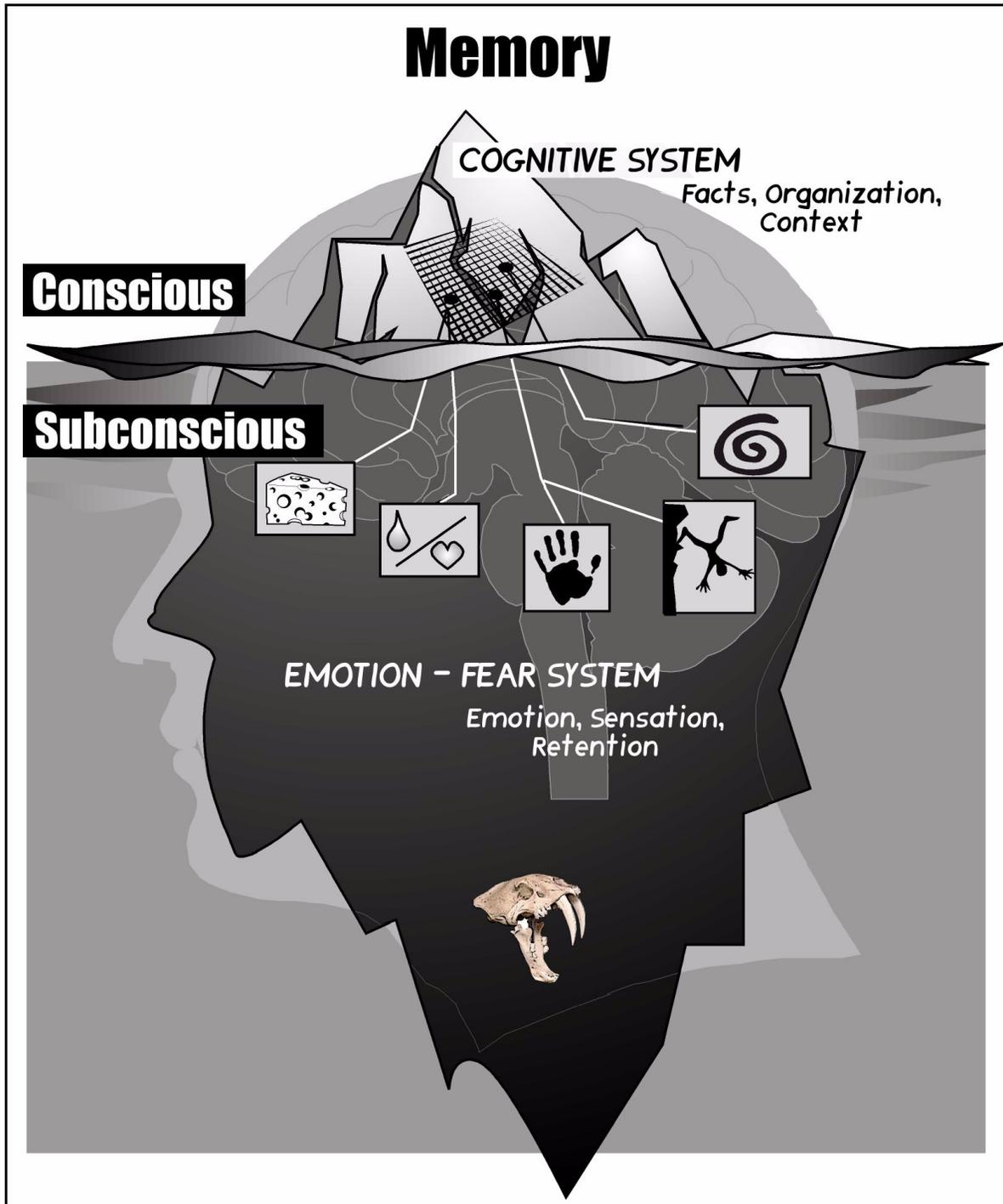
You retain training, experience, and attitudes through your memories. Your ability to be an effective professional requires you to remember a wide variety of facts and concepts about technical tasks. Someone's seemingly natural ability to lead also stems from this pool of memories.

As a leader, you are in the *memory business*. You lead by providing new memory slides to your subordinates in the form of training and experience.

You deal with memory, both cognitive and emotional, every time you try to lead. When you are in a leadership position, every memory you make with a subordinate either contributes to, or takes away from, your intended purpose—and you make memories every minute of every day.

Memory Systems

The mechanics for storing memory are the same for you as for other mammals. You have two memory storing systems: the cognitive memory system and the emotion-fear system.



FLC-09-01_023a

The Cognitive Memory System

The cognitive memory system, based in the hippocampus, supports the conscious mind by providing order and sense to memory. The cognitive memory system has these characteristics:

- **Complex and connects memories together.** It can recall well-elaborated autobiographical events, complete with their context.
- **Well integrated** with other cognitive parts of the brain.
- **Treats information neutrally.** It is unemotional and cannot differentiate between something that is important vs. something that is trivial.
- **Subject to control and filtering.** Memories made in this area can be focused, controlled, or filtered.

The Emotion and Fear Memory System

The emotion-fear memory system also records memory in a more primitive part of the brain, the amygdala. The emotion-fear memory system has these characteristics:

- **Responsible for special emphasis** and highlighting of memories. The cement for long-term memory is applied by this system.
- **Stimulus-driven.** Memory of smell, taste, sound, and touch are processed and stored by this system. Recalling memory from this region can entail a sense of reliving.
- **Direct and quick.** Memory recall from this system is instantaneous.
- **Highly emotional, inflexible, and fragmentary.** The emotion-fear system contains fragmented, non-integrated, and seemingly illogical memory connections. Memories in this region are not connected together in logical or predictable ways. These memories are held together through their connect to the cognitive system, which places them in context.
- **Connected directly to fear responses,** which circumvent the rational thought or context provided by the hippocampus.

The memory *slide* you use for a given situation is comprised of a combination of emotional and cognitive memories. For a long-term memory to be formed, there usually has to be strong information from both systems.

Values

Values are attitudes about the relative worth or importance of ideas, people, or things. Whether or not they have formally defined them, all people have values.

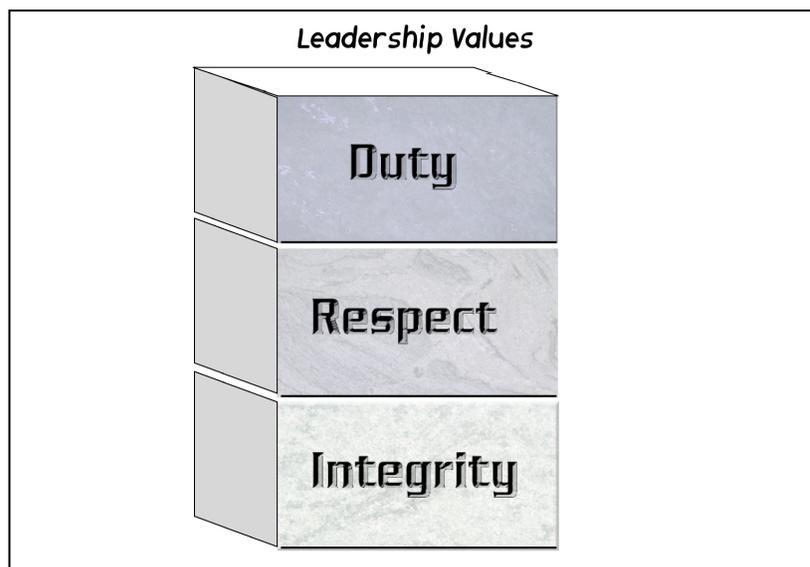
In fact, people's behavior mirrors their values. People's values guide their life choices: their choice of profession, what kind of car they drive, where they live and work, how they raise a family, where they spend their money, what they do with leisure time.

Although everyone has values, many have not formally articulated them. However, identifying and defining your personal values offers valuable insight to leaders. By formally defining core values, you create a critical context for decision-making.

Knowing your values enables you to discard potential courses of action that are incompatible with your values. Without going through a formal process to define them, you may simply have a vague sense that something is wrong when driven to a decision that conflicts with your values. Knowing your values provides a barometer for gauging where you stand and what you should do.

As a leader, you represent the values of your organization, be it a team or an agency. Both your own values and the values of the organization must be the basis for your behavior and decisions.

The values listed below as leadership values are only one set of many sets of values in place at any given time. For example, team, professional values, or the values of the agency may include other items.



FLC -09-00_002

Character

What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Character is the way that you communicate your values to others. It is the collection of actions that others appraise to determine if you can be trusted to do the right thing. Hence, character is the most valuable resource a leader has, and a person without it cannot effectively lead and influence others.

Because character is the result of the observation of many actions, it is impossible to hide. You cannot fool your team. They assess your character every day. They know if you are open and honest. They see if you are indecisive, lazy, or selfish. They quickly find out whether you enforce standards or not.

Your team knows this and will quickly take advantage of your weaknesses unless they believe you are a person of character. If your team believes you are a leader with character, they can accept weaknesses and help you compensate for them.

Effective leaders are mindful of their values and the way that they communicate and reinforce them to others and to themselves. You and your team must take steps to build character every day, doing small routine tasks to prepare you for the big tests on the job. Building and developing character is a lifelong pursuit.

危機 Leadership Principles

Principles are values in action. Most of these leadership principles were synthesized during a 1948 leadership study, which later served as a foundation leadership development in the U.S. armed services. As timeless as the historical axioms that inspired them, these principles hold true today.

Leadership Principles	
Duty	<i>Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.</i>
	<i>Make sound and timely decisions.</i>
	<i>Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished.</i>
	<i>Develop your subordinates for the future.</i>
Respect	<i>Know your subordinates and look out for their well being.</i>
	<i>Keep your subordinates informed.</i>
	<i>Build the team.</i>
	<i>Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.</i>
Integrity	<i>Know yourself and seek improvement.</i>
	<i>Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.</i>
	<i>Set the example.</i>
Values	Principles

FLC -08_02_003

Leadership Responsibilities

Leaders must understand how to provide purpose, direction, and motivation. As a leader, you have a responsibility to put the principles into action.

