

**Relational Leadership**  
**\*Equipping for a Legacy of Impact\***

**An Introduction**

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**Introduction/Summary**

Relational leaders, at their core, are treasure seekers. What is it that captures their primary attention? Seeing others come to both understand the “who” they are and then grow into these same personal qualities of strength, unique gifts and skill. To be this to others, the following truth is key...

*Leaders who impact or influence others do so more as a result of their character (who they are with consistency), than they do as a result of their talent, skill or ability to lead (what they do as effort – i.e. cast vision, manage, motivate, attain goals, etc.). – MGF*

Consider those leaders you have encountered who have left a positive mark upon your life. I suspect they did so because of who they were to you (their character) over any particular aspect of accomplishment you were a part of with them. In other words, these leaders made being “others-centric” their primary lens for life with others, most especially as leaders.

**The Vision for Relational Leadership**

Intended to be dynamic, life-giving and creative, relational leading is not about attaining certain levels of personal qualities as a leader. Rather, it reflects possessing a vision for personal character that is living and active, tested and tried, and yet, growing with increasing and enduring clarity and impact. *For the purpose of this encouragement training towards becoming a relational leader, the emphasis will focus on the broader vision or ideas about the kind of character that defines a relational leader whose focus is on building people.* Within this broader approach, there can be a variety of applications or strategies for supporting and growing any particular character quality being identified and discussed. While some attention may be discussed over more specific applications, the main goal of this equipping remains to elevate a focused gaze, value for and priority on the character quality as a higher vision to daily reach for in one’s leadership life, rather than marking a particular end point of “attainment”. None of us will attain the fullness of any of these qualities. Life itself proves that the journey of growth is ever present. The same can be said for becoming a relational leader. Our fidelity to impact others with an enduring legacy is connected to our value for the character needed to do so with consistency. In other words, there is always more growth ahead.

I want to emphasize again. *Relational leadership makes as its priority, the building and impacting of others through personal character.* Regardless of the environment or the circumstances of the leading required, this priority stays priority. No doubt it will be challenged, and likely often. Reminding ourselves often of this truth in those moments is important – long after the moment of challenge passes, the presence of positive impact will still be living and connecting with future generations. You, yes you, can be that kind of light to impact future generations.

## Key Character Traits of Relational Leaders

The following character traits and internal heart values direct perspectives and actions of relational leaders that impact others towards personal excellence, success and support. While some could be part of a leader's natural disposition, each can also be choices one makes towards becoming a more relational leader of impact. Doing so can strengthen each trait to become more prominent with intentional priority and practice. While others certainly exist, these especially have resonated with my own 45+ year experiences of leadership, as well as with others who have encountered or studied relational leaders of impact.

*Relational leaders value and hold important...*

- **A Seeking Heart for Personal Identity**
  - Always pursuing discovery of personal strengths and gifts in others
  - Valuing and calling out the treasure in others as more real than the “dirt” (i.e. failures, weaknesses, etc.)
  - Carrying a primary vision of “what can be” over “what is”
- **Encouragement Connections**
  - Regularly offering personal encouragement and authentic gratefulness for others
  - Carrying a “building” lens for relational life
  - Giving attention to details for relational care
  - Listening and considering other's perspectives for mutual understanding
- **Freedom Environment**
  - Creating a relationally safe environment for all team members to be themselves
  - Building and sustaining trust as one's greatest accomplishment
  - Operating with invitation/choice over control/obligation
  - Cultivating meaningful creativity through honoring freedom
- **Growth Lifestyle**
  - Redemptive vision for all circumstances
  - Reflecting and receiving personal feedback often for continued growth
  - Embracing conflict and failure as growth opportunities towards stronger relationships (i.e. falling forward)
  - Affirming the capacity of others for transformational growth and change
  - Promoting consistency as the key change impactor in attitudes and behaviors
- **Intentional Communication**
  - Focus on clarity and consistency
  - Value insightful questions for understanding
  - Processing conflict and unmet expectations
  - Relational connection through active listening
- **Times and Seasons**
  - Distinguishes between the two in personal, relational and circumstantial spheres
  - Connects both to strategic outlook and decision-making processes
  - Makes space for embracing both the moment and its role in the larger picture
- **Transparent Authenticity**
  - Embracing and offering personal vulnerability
  - Offering a dependable and well-defined personal decision-making process
  - Valuing reflection and quick ownership of actions and consequences

- **Personal Self-awareness**

- Being Principle driven in attitude, language, action and our decisions
- Surpassing words with one's actions
- Taking the greatest risks on the potential greatness of others
- Valuing wonder, beauty and mystery as definers of relational love and goodness
- Value and pursuit for enduring personal character
- Servant-hearted towards those one is leading
- Honors personal limits and capacity, and the need for others

### **Equipping Process**

A variety of either in-person or on-line discussion sessions can be developed to fit the needs of any organization, leadership team or staff development environment. Each trait can be the focus of individual sessions, or several can be covered at one time. The focus level will determine the depth of exploring that can be done during the training time. In addition, follow up strategizing can be offered as further support to implementing action plans for leadership development based on these principles. Individual sessions revolve around more conversational discussion exploring key questions to encourage understanding, impacts, applications and personal self-assessment.

Contact me for scheduling a visit to explore options for bringing this training to your team or organization.

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