

EnLive

ROAD MAP TO SELF AWARE LEADERSHIP

by M. Ross Naylor-Tatterson



“The world desperately needs leaders who know how to make wise decisions. It is impossible for a leader to cultivate wisdom without taking the time to reflect and consider the impact of their own actions and make the necessary adjustments.”

- M. Ross Naylor-Tatterson

**Presenting
the Best of
Who We Are**

Self-Aware Leaders Are Confident In The Value Of Their Contribution

*“Power - the ability to effect
change.”*

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Self-aware leaders possess the confidence that what they have to contribute brings value.

If you are not aware of your strengths in a given situation, then you don't have a handle on where to even begin leading. Being confident in your contribution is how you add value and it is the place of launching into leadership.

For example, as a person who has a lot to do with encouraging soft skills in the workplace such as motivation, team building, and conflict resolution, I have found they have not been valued as much as hard skills such as analyzing metrics, technical expertise, craftsmanship, business acumen, etc.

However, I no longer question my contribution to the business environment. In fact, I have seen a turning around and an understanding that you will suffer hardship, both in productivity and financially, if leaders are not attentive to the way their leadership is impacting others.

Self-aware leaders know how to self- differentiate

*Without solitude we remain
victims of our society and
continue to be entangled in
the illusions of the false self.”*

-Henri Nouwen

One has to learn how to get outside of the emotional climate of a situation in order to see it clearly and be effective as a leader. Firing off emails in the middle of the night because of being swept up in the emotional climate is an example of a lack of self-differentiation. To go into a situation you're not prepared for displays a lack of self-differentiation

You have then become a victim of the tyranny of the urgent. Self-aware leaders recognize when there is a disturbance in "the force."

Preparing for a meeting with just one person in mind and trying to impress them, rather than truly addressing all the people in the meeting, is a sign that you may be poorly differentiated. Other signs are anxiety, anger, and procrastination.

In order to differentiate, a self-aware leader has developed five types of supporting relationships that help to talk you off the ledge and bounce ideas around before attending the meeting or making key decisions.

Encouraging practices and key support systems help leaders to develop preparing themselves to enter into a meeting or conversation in a way that will be constructive. This is not about ignoring the issues, but rather being ready to address them with the team in a healthy way.

**Self-aware leaders
regulate the impact
of their presence**

*“Between stimulus and
response there is a space. In
that space is our power to
choose our response.” -*

Victor Frankl

As a leader, you need to know the impact of your presence and how this contributes or detracts from the mission and the relationships of the people you are leading. Good parents raise their children to be responsible for the impact of their presence. This is adult behavior. This is what an adult does.

Some good reflection questions to interrogate this:

What is it like working for you?

What is it like being married to you?

How does my presence affect the people around me and the organization?

**A self-aware leader
knows the
strengths and
weaknesses of the
way they
communicate**

*"Sometimes silence is golden
but other times it's just plain
yellow."*

-Ed Cole

Most people think they are a lot better communicators than they actually are. They don't understand the dynamics of how they send a message and others receive it. They don't understand the true impact of their actual message. Body language, tone, and words are what people receive, in that order. You miss out when you don't intentionally use all of these.

A cross-cultural layer can add difficulty to how well you communicate. Some communicate well in their cultural bubble but fail miserably outside of it.

Personality also impacts your communication style and is something a self-aware leader can regulate and improve.

**Using
Wisdom In
Our Decision
Making**

A self-aware leader challenges thinking and assumptions

“A company's most
important strength is new
thinking.”

-Peter Thiel

Self-aware leaders develop a “radar” for hearing or speaking an assumption.

They hone their ability to detect an assumption. Something someone believes is a fact or absolute. It sounds usually conclusive. A self-aware leader has a tool kit of questions that challenge assumptions such as:

What are you basing that on?

That is one way of doing it, are there any other ways you can think of?

How can you be sure that what you are thinking is correct?

Push them to validate their conclusions.

Self-aware leaders learn how to harness conflict

*“We are not given a short life
but we make it short, and we
are not ill-supplied but
wasteful of it.”*

-Seneca

Conflict needs to be reinterpreted as an opportunity to learn and grow. This is an area where practice is imperative or you will never get better. If you abandon learning this skill, you will continue to get the same results. It's helpful to identify what each Enneagram type favors in terms of how they are triggered into conflict and how unhealthy types might respond.

Personally learning these skills then sets you up to be an excellent mediator. I believe all organizations should have staff trained to be catalysts in that organization to commence harnessing the opportunities for healthy growth that conflict brings.

**A self-aware leader
seeks honest
feedback and
interrogates reality**

*“Pride makes us artificial
and humility makes us real.”*

-Thomas Merton

Self-aware leaders are brave enough to have conversations that go a little deeper than what most people are comfortable with. They believe in radical candor and care for the individual. These are parallel truths that cannot be separated if you truly are seeking reconciliation. It's a balance and what the Bible refers to as "speaking the truth in love."

Leaders don't make this a one-way street, either; they pursue the truth about themselves and the organization they lead. Without a good grasp on reality, confusion ensues and decisions are made on false assumptions.

**A self-aware leader
knows trust is the
foundation of all
relationships**

*“Trust and confidence are
not traits that you have, but
traits that are built,
maintained, learned,
nurtured and protected.”*

-Paolo Gallo

Knowing how trust is built and lost is a very big deal, because trust is the foundation of all human relationships. There are some very specific skills and tools that a leader can use to build trust. Often leaders overlook building this foundation and rely upon their status and power to get their teams activated. You may get compliance but with trust you get whole hearted participation and the benefits it brings with it.