To do this, you must first develop awareness in three important areas:

- **Know your job**
- **Know your team**
- **Know yourself**

Leader *Must Knows*

Know Your Job

Job knowledge consists of your technical knowledge and leadership knowledge.

Your technical knowledge consists of your professional skills along with the tactical ability to properly employ your team. Your leadership knowledge encompasses the skills and behaviors needed to be an effective leader.

Your technical knowledge also includes your ability to navigate and focus the *system of systems* in your agency.

To be effective as a supervisor and problem solver, you must be able to adeptly navigate the web of agency regulations, policies, and resource systems. Everything you do as a leader must be conducted within this context.

- **Know your system's policies** about hiring and firing as well as those affecting operations and discipline. Know how to use the system to obtain what you want and how to use the system to protect your organization.

- **Keep superiors informed about current events.** Investment equals commitment. If your supervisors do not feel that they are involved in your operations and feel ownership in the process, they will not support you.
- **Know your available resources and contact points.** Know all the resources that the organization can bring to bear on the situation. Understand who controls what, and who you call when the situation goes beyond your control.
- **Train your subordinates to the system.** Mentor subordinates so that they go through the process of operating in the organizational environment. Take them through the process, even if they don't have to be there.

Know Your Team

Knowing your team is just as important as knowing your job. You must know each of the team members as well as the team itself. A leader cannot effectively lead someone else until they understand whom they are leading.

It's equally important to understand the team's capabilities and limitations so the leader does not place it at risk unnecessarily. A leader who takes the time to know the team shows concern about their welfare.

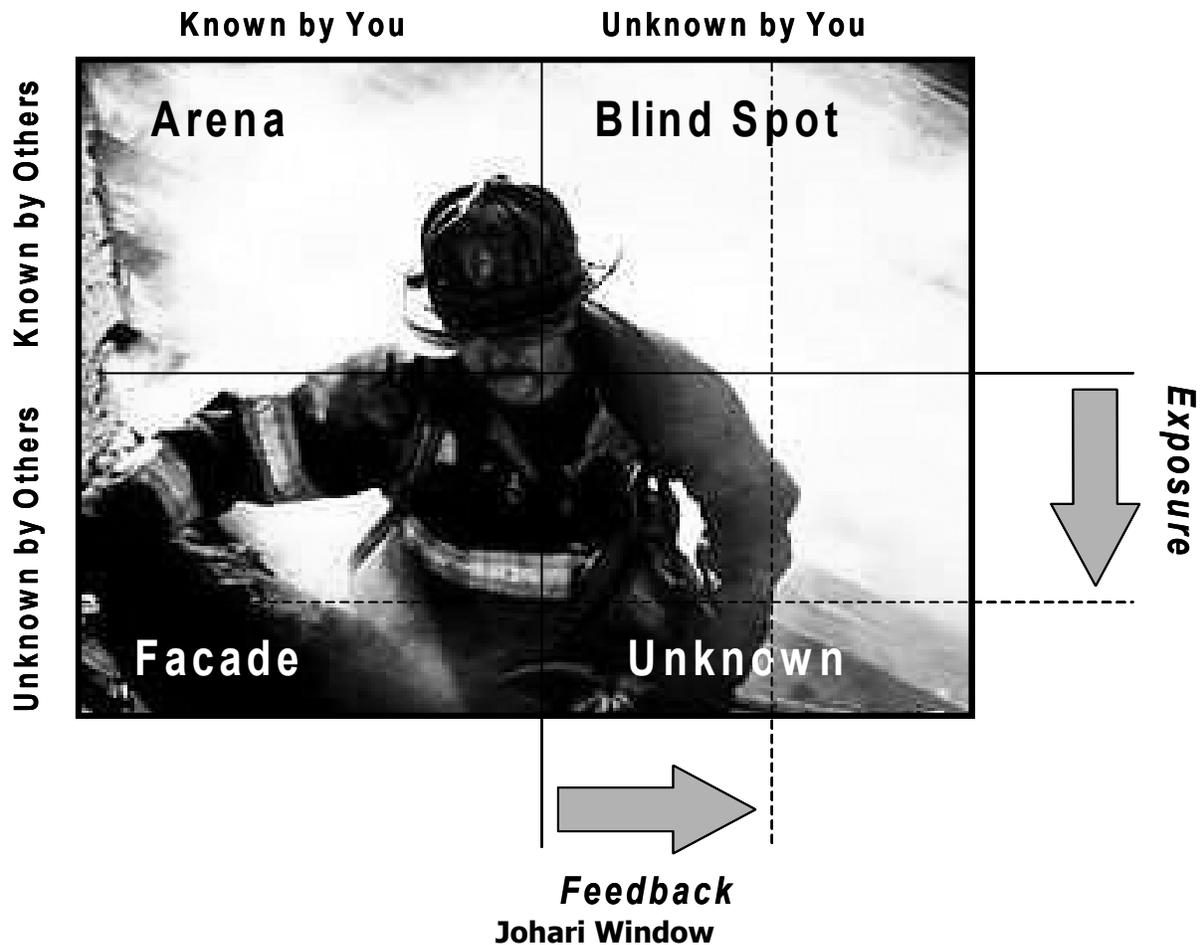
Know Yourself

Know thyself.
- Plato

Self evaluation is crucial for a leader. Only after taking a deep, hard look inside can leaders focus on maximizing their strengths and working to improve their weaknesses.

As a leader, there are four sides to you. Each of these quadrants shows a different perspective of you:

- **The you known by others and yourself**
- **The you known by you but unknown to others**
- **The you unknown by you but known to others**
- **The you unknown to both others and yourself**



The areas unknown to you are your *blind spots*. To understand how you can work effectively, you must try to understand how others perceive you.

Leadership is rooted in the perceptions of the people you lead. If you do not have their support, you cannot lead effectively. As a leader, you must be willing to examine and probe your blind spots, even when it is uncomfortable and unpleasant.

There are two primary methods of increasing your arena: through exposure and through feedback from others.

When you let someone know something about yourself, you give them greater insight about yourself through exposure. Leaders who use exposure enhance their ability to lead in two ways: first, exposure builds trust with the subordinate; second, it provides a more complete and accurate perception of you in the subordinate's eyes.

Your leaders, peers, and team will give you honest feedback if you ask and they believe you are open to it. Fear is the primary reason that people do not seek outside opinions about themselves, so asking for feedback is a show of strength, demonstrating that you have the backbone to seek and accept input.

Provide Purpose

Beyond the leadership *must-knows*, leaders must be able to provide purpose, direction, and motivation. Clear leader's intent is at the heart of providing purpose.

Leader's intent is a powerful tool that answers the question *why* in advance and describes what success will look like after the action has been completed. Leader's intent gives the team a *focused flexibility* and serves as one of the cornerstones for building synergy in the team.

Good leader's intent breaks an assignment into three parts, providing clear guidance in each area:

- Task—what needs to be done
- Purpose—why it needs to be done
- End state—how it should look when complete

The task defines the objective or goal of a specific assignment. What needs to be done?

It's important to clarify purpose because it allows the team to get the job done in your absence or when circumstance changes the plan.

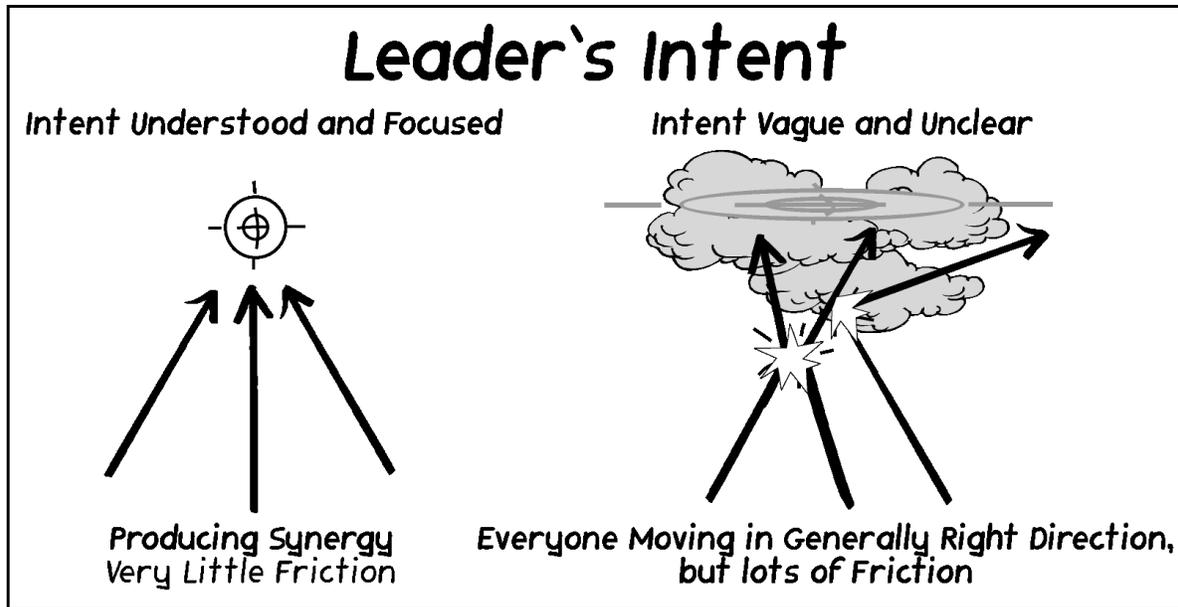
You may have heard the phrase *No plan survives the first bullet*. Actually, the leader's intent is the only part of the plan to survive the first bullet.

When the team clearly understands your intent behind instructions, they can use their initiative and find a way to accomplish your intent, even if the conditions at the time you assigned the task radically change.

In a mission-oriented environment, the desired end state is a description of how things look when the mission is successful. The desired end state includes the success criteria and acceptable risk for that assignment.

Here is an example of a statement describing an end state:

When the secondary search is complete, we will know that all savable victims have been rescued and that all responders are operating in positions of reduced risk. All units will be in positions where they can redeploy rapidly if necessary.



FLC -09-00_012

Providing a clear statement of intent also reduces friction between team members as they attempt to accomplish what they all perceive as the mission or goal. An unclear intent can lead to misperceptions on the part of the team members, and they can run into each other while they all strive to accomplish what they believe is the goal.

Provide Direction

Providing direction starts with you, the leader, understanding your higher leader's intent. Your understanding comes from Analyzing written and verbal guidance from your leader and asking questions. You set the direction of your team by establishing emphasis and priorities.

Leaders provide direction in many ways:

- **Establishing and maintaining standards**
- **Setting priorities and goals**
- **Planning**
- **Making decisions and solving problems**
- **Supervising and evaluating**
- **Training, coaching, and providing feedback**

Provide Motivation

If I had enough ribbon, I could conquer the world.
- Napoleon, on the motivational power of a small piece of ribbon presented to his soldiers

All actions link to some motivation. Keep a broad point of view about human behavior and motivation. A leader understands that the best team on earth, if not properly motivated, can slip into mediocrity quickly.

Leaders provide motivation in several ways:

- **Leading by example**
- **Building strong teams through teambuilding**
- **Meeting needs**
- **Rewarding and disciplining**

Team members value praise and recognition. These rewards are visible evidence that their leader, the team, and the organization appreciate their courage and hard work.

Situational Leadership

Successful leadership lies in your ability to influence people in a variety of situations.

Just as you use a variety of tools for different jobs, you also use a variety of power sources and leadership styles for different situations. Being able to select the most effective leadership tools in a given situation is the definition of *situational leadership*.

Sources of Power

Power is the ability to influence the actions of others. How you use power shapes the team's perception of your ability to lead.

A leader has several sources of power:

- **Position Power**—Position power is based on the team's perception that the leader's rank and position automatically gives the leader certain rights and authority.
- **Reward Power**—Reward power is based on the perception that the leader controls rewards that are valued by the team and given for good performance.
- **Discipline Power**—Discipline power is based on the team's perception that the leader can and will discipline team members who do not meet standards.
- **Expert Power**—Expert power is based on the team's perception that the leader is an expert in his or her field. Those with expert power have a depth of knowledge in a given area.
- **Respect Power**—Respect power is based on the team identifying with the leader as a role model and associating with the leader's example and performance. Of all the types of power, Respect Power is the most difficult to achieve, yet it has the greatest impact on others.

Leaders must lead by balancing each of the sources of power. The need to use different sources of power constantly shifts as the environment changes. Being able to shift your source of power is a component of situational leadership.

Leaders have access to sources of power based on who they are and who their team members perceive them to be. For example, when a new leader joins a team, the leader doesn't automatically have Respect Power. The leader must earn Respect Power by demonstrating to the team that he or she is a good role model and worthy of respect.

The most powerful leaders have all five sources of power at their fingertips. It's the leader's responsibility to develop all five sources.

Leadership Styles

No single leadership style is best. Moreover, you do not adopt one style for life. Don't confuse leadership style with personality. You may have one personality, but you change your style depending on the situation.

Adapting to different leadership style based on the situation is another component of situational leadership.

Leadership styles include the following:

- **Directing**
- **Participating**
- **Delegating**

Directing Style

With a directing style, you do not ask for any input or recommendations before making and announcing your decision.

Use a directing leadership style to tell people what you want done, how you want it done, and when you want it done. A directing style implies that you supervise closely to make sure your directions are followed.

The most appropriate time for the directing style is when time is short and you alone know what needs to be done and how to do it.

Use this style when dealing with inexperienced team members who lack experience and competence at a task. They won't resent close supervision because it's what they need and want. Asking inexperienced team members to do complex tasks without clear guidance is frustrating for them.

Keep in mind, the directing style does not mean yelling, threatening, intimidating, or demeaning subordinates. That's not leadership; it's abuse.

Participating Style

You use a participating leadership style to involve team members in determining what to do and how to do it. You ask for recommendations and information, but you still make the decision.

If you have team members and junior leaders who are competent and support your goals and vision, allowing them to participate is a powerful team-building tool. It builds team member's confidence and increases their ownership of your plan.

How you use the participating style depends on your source of power. It can range from encouraging team participation to actively selling a suggested course of action to peers or superiors.

If you allow team members control over and input into the mechanisms that control their lives it strengthens your ability to lead them. You also have to be willing to take the first step.

If you want power, give it away. This is called the *Power Paradox*.

If you want respect as a leader, give respect to your team. If you want the trust of your team, trust them first. Asking team members to participate is a sign of strength, not weakness. It builds your team members' respect for you.

Delegating Style

You use a delegating leadership style when you delegate problem solving and decision making to one or more team members.

A delegating style is effective when you are dealing with mature, experienced, motivated team members who support your goals and vision.

As the leader, you are still responsible to your boss for any tasks you delegate, and you must hold your subordinates equally accountable.

As a leader, you should train and develop your team members so that you can confidently delegate tasks to them. Having tasks delegated to them begins team members journey from followership to leadership.

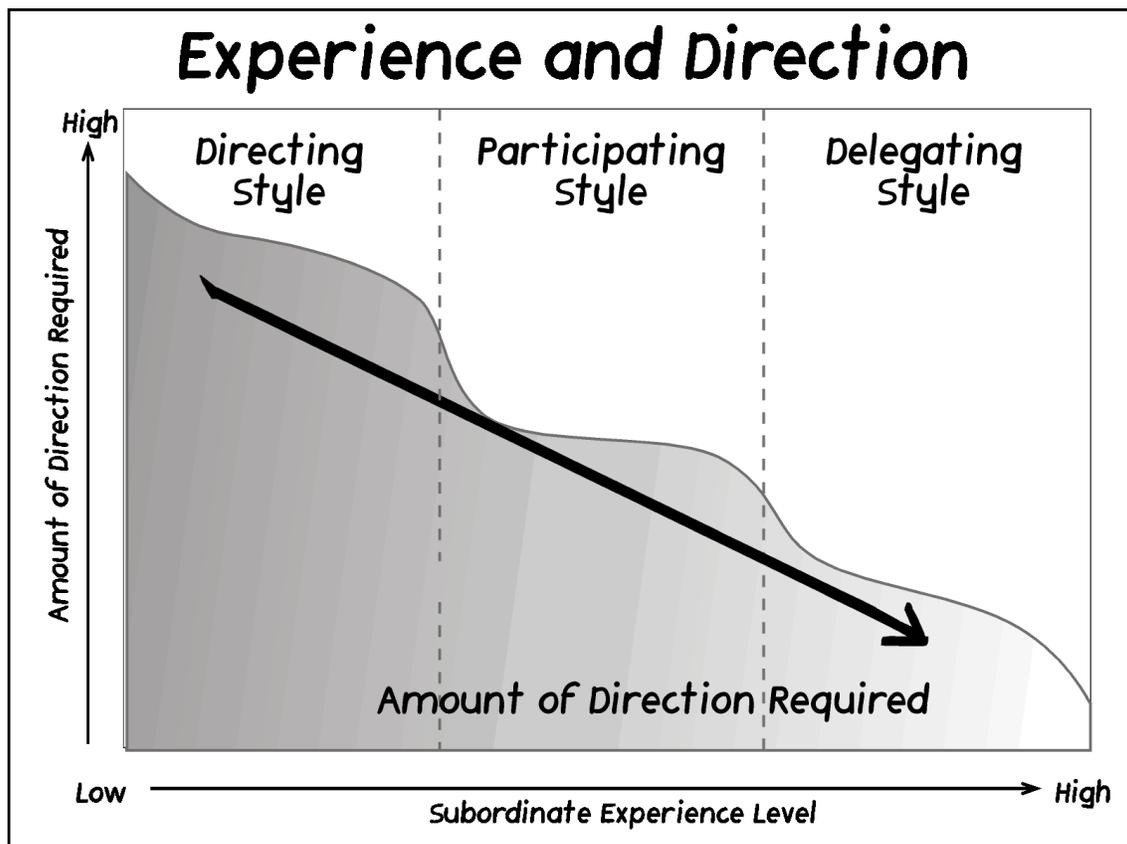
A delegating style requires the least amount of your time and energy to interact, direct, and communicate with your team.

It is in your best interest to use the delegating style as much as possible, but only when your team members are trained for and understand clearly the task you give them.

Selecting a Style

Selecting a style depends on many variables: you, your team, your mission, the time available, the consequences of success or failure, as well as a host of other factors.

One key factor is the experience of your team members. You must adapt your approach to make sure their needs and your needs are met. The following diagram graphs the type of leadership style against the experience of subordinates.



FLC -09-00_013

Human Error

Most high-risk environments are complex and dynamic. Even in operations using high-tech computers and machinery, such as space travel and undersea operations, the human mind is the only tool adaptable enough to take in the information needed and make quick decisions in ambiguous situations.

Organizations in high-risk environments operate under the scrutiny of the public eye. For these organizations, the cost of failure is high, and the consequences of failure can be great. In high-risk environments, human error accounts for 75% to 95% of all accidents.