Building trust is probably one of the most important skills to develop when it comes to leadership and the main thing that makes all the other 16 principles effective.

**Using Tools
Of
Assessment
And
Alignment
For Coaching**

A self-aware leader needs a centering vision or document

*“The most important issue is
that the vision becomes
some sort of magnet that all
compasses point towards”*

- Carsten Lind

Without a centering vision or document, any program, project, business enterprise, or activity will become personality driven. A centering vision levels the playing field. Point your arrows toward this. It defines the culture you're going to operate in, and culture is not personality.

Personality can dominate culture. If it's driven by personality, then that personality has to be pleased. If you have an agreed-upon vision and set of values, everybody has the right to say, "Is this in alignment with values and vision?" This is good for longevity and it helps in multiple areas.

Self-aware leaders use tools to provide regular assessment

*"You should examine
yourself daily. If you find
faults, you should correct
them. When you find none,
you should try even harder."*

-Unknown

Without regular assessment, there is no way to gauge progress or growth.

This is critical in coaching, where you are pursuing definite results. Growth continuum and the People Growth framework as well as the modified Nine Box are some of the tools we have developed to provide assessment. These instruments, when handled well, can help those being coached to identify what next areas of growth need to be focused upon.

**Self-aware leaders
know what ignites
and what deflates
those they are
coaching**

*"You cannot inspire unless
you are inspired yourself."*

- Carmine Gallo

In the realm of coaching, self aware leaders provide more than just supporting and encouraging. I have found that most leaders do not invest much time in developing a treasury of rewards or specific ways of celebrating or affirming those they are leading. They need to know what inspires a person or a team. They need to know what deflates.

This is how you energize others in pursuit of results. Everybody's different so each individual responds to different rewards. You are also unique so do what works for you in alignment with what works for them.

**A self-aware leader
can use the tools of
the Enneagram to
release, and
encourage the
diversity on their
team**

*“Not everything that is faced
can be changed, but nothing
can be changed until it is
faced.”*

- James Baldwin

While understanding and working within diversity in all areas are important, personality diversity is one dimension of diversity as important as ethnic or gender diversity. There is such a wide range of personalities, and our personality impacts how we work and how we make a contribution to the larger mission.

Personality diversity is often overlooked. This also impacts developing the bench strength of emerging leaders in an organization. People leave organizations because of not being appreciated, valued, or given direction in their area of strength and personality. It's not necessarily because of money or a bigger office, but because they don't feel they fit in this particular team or workplace.

**Self-aware leaders
deal with viruses
immediately in
order to maintain
the health of the
organization**

*"An inefficient virus kills its
host. A clever one stays with
it." - James Lovelock*

Organizations are vulnerable to several common viruses. Self-aware leaders have their senses trained to hone in on these viruses before they run rampant. There's no use pretending the virus isn't there.

What are the problems with ignoring the viruses? They will spread and start to attack functioning parts of an organization and eventually destroy the whole system. You don't kill the carrier; attack the virus and save the patient. Isolate those who love their viruses.

Growing Healthy Leaders

**Self-aware leaders
know everyone in
leadership needs to
use the skills of
coaching**

*"Leadership is not measured
by how many people follow
you, how large your
constituency is, but by how
many leaders of character
you develop and empower to
lead with you"*
- Alexander Venter

The true fruit of an apple tree is not the apples, but more trees. Leaders who learn how to coach are not trying to make the rosier apples. A good leader is trying to release the potential in each apple to try and produce many more apples. I'm here to help this individual reach their maximum potential.

Coach them to identify that, release that, remove any obstacles. Without coaching, a leader can try and do it, but coaching is coming alongside asking questions. Coaching is how you produce apple trees.

**Self-aware leaders
know how to build
the coaching
relationship**

*“All learning requires effort.”
- David Daniels and Virginia
Price*

In coaching, self-aware leaders set expectations and boundaries. They make the roles and responsibilities crystal clear. Who's doing what? Who sets the agenda? What is the nature of the relationship?

By answering these questions, both parties know what the relationship is about. In this way, the coaching relationship is protected from distraction or unmet expectations as well as focused on a primary goal.

Activating Strategic Thinking

Self-aware leaders pursue results

*“That which does not grow,
rots.” - Catherine the Great.*

In the coaching relationship, you are there to make sure results are attained. This leads to one of the primary questions to ask:

“What are you and your team leader working on in terms of your development right now?”

This question reveals whether there is some sort of growth focus going on in the team/leader relationship.

If we are to be an organization that values growth, this is a question that we can use to measure whether we are walking the talk. However, I do believe most leaders feel they don't have the time to get this involved in their team members' lives, especially when they have to get production out the door.

**A self-aware leader
interviews well in
order to recruit and
select the right fit
for his or her team**

*"Recruiting is not an exact
science"*

- Will Muschamp

They are aware of confirmation bias, unconscious bias, and overconfidence bias. Sometimes, in searching for the right candidate, you've already decided based on how they are dressed or how they look—in other words, looking for yourself—then you go on to validate your first impression. The questions you ask prove they are more like you and therefore they are the right fit. Modifying questions depending on who is being interviewed means you're giving some people a pass while grilling others. Another indicator is having no need to look at history or references or do research.



If you want to learn more
about becoming a self-
aware leader sign up to
receive our monthly
newsletter at
enliveleaders.com