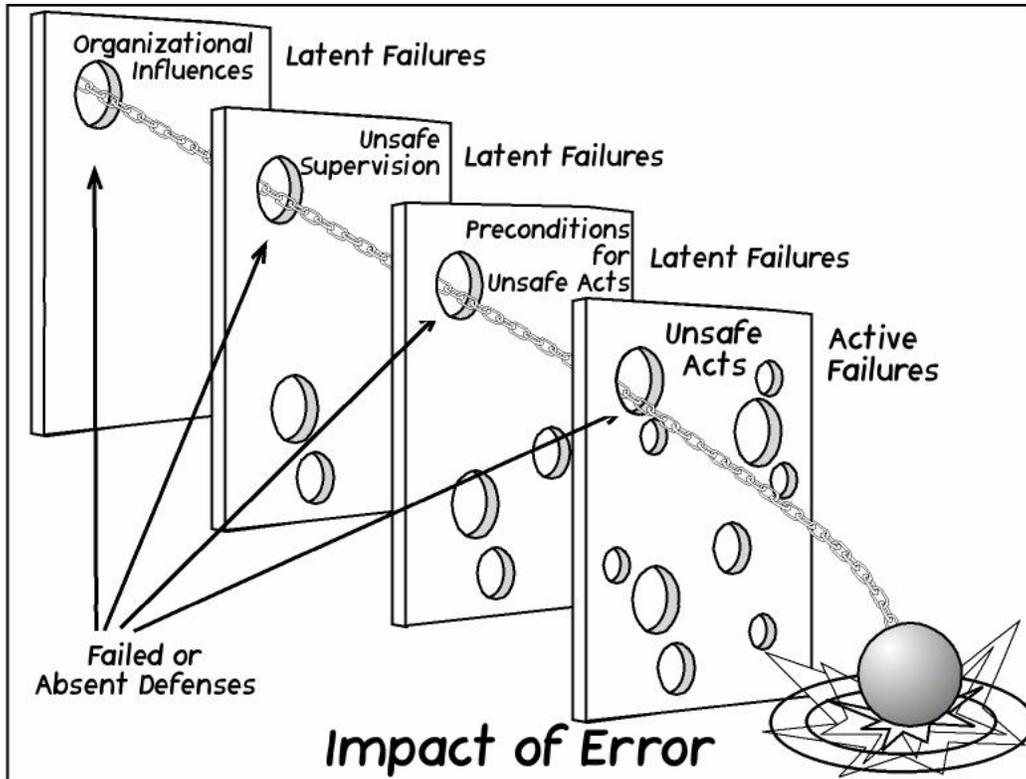
Human error occurs anywhere you have human involvement. On an incident, people are involved at every level, from preparedness to recovery work. This means that errors occur at every level of the operation.

Framing Error

James Reason, a psychology professor from the University of Manchester in Great Britain, offers an innovative framework for thinking about human error.

Called the Swiss Cheese Model,^{*} this theoretical framework scrutinizes all levels in an organization when looking for the causes of human error.

* The source for this description of Reason's Swiss Cheese Model is "The Human Factors Analysis and Classification System—HFACS," a report by S. A. Shappell and D. A. Wiegmann, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration.



NRC-09-03_025

The Swiss Cheese Model of Human Error Causation

Reason points out that errors occur at all levels of an organization. Like holes in a slice of Swiss cheese, these errors—caused by weaknesses, omissions, or failures—occur at different levels or at random. When errors at different levels of the organization align with each other, a weakness at one level in the organization can contribute to or worsen an error at a lower level.

When these errors line up, producing a set of lined-up *holes* through the organization, an accident can occur. This set of aligned holes or errors is also widely known as an *error chain*.

When trying to pinpoint the causes of an accident or error, too often people focus on the actions of those closest to the incident.

The beauty of Reason's model is that it underscores that error does not occur in a vacuum and that all levels of an organization can contribute to and are accountable for the causes of error.

Level 1—Unsafe Acts

The first level, *unsafe acts*, consists of actions or any inaction directly linked to the accident. This level includes two categories:

- Errors—actions fail to achieve their intended outcome. People make errors because they lack the skills, make poor decisions, or have poor situation awareness.
- Violations—the wilful disregard for the rules and regulations. In some cases, violations are routine. For example, many people violate the speed limit and drive 5 to 10 mph over the posted limit. But going 50 mph over the speed limit constitutes an exceptional violation, which is defined as a departure from the norm that can have serious consequences.

Level 2—Preconditions for Unsafe Acts

The next level, *preconditions for unsafe acts*, involves conditions such as mental fatigue or poor communication and coordination practices.

This level includes two categories:

- Substandard conditions of operators—adverse mental states, including the loss of situational awareness, task fixation, distraction, and mental fatigue; adverse physiological states, including medical or physiological states that preclude safe operations; physical or mental limitations, in other words, the mission requirements exceed the person's capabilities.
- Substandard practices—poor coordination among personnel before and after the assignment during briefings or debriefings; a lack of personal readiness—individuals fail to prepare mentally or physically for their duty.

Level 3—Unsafe Supervision

On the third level, *unsafe supervision*, one might argue that the errors committed here *set up* individuals or teams to fail.

This level has four categories:

- Inadequate supervision—supervisors, at all levels of operation, have an obligation to provide guidance, training opportunities, leadership, and motivation. Failure to provide them spring-loads subordinates for error.

- Planned inappropriate operations—the tempo of the operation or the scheduling of the team puts individuals at unacceptable risk. This category includes pressing crews into service without an acceptable amount of rest or pairing inexperienced team members together.
- Failure to correct a known problem—when supervisors know of deficiencies in individuals, equipment, training, or other related safety areas yet allow them to continue unabated. This category includes failing to correct unacceptable or dangerous behavior.
- Supervisory violations—when existing rules and regulations are wilfully disregarded by supervisors.

Level 4—Organization Influences

The highest levels of an organization also contribute to human error. Reason calls the top level *organization influences*. Some might argue that nearly all human error has contributing factors from this level.

For example, during budget cuts, training may be significantly limited. In time, a lack of training soon impacts each level of the organization. Supervisors may be required to assign inadequately trained personnel to tasks above their proficiency. The practice is, so to speak, an accident waiting to happen.

The same often occurs during organization build-up in unrealistically short timeframes. People lacking the necessary skills get promoted to positions because of a shortage of qualified people.

In a high-speed operation, the opportunity to break the chain of errors early takes diligence and commitment. People at every level must seek out errors and, when they find them, correct them at their level. An unwavering determination to correct errors where they are found is critical for building and maintaining organizations that are resilient to problems.

As long as people are involved, human mistakes and failings are inevitable. It is not a question of *if* something will happen, but rather *when* and *how bad* it will be.

Accepting this reality, learning to plan for human error, and focusing on risk management are important steps toward becoming a professional high-risk organization.

Although error cannot be totally avoided, it can be kept to being less frequent and less severe. For this reason, error reduction is an ongoing goal of high-risk organizations as they strive for improvement. Leaders have a critical role in perpetuating values that root out error early and address it aggressively.

As you discuss error and learn from it, you will become more skilled in looking at error systemically. As you talk through mistakes with subordinates, you will be able to increase your situation awareness when detecting and dealing with error early in the process.

Look for the root causes, not just the actions at the surface of the problem. This process will assist subordinates in thinking critically about their own performance and thinking processes.

Although they will never rid themselves of errors completely, organizations strive to plan for, seek out, and mitigate error at every opportunity. These organizations seek to build self-correcting teams. They instill in their members the professional duties of communicating effectively and learning from their mistakes.

Error can be costly. A mistake can cost time, resources, money, and opportunity. In extreme cases, it can cost lives. Organizations tend to focus on safety and accidents in the error equation. However, the more closely you look at errors, the more you will understand their impact and the impact of your efforts to minimize them.

Building the Resilient Team

Research demonstrates that teams who are trained to use a particular set of skills are statistically more effective, resilient to errors, and cohesive. Generally, these teams practice a set of behaviors that reinforce situation awareness, communication, and learning. These behaviors help to provide a foundation for managing human error rather than merely reacting to it.

An error-resilient team practices these behaviors:

- **Self-correction and learning.** The team self-corrects and evaluates performance routinely and frequently using daily after action reviews, posting mission critiques, and instituting on-the-job testing.
- **Strong SOPs.** The team develops and adheres to a clear set of standard operating procedures.
- **Routine communication.** The team communicates on many levels—formally and informally. They train to and reinforce the five communications responsibilities as a part of their standard of performance.
- **Quality training.** The team conducts quality training, for both technical skills and techniques such as leadership and human factors. They routinely use on-the-job training and mentoring.

- **Planning.** Leaders actively conduct planning activities involving the entire team. Planning activities include developing contingencies and *trigger points*. These teams plan for errors to happen and calculate remedies in advance.

Stress

Like many others in high-risk environments, incident responders and their commanders deal with many physical and mental barriers. Fire, chemical spills, inclement weather, poor visibility, and noise—all these can pose significant physical barriers to each person's situation awareness.

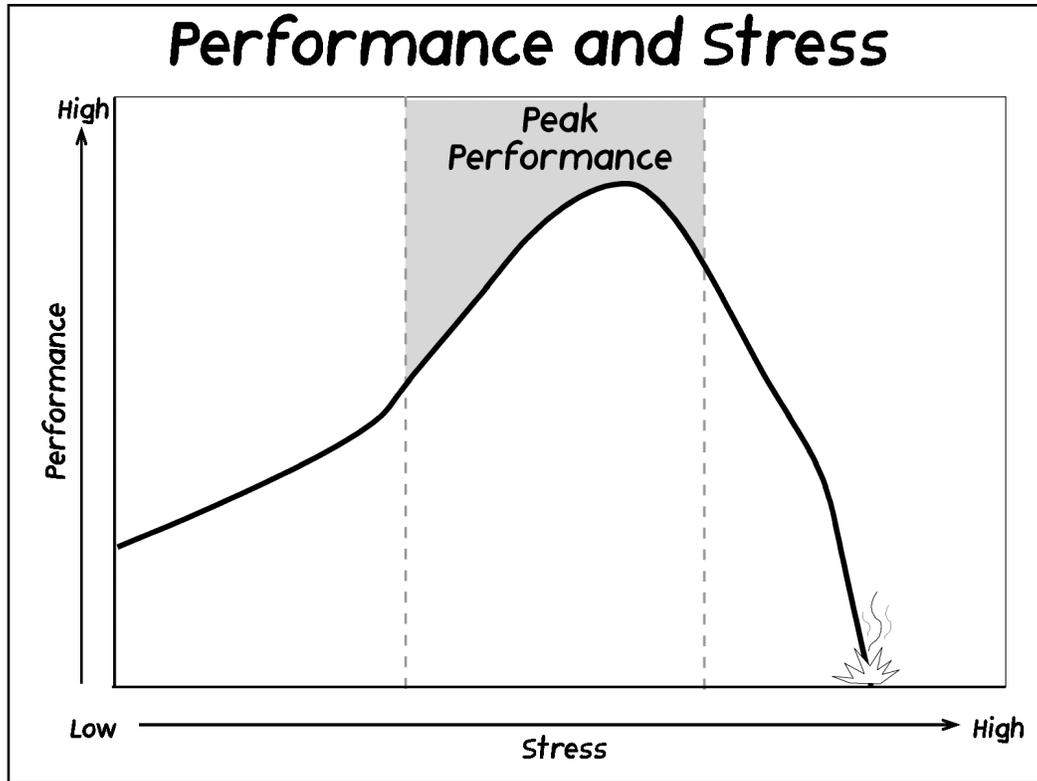
Similarly, team members face a variety of human-based barriers. Of all the mental barriers that produce errors, stress is the most problematic of them all.

The issue is not the stress itself as much as our reaction to it. Stress reactions often cause errors in decision making.

Stress is an arousal response to some form of stimuli or provocation—the fight or flight response in its primitive form. All animals experience and react to stress. Dogs bite when stressed; cattle lose weight; birds take flight. The response is basic and primitive.

The Stress Curve

Stress is not necessarily bad. In fact, performance and attention increase steadily with increased stress—but only to a point.



FLC -09-00_016

Performance and Stress

Bored, complacent, hyped, in the groove, overloaded, burned out—these are common descriptions of points along the stress curve.

Low Stress—Boredom and Complacency

Being on the tightrope is living; everything else is waiting.
- Karl Wallenda

Activities for emergency responders vary from periods of intense stress and fear to routine maintenance activities to times of boredom. Dealing with boredom is essential for maintaining high performance in teams.

In Vietnam, some units spent days in the jungles and rice paddies without enemy contact. The only diversion was constant alertness for booby traps. After time, falling prey to boredom, the unit would let its guard down and become careless.

Effective leaders found ways to occupy their units while they spent days in the jungle. They focused on security, resupply, personal hygiene, patrol activities, equipment maintenance, and mission-related training activities such as cross training and radio procedures. Such activities helped develop and maintain unit cohesion and combat effectiveness.

Apply these lessons to your team. Plan for the inevitable downtime with pre-planned activities.

High Stress—Overload and Task Saturation

When team members experience too much stress, they become overloaded or task saturated, and performance begins to drop quickly. They cope using strategies learned in childhood. Some coping strategies help reduce the stress on the spot; some reduce the stress after the fact.

These coping strategies are better known as *stress reactions*. We use them for a simple reason—they work to some degree. At least in the short term. Stress reactions vary widely from person to person.

Stress Reactions

Your reactions to stressful situations were learned when you were very young. You revert to them now because, to some degree, they work.

For example, if you tend to yell and get angry when you are under stress, people tend to leave you alone—hence less stress. But what may work for the individual is not necessarily what is good for others or the team.

The following are some common reactions to stress:

- Tunnel vision
- Irritability
- Nervousness
- Freezing up or shutting down
- Blowing up or yelling
- Fighting
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Disordered or confused thinking
- Excessive use of humor

- Impatience with people or yelling
- Denial
- Perspiration
- Accelerated heart rate
- Excessive talking

Understandably, some reactions to stress can have a big impact on cohesion and communication. Given that team members have different and conflicting reactions to stress, a team under stress can quickly lose its cohesiveness—seemingly in an instant.

For this reason, leaders must be able to help team members deal with stress, and they must constantly be on the lookout for stress buildup in the team.



Knowing your Stress Reactions

Although you do not always have control over a stressful situation, you always can control yourself. Understanding your reactions to stress and its impact on your decision-making process and communication can be priceless insight for any leader.

The Leader's Role in Mitigating Stress

Stress poses a set of risks to the team's safety and operational effectiveness. For a team to be self-correcting and to mitigate risk, it must be able to anticipate and handle stressful events.

As a leader, you have a number of responsibilities regarding stress:

- **Know your stress reactions.** As a leader you should be aware of how you react to stress and learn how to mitigate your own stress as much as possible because your personal stress can spill over into the crew.
- **Plan for stress.** The common causes of team stress, as well as stressors associated with operational risks, are predictable and can be risk managed. It's too late to plan for stress after you're already stressed.

- **Establish trigger points and control measures in advance.**
- **Monitor stress buildup in the team.** The leader also has a responsibility to monitor and prevent stress buildup in the team. The leader needs to create an environment where members of the team help monitor each other.

You mitigate stress when you replace an ineffective coping strategy—the current reaction—with a more effective one. There are two types of coping strategies: emotion-focused or problem-focused.

Emotion-focused coping strategies are based on reducing or redirecting your emotional responses to stress. This approach can be effective when someone is dealing with stress that is beyond his or her control.

Individuals can use a variety of methods to develop emotion-based coping strategies including relaxation techniques such as meditation, healthy diet, exercise, medication, and coping skills therapies. Information and products are widely available in libraries, bookstores, and on the Internet.

Problem-focused coping strategies are based on confronting the source of stress with a focus on problem solving. You use these strategies when you have some control over the source of stress or the way it impacts you.

The leader has some level of control over many sources of stress, so problem-focused coping strategies fall squarely in your court. Problem-focused strategies take on the following forms:

- **Gathering information**—Increased situation awareness helps reduce stress, because *unknowns* cause stress. *I talked to Frank about what was going on, and he provided more perspective on the situation.*
- **Planned problem-solving**—solving a stressful problem through deliberate problem-focused strategies. *I expected to deal with this type of stress, made a plan of action, and followed it.*

Planning your reactions to stress can be a very effective countermeasure to stress buildup for both the team member and the team as a whole. Establish trigger points and controls in advance.

- **Taking action**—assertively changing a stressful situation. *I was really uncomfortable with how they wanted us to do that assignment, so I talked with the chief about an alternative plan.*

Fear

Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is.
- **German Proverb**

Team members start on the team with all kinds of fears—fear of failure, fear they won't fit in, fear of speaking up. Fear produces stress on the team member; fear is a leadership tool and a leadership problem.

The Mechanics of Fear

The things you fear are undefeatable. Not by their nature, but by your approach.
- **Jewel Kilcher**

Fear is the *fight or flight response* to stress—a hard-wired reaction connected directly to the Emotion-Fear Memory System. Because fear isn't processed through the rational Cognitive Memory System, it is extremely difficult to overcome fear once it is established.

Because fear lives *below the water line* in the subconscious, the leader must approach team members with respect when dealing with fear. The leader's example either reinforces fear or influences others to overcome fear.

Fear and The Leader

The ugly truth is revealed that fear is the foundation of obedience.

- Sir Winston Churchill

A leader's role is to instill fear and dispel fear simultaneously.

- Mark Smith

All leaders use a form of fear either directly or indirectly. It is an easy source of influence that comes naturally to most. Thus, fear has always been a tool of leadership, but like any tool, it must be used situationally to be effective.

Common fears in cohesive and healthy teams include the following:

- **Fear of not being accepted.** Leaders use the team member's fear of not being accepted to help establish team norms. Here, the source of fear is the other team members; this fear is more commonly known as peer pressure.
- **Fear of consequences.** Leaders use a fear of consequences to maintain standards and discipline. Here, the source of fear is the system and the knowledge that leaders hold subordinates accountable to the system's standards.

Although fear is easy to use, it can be a double-edged sword for a leader, especially in the case when the leader becomes a source of fear.

Some leaders use intimidation because they have weakness in their values and character. Being intimidating is easy, and these leaders use it to boost their own egos by exercising coercive power over a subordinate.

Fostering this type of fear is dangerous. It undermines everything that good leadership is supposed to foster—communication, trust, and cohesion.

Leaders who foster this type of fear actually limit their own ability to lead by cutting off their access to other sources of power. These leaders also limit their team's ability to mitigate and correct error.

If you use fear, use it, like explosives, in a thoughtful, measured, and planned manner. Because you are dealing with the subconscious, you cannot always control or predict the outcome of a fear response. With fear

comes emotion, and with emotion comes emotional baggage. Handling fear carelessly or incorrectly can yield you many leadership problems down the road.

As a leader seeking to build and maintain an effective and cohesive team, always work to keep fear from being a barrier. Fear produces stress, and stress can inhibit performance if it gets too great.

Overall, a leader seeks to eliminate fears that inhibit performance and, especially, communication. Fear can destroy communication and with it trust and cohesion. The challenge for leaders is to find the balance between having enough fear to keep things running smoothly, while keeping unneeded fear out of the picture.

Throughout your leadership development, you will find fear everywhere—in subordinates, your superiors—and, if you are willing to look, yourself. Fear shapes conflict; in many cases, you must address a subordinate's fears to correct substandard performance or attitude.

Influencing Behavior

Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens.
- Jimi Hendrix

Behavior is the term used to describe how a person conducts himself or herself. A person's behavior is guided by their values and attitudes. Values shape attitudes; attitude directs behavior. The values and attitudes that drive behavior reside in the subconscious.

The relationship between attitude and behavior is complex. Values and attitudes overlap. Some behaviors are habits left over from previous attitudes that are now gone or forgotten. Other behaviors are a reflection of deeply held beliefs.

When you consider the complex connections among values, attitude, and behavior, you can appreciate the idea that other people's behavior and attitude is outside of your control. This awareness is a component of a leader's perspective of what you can and cannot control—a facet of mastering the art of leadership.

However, understanding that you cannot change someone's attitude or behavior does not mean that you cannot do anything about it. On the contrary, leaders have an obligation to influence people and their behavior. This chapter describes tools that maximize your ability to influence people.

Understanding Resistance to Change

Most people dislike change. But far worse than the dislike of change is being told they need to change by someone else. Being told to change almost always starts a type of psychological *turf war*.

All people perceive themselves as individuals in charge of their own life. For example, another person generally does not have the right to tell you who you are, what you should be, what you should believe, or how to act. These things are your *turf*, and when someone tells you to change, it is an invasion of your turf.

Yet, that is generally what happens when one person tries to get someone else to change their behavior.

Consider these common approaches:

- Ordering: *You have to learn to listen!*
- Threatening: *You better do this, or I'm going to...*
- Preaching: *You should really start running more.*
- Advising: *I think you should go tell him to...*
- Using logic: *Don't you realize if you smoked less...*
- Judging: *That was stupid, you need to...*
- Flattering: *You have so much potential!*
- Shaming: *You're too sloppy, you need to...*
- Analyzing: *You have a problem with authority.*
- Reassuring: *Things will be better tomorrow, you'll see.*
- Interrogating: *Why in the hell did you do it like that?*
- Distracting: *C'mon. Let's go have a beer and forget about it.*

Notice how many of these use the word *you*.

People don't like *you* messages. *You* messages impact the receiver in a variety of negative ways:

- **Convey blame.**
- **Communicate a lack of respect.**
- **Often cause retaliatory behavior.**
- **Produce resistance, rather than openness to change.**

You messages can represent the first shot fired, starting the unintended psychological turf war.

On a subconscious level, *you* messages convey a strong message: *I know how you should be, so change! What's your problem?*

A *you* message does not provoke a battle over the change; it provokes a battle over who has the right to dictate change to another person.

From a leader's perspective, *you* messages are a highly inefficient tool for trying to influence change in a person because you constantly fight the natural resistance to being told to change behavior.

***I* Message**

Being able to influence people is difficult unless they accept what you say. *You* messages erect barriers. By contrast, *I* messages produce an opposite effect.

An *I* message is a tool that you can use to tell someone you have a problem with their behavior, without necessarily invoking a defensive response that *you* messages can cause.

***I* Message Components**

A complete *I* message contains—in any order that works—these components:

- **Behavior**—A description of the behavior.
- **Emotion**—A statement of how the behavior affects you.
 - *I am upset because...*
 - *I'm disappointed because...*
 - *I get worried when...*
- **Effect**—The effect of the behavior on the rest of the team.

Sue, I get upset when I realize that maintenance on the equipment isn't getting done. It bothers me that it might break down on us when we need it the most.

Sue, you're letting us down by not taking care of the equipment.

Why *I* Messages Work

I messages work for many reasons:

When you use an *I* message you don't tell the other person who they are or are not, you tell them your perspective about the effects of their behavior. How you feel is *your* turf, and you have a right to say anything you want about that.

An *I* message is rooted in respect, and leaves a person a way out. Because you are not attacking their turf, your statement may not trigger the subconscious fight or flight response.

I messages contain a lot of information that is aimed at the subconscious level. Just as the media uses emotion-based content to get your attention, an *I* message uses the statement about your perspective as a method to reach the other person at a level where there are fewer barriers.

Stating the effect of the behavior on the team places the problem in context with something that the team member values, again engaging the subconscious.

This attaches a price tag to continued behavior because the person knows how it makes you feel and the effect on the team.

You can practice using *I* messages in a variety of circumstances, personal and professional. In most cases, *I* messages prove to be a powerful tool for influencing others.



Active Listening

Active listening is probably the single most important leader tool available for communicating with your team members and for solving problems.

Active listening enables you to do the following:

- **Size up the situation**, without charging in and getting burned. Just as you don't charge into an incident without understanding the issues and threats, you don't charge in and start fixing problems without understanding the size, nature, and human behavior involved.
- **Keep up the flow of information** until you have a complete understanding of the situation or problem. This builds trust and respect.
- **Determine the real or root problem** and whether or not you are going to get involved, and if so, in what capacity.
- **Guide team members to solving their own problems.** They retain ownership of the solution during the process. Don't you already have enough of your own problems!?

Active Listening Techniques

You can use several different types of active listening statements to further your understanding of the situation. Like all leadership tools, select them according to the situation.

Active listening tools include the following:

- **Encouragement**
- **Decoding**
- **Restatement**
- **Inquiry**
- **Summarizing**

Generally, at the start of a conversation you use more encouraging and reflecting statements and toward the end, more interpreting or Summarizing statements. You may find yourself using all of these techniques several times during a conversation.

Active listening requires a lot of focus and concentration. It takes a lot of practice to master, and you have to practice it to stay sharp.

Encouragement

Encouragement gets people talking and builds trust. When expecting a person to open up to you, you need to encourage them through a variety of methods. You encourage people both verbally and non-verbally.

When encouraging someone to talk, don't pass judgment or disagree with the speaker. Use words and phrases that do not commit you to a position about the subject. Most importantly, make sure that you send a consistent message both verbally and non-verbally.

Active listening uses the following non-verbal elements:

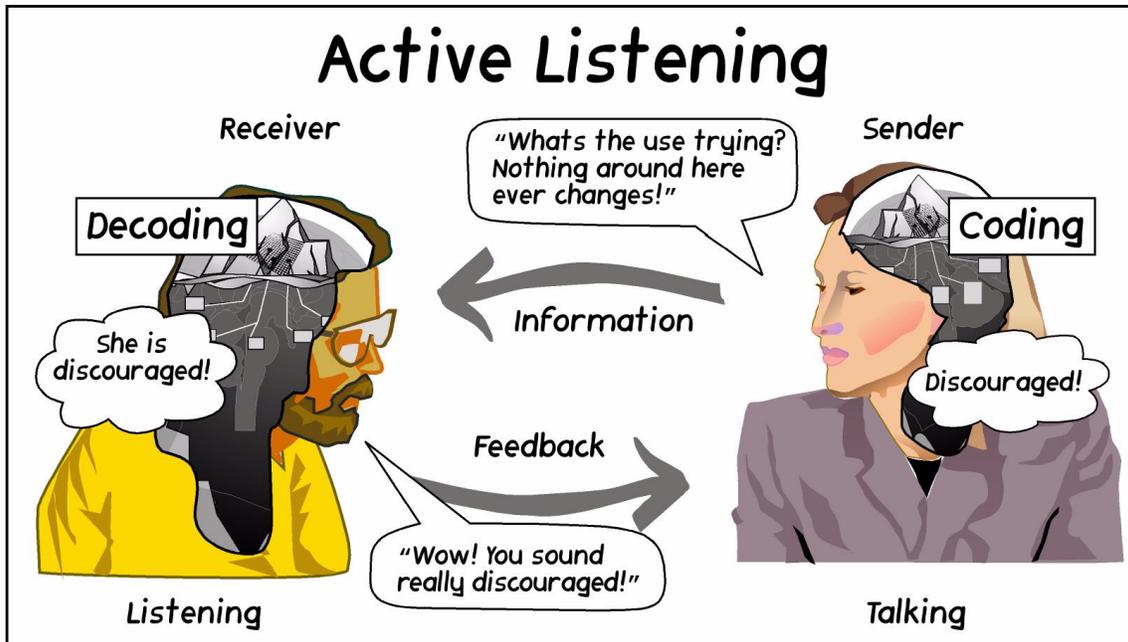
- Eye contact
- Good posture
- Head nodding and gestures
- Facial expressions of interest
- Silence

For every word you speak, you also send with it *context* in the form of verbal inflection and non-verbal signals. You undermine your own message by crossing your words with your body language. Usually, the context means more because it is interpreted subconsciously.

Decoding

Like encouragement, decoding statements, also called reflective statements, are tools that build trust and draw out more information than routine questions about the facts.

When you use reflective statements, you restate or decode the emotion behind the speaker's statement.



NRC -09-03_006b

Coding and Decoding Emotion-Based Content

When you feel strongly about a subject, your emotions are usually coded imprecisely into language. For example, the emotion of discouragement might get translated into something like, *What's the use in trying, nothing ever changes*. That language then has to be decoded by the listener, and then interpreted. All in all, a cumbersome process.

Although you interpret these emotions at some level subconsciously, reflection requires a conscious effort to decode the emotion and reflect for verification. This process doesn't come naturally, and it takes practice, but as you get better you will be able to discover the *problem under the problem* more quickly if you can tap into this content.

The good thing about active listening is that you can't screw it up.

You: *Wow. That has to be pretty disappointing.*

Raul: *Not really. I'm more angry with myself than I am disappointed.*

Because of the trust and respect behind this technique, even if you ask a question that is totally off base, the sender will correct you. Often when dealing with personal issues, team members have a hard time being objective. They may not even understand the problem themselves. Decoding is a technique that can help them articulate the real issues.

Restatement

When you restate a message, you are basically restating the factual part of the message using your own wording.

Example: *So you were supposed to get four cases but they would give you only three.*

Simply verifying the facts implies that you respect what the person is saying and are taking them seriously. This builds a great deal of trust and respect.

During situations in which people feel strongly or stress is high, people have a hard time stating the facts of an issue. They may not have objectivity, so facts, opinions, and emotion are all mixed together.

Restatement is a good way to get a quick map check and reaffirm your understanding of the situation. It also keeps the sender engaged with you and helps calm people down and provides focus.

Inquiry

Questions should be designed to either confirm or eliminate possibilities. It's important when asking questions that they are phrased in a way that stays objective and don't appear to be leading, interrogating or taking sides.

When you use inquiry, you are probing the sender's content for more breadth or detail. Use questions that can not be answered with a simple *yes* or *no*. Open-ended questions force the sender to elaborate or explain, providing you with more information.

Example: *What were some of the things you were thinking about that led you to that decision?*

Summarizing

In multi-part problems, it's important to summarize the larger portions and to make good mental or written notes. Summarizing allows all participants in the discussion to know that a conclusion has been reached in that area and the discussion can move on. Without summaries it can be unclear that there was a conclusion, or what it was.

You can use Summarizing statements to bring the conversation to a head in preparation for moving into the problem solving. summarize the final facts and points. Verify the conclusions with the sender. Establish a firm common baseline perception so that discussions about solutions can begin.

Example: *So if I understand this—they would only give you three cases, and you got frustrated that they wouldn't listen to your reasons for needing four. And that's what led to the argument.*

Barrier Statements

Forming an active listening response doesn't come naturally. It takes a lot of practice. In some cases, the first response that comes to mind may shut down communication rather than eliciting more information.

These are called *barrier statements*. As a leader, you should be aware if you use these kinds of statements when working with subordinates. Barrier statements can compromise the leader's effectiveness because they deliver the same subconscious message as the *you* message and start up the *turf war* of resistance to change.

Look at the following common barrier responses, and their active listening alternatives:

Sky: *What? Someone else complained about how I do that?*

You: *(barrier) C'mon Sky, just accept it as constructive criticism.*

You: *(active listening) Sounds like you feel like you're getting it from all sides.*

- Bill:** *Why does he screw up so much? I have to do it over!*
- You:** *(barrier) Well, maybe you should tell him how you feel...*
- You:** *(active listening) You're really upset by his performance.*
- Juan:** *I don't know, I'm kind of nervous about this.*
- You:** *(barrier) I know you can do it if you try.*
- You:** *(active listening) You're not sure you're up to this.*

Silence

Silence can be a valuable communications tool. In the first place, you can't listen until you are silent, but in addition, silence can be used as an effective tool for gathering information.

When you're having a conversation and don't respond to what is said, the speaker usually interprets the silence as encouragement to continue. Very few people are comfortable with not filling the *void* that you provide when you don't speak.

When used carefully, and generally after some trust has been built, silence can be a powerful tool for gathering information.

Organization and Pacing

When you are gathering information through active listening, it is easy to get lost in the exchanges. When going after a difficult problem, you may have several leads that you need to confirm or deny in order to get a handle on the problem.

Keep the pace comfortable. Be prepared to pause for a few seconds to gather your thoughts before embarking on a line of questions.

When you are actively listening, you are bombarded with content and context alike. Interpreting everything is difficult, especially if you are trying to formulate a question at the same time. Use silence to give yourself an opportunity to consciously review what has been said to date and make sure you have good situation awareness before continuing.

Taking some notes is a great way to stay organized and write down facts, possibilities for further exploration, summaries, and so on. Although some people might be intimidated by note taking, it's fairly easy for a leader to diffuse that by using them effectively with the other active listening techniques.

Inevitably, you'll get lost from time to time and lose focus of the discussion or the person you're talking with will lose focus. The *safety zone* of active listening is the original behavior or issue. If the discussion does not appear to be on track, go right back to the behavior.

Ted, I'm trying to see your side to this, but I'm getting frustrated that we seem to be going around in circles. None of what we've talked about helps me understand why you were late three times last week.

Tool	Purpose	Techniques	Examples
Encouragement	To gain trust and openness by conveying interest To keep the person talking while remaining neutral yourself	Don't agree or disagree Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice Use non-verbal encouragements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I see ...</i> • <i>Uh-huh ...</i> • <i>That's interesting...</i> • <i>Really?</i>
Decoding	To connect with the emotion behind a statement Connect subconsciously with person	Restate or decode the other's emotion about the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You feel that...</i> • <i>You're really angry about...</i>
Restatement	To demonstrate that you are listening and understand To verify the facts separate from emotion	Restate the facts so far as you understand them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If I understand, this happened then that...</i> • <i>In other words, this is your decision...</i>
Inquiry	To gain more information or detail about the situation or the speaker's viewpoint	Open-ended questions that require more information to answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What do you think the reason is?</i> • <i>How is it different than before?</i> • <i>What happened then?</i>
Summarizing	To pull important bottom line ideas and facts together To establish a basis for further discussion or for problem resolution	Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed...</i> • <i>If I understand you, this is the way you feel about the situation.</i>

Resolving Conflict

Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit upon his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats.

- **Henry Louis Mencken (1880-1956)**

No pressure, no diamonds.

- **Mary Case**

Everybody in America is soft, and hates conflict.

John Jay Chapman (1862-1933)

American author

con • flict, kän' flikt, n. Competitive or opposing action of incompatibles; antagonistic state or action.

Few people enjoy dealing with conflict. Conflict makes people uncomfortable. They associate it with hostility, alienation, and fear. Conflict often invokes a tendency for fight or flight.

However, conflict is inevitable in team interaction. In fact, healthy conflict is a prerequisite for team effectiveness. Healthy conflict indicates that team members are engaging in a dynamic exchange of ideas, which enables a team to consider diverse viewpoints and, ultimately, reach innovative solutions.

The fear of conflict represents one of the basic dysfunctions of a team. Being reluctant to voice conflicting opinions or avoiding controversial topics robs the team of valuable points of view and creativity and weakens team dynamics.

The leader's challenge becomes managing conflict so that team members feel that they can bring up disparate opinions while keeping conflict from escalating out of control.

Unresolved conflict is often at the heart of a lack of trust within the team. Animosity over previous mistakes or shortcomings can sully working relationships and compromise the team.

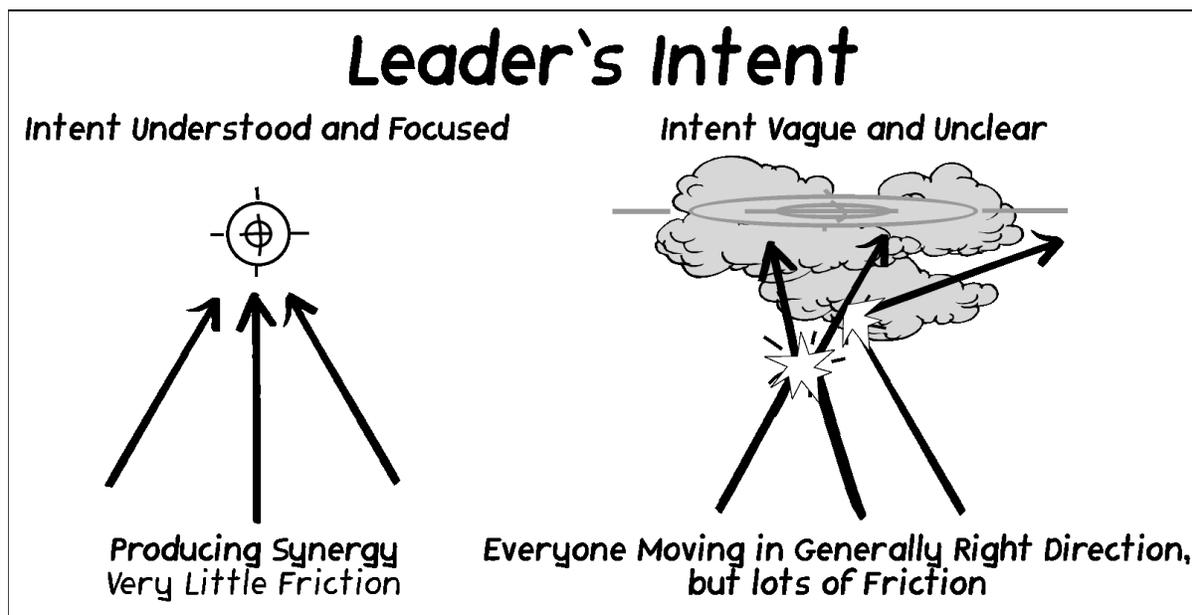
Preventing Unhealthy Conflict

Many tools are available to help you prevent conflict. They include clarifying leader's intent, using active listening to get situation awareness, and using *I* messages as a way to reduce barriers.



Leader's Intent

Clarifying leader's intent prevents a lot of conflict from starting. Leader's intent should be included in team vision, leadership philosophy, and leadership expectations. Understanding the leader's intent produces greater cohesion and less conflict within a group.



FLC-09-00_012



Active Listening

Active listening is a powerful situation awareness tool that enables you to monitor indications that conflict is building within the team. If you use active listening, even during short, routine interactions with team members, you are likely to prevent or at least spot many emerging conflicts that you wouldn't normally discover until it is too late.



Feedback

Feedback is another tool that keeps conflicts from building. Feedback from the leader to a team member keeps him or her informed on whether they are meeting the leader's expectations. If the team member is not performing to standard, the behavior is addressed early before it becomes a bad habit.

Feedback from the team to the leader serves the same purpose. From a behavior to a deficiency in a policy or practice, team feedback allows the leader to see where the friction points are and to make appropriate adjustments.



Humor

Humor can cut tension, especially under high stress conditions. Humor increases endorphins—natural painkillers—and naturally suppresses stress hormones.

Coming from the leader, humor reinforces that the leader takes the job, but not necessarily himself, seriously. People want to work on a team that knows how to have fun.

In stressful situations, a leader's use of humor can reassure team members that the leader is still in control and has enough perspective on the situation to see the light side. It allows people to focus on their jobs, confident that the leader also has good focus.

Strategies for Resolving Conflict

*The important things are always simple.
The simple things are always hard.*
- **Murphy's Law of Combat**

There are three ways you can resolve conflict:

- **I win, you lose.** My needs win over your needs.
- **You win, I lose.** Your needs win over my needs.
- **You win, I win.** We meet both my needs and your needs.

You win, I win is definitely the preferred method, but it is the hardest to put into practice.

I Win, You Lose

Sometimes *I win, you lose* is necessary, either in high risk or high stress situations, or when the other person's needs are just unreasonable or beyond your ability to meet.

In many cases, time constraints force you to resort to the *I win, you lose* approach. That's OK. If you use win-win situations most of the time, the team will understand that incidents place unique constraints on your problem-solving techniques.

When the stress level goes up, leaders often find it difficult to take the time to find the win-win solution. The good news is you can always go back after shift and pick it up from there.

Hey Linda, I know you weren't real pleased with how things went earlier today. Can we talk about it?

You're back on track to a win-win situation.

Although sometimes necessary, *I win, you lose* causes you to use your influence in a clear demonstration of power. This approach may get your immediate needs met, but it causes resentment in the person who loses.

In the long term, reliance on this authoritarian approach builds up so much resentment and creates such a bad leadership climate that team performance often deteriorates.

Operating with respect power and using participating and delegating leadership styles whenever possible lets the team know you're serious when you resort to the *I win, you lose* approach.

You Win, I Lose

Compromise makes a good umbrella but a poor roof.

James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)

American author and poet

Certain situations warrant the leader consciously putting the needs of one individual over the needs of the group. Usually it is made because the leader wants to show team members they can trust the leaders to take care of them in personal emergencies.

You win, I lose means the other person's needs are met at the expense of not meeting yours. If you use this method too often, it can lead to the perception of team members that they can take advantage of you.

However, not having your needs met as the leader causes problems for you and the team. It can lead to the team losing respect for you and you resenting the team members.

It also places you in a position of having to do more of your subordinates' tasks. Becoming a *doer* negatively affects your situation awareness and ability to exercise proper span of control as your focus shifts to the responsibilities of a team member rather than those of a leader.



You Win, I Win

Finding a win-win solution requires innovation and hard work. The win-win solution is rarely obvious; the win-win is almost never the first solution that comes to mind.

Further, a win-win result is not mere compromise, in which everyone gets something but also gives up something, often leaving everyone feeling as though they have lost. Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of England, once said that compromise is the lowest common denominator solution.

The win-win outcome achieves synergy, but it is no easy solution. To achieve a win-win, you must be prepared to listen, consider several options, and think creatively.

Once achieved, the win-win approach has many far-reaching benefits:

- **Increased commitment to the solution**
- **Higher quality decisions**
- **Mutual respect**

If you analyzed this method, here's what's being said:

You and I have a conflict of needs. I respect your needs. But I must respect my needs too. I will not use my power over you so I win and you lose, but I can't give in at the expense of my needs. Let's agree to look for a solution that satisfies both our needs, so no one loses.

Professional Ethics

A lot of people these days think that ethics is basically about staying out of trouble... And the ancient philosophers had a very different perspective—they thought that ethics is about building strength within yourself, between people, in organizations.

- Tom Morris

former professor of Philosophy
National Public Radio *Morning Edition*, August 5, 2003

Ethics are the principles and standards that guide us to do the right thing. Ethics are the moral context that defines our values and character.

Professional ethics are the principles and standards that guide members of a profession to determine moral versus immoral behavior.

Ethical Responsibilities

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

- Mark Twain

These are the ethical responsibilities of a leader:

- **Be a good role model.**
- **Develop your subordinates ethically.**
- **Lead in a way that avoids putting your people in an ethical dilemma.**

A leader can create ethical dilemmas by directing team members to actions that are in conflict with their values or by directing them to actions they cannot possibly achieve.

The following are warning signs of imminent ethical dilemmas:

- ***I don't care how you do it, just get it done!***
- ***The end justifies the means.***
- **Zero defect mentality. Covering up mistakes.**
- **Telling higher authorities what they want to hear.**
- **Assigning tasks without resources to get them done.**
- **Loyalty up but not down the chain.**

Ethical Dilemmas

An ethical dilemma exists when you are forced to choose between two competing values: loyalty to a supervisor versus duty to report wrongdoing.

Have you ever respected anyone who decided to cover up a mistake?

A leader is not so much judged by whether or not the leader or team makes a mistake. The leader is judged by how they handle the situation after the mistake is made. If you think otherwise, simply turn on the television or read a newspaper to find scandals related to cover-ups.

Handle a potentially embarrassing mistake in the honorable and effective way:

- **Admit the problem**, which is even more important if you made the mistake.
- **Fix the immediate problem.**
- **Look for causes**, not scapegoats.
- **Learn and improve.** Leaders always look for ways to turn weaknesses into strengths.

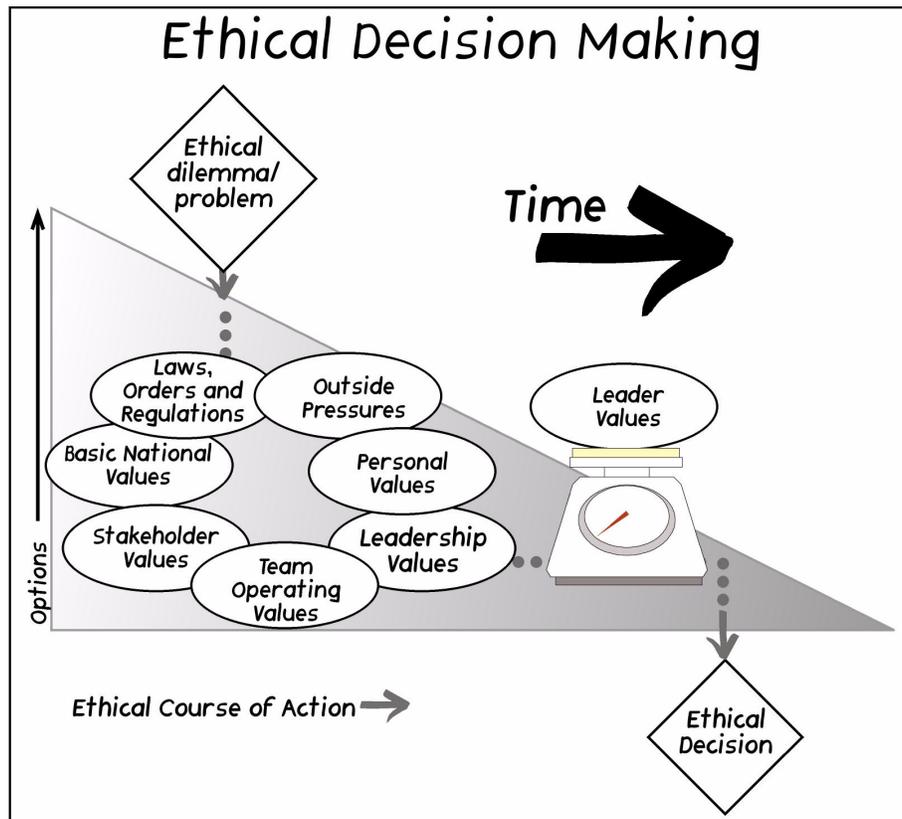
Making Ethical Decisions

Never violate the sacredness of your individual self-respect.
- Theodore Parker

Sometimes you find yourself in complex ethical dilemmas where the right ethical choice is unclear. In such situations, using an analytical decision-making process can help you identify the best course of action.

An analytical or deliberate decision process is when you formally develop more than one course of action and then carefully weigh the benefits and risks associated with a possible course of action. Use an analytical decision process during activities that are not time-critical, such as planning.

Because the consequences of ethical decisions can be great, and you may be asked later to justify your decision, you should take a careful and thorough approach to ethical decisions whenever time allows.



NRC -09-03_004

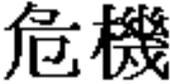
For unusually complex ethical dilemmas, there is no textbook solution. Some will praise your decision; others will criticize it. Different leaders arrive at different solutions.

Tough leadership decisions do not always have happy endings. Most importantly, you must be able to live with your choice. Before you can gain the respect of others, you must first respect yourself.

When you lead in an ethical manner, you build trust with your team and gain respect from your peers. Your supervisors will reward you with more independence.

Some may perceive that a leader gives up short-term gains by leading ethically. However, in the long run, leading ethically allows you to accomplish far more as a leader than you could using a short term focus or basing decisions on what's easy or expedient.

Leadership Values, Principles, and Tools

Leadership Values	 Leadership Principles	 Leadership Tools
Duty	<p>Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.</p> <p>Ensure tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.</p> <p>Make sound and timely decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Process • Leadership styles • <i>I</i> messages • Win-Win • Analytical decision process
Respect	<p>Develop your subordinates for the future.</p> <p>Know your subordinates and look out for their well being.</p> <p>Keep your subordinates informed.</p> <p>Build the team.</p> <p>Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debriefings • Active listening • Know how to mitigate stress • Providing feedback • Three approaches to problem solving • Values • Leader's intent
Integrity	<p>Know yourself and seek self improvement.</p> <p>Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.</p> <p>Set the example.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your stress symptoms • Johari window

Appendix A—Suggested Reading

Biographies

Crocker, H.W. III. *Robert E. Lee on Leadership*. Forum, 1999.

Fielder, Donald. *The Leadership Teachings of Geronimo: How 19 defeated 5000*. Sterling House, 2002.

Holden, Henry. *Women in Aviation: Leaders and Role Models for the 21st Century*. Black Hawk Publishing Company, 2001.

Powell, Colin. *My American Journey: An Autobiography*. Random House, 1995.

Case Studies

Ambrose, Steven E. *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*. Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Blum, Arlene. *Annapurna a Woman's Place*. London: Granada, 1980.

Bowden, Mark. *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999.

Cornum, Rhonda. *She Went to War*. G.K. Hall and Company, 1993.

Junger, Sebastian. *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea*. Harper, 1998.

Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air*. New York: Villard, 1997.

Lansing, Alfred. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Carroll & Graf, 1999.

Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. Jossey-Bass, 2002.

MacLean, John N. *Fire on the Mountain: The True Story of the South Canyon Fire*. Morrow, 1999.

MacLean, Norman. *Young Men and Fire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Mundle, Robert. *Fatal Storm: The Inside Story of the Tragic Sydney-Hobart Race*. McGraw-Hill, 1999.

Shaara, Michael. *Killer Angels*. New York: McKay, 1974.

Useem, Michael. *The Leadership Moment: Nine True Stories of Triumph and Disaster and Their Lessons for Us All*. Times Books, 1999.

Leadership Theory and Principle

Badaracco, Jr., Joseph. *Leading Quietly*. Harvard Business School, 2002.

Chadwick, David. *The 12 Leadership Principles of Dean Smith*. Total Sports Illustrated, 1999.

Cohen, William A. *The Stuff of Heroes: The Eight Universal Laws of Leadership*. Longstreet, 1998.

Flin, Rhona H. *Sitting in the Hot Seat: Leaders and Teams for Critical Incident Management*. John Wiley & Sons, 1996.

Freedman, David H. *Corps Business: The 30 Management Principles of the U.S. Marines*. Harperbusiness, 2000.

Johnson, Spencer. *Who Moved My Cheese?* Putnam, 1998.

Kaltman, Al. *Cigars, Whiskey & Winning: Leadership Lessons from General Ulysses S. Grant*. Prentice Hall Press, 1998.

Linsky, Martin and Ronald Heifetz. *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*. Harvard Business School, 2002.

O'Toole, James. *Leadership A to Z: A Guide for the Appropriately Ambitious*. Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Roberts, Wess. *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*. New York: Warner, 1990.

Smith, Perry M. *Rules & Tools for Leaders*. Avery Publishing Group, 1998.

Strock, James M. *Reagan on Leadership: Executive Lessons from the Great Communicator*. Prima Publishing, 1998.

Townsend, Patrick L., Joan E. Gebhardt, and Nancy K. Austin. *Five-Star Leadership: The Art and Strategy of Creating Leaders at Every Level*. John Wiley & Sons, 1999.

Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*. Trans. Samuel B. Griffith. Oxford University Press, 1984.

Useem, Michael. *Leading Up: How to Lead Your Boss So You Both Win*. Crown Business/Random House, 2001.

