



Inspired Success  
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## Principles For Inspired Success Ezine

*"Tips, Tools, & Resources for People-Whispering"*

### Is Focusing on Strengths Enough? Challenging Assumptions about Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

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**Issue #30, March /April 2011**

**People-Whispering Tip:** Focusing On Strengths Alone Is Not Enough

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**Transformational Coaching Tip:** Identify Your Triggers as the First Step to Self and Relationship Management, Virtual Showcase July 12, Complimentary DiSC Strategy Session

#### People Whispering Tip

Leadership is a popular and confusing topic for many probably because it can seem to be in short supply in many organizations. If you go to any bookstore and search the titles of the business section, you will find numerous books about leadership and how to create results through people. Is leadership really that complex that we need so many perspectives on the topic?

Perhaps there is just so much misinformation about what constitutes good leadership, that all of these books serve to dispel some common misperceptions. For example, there is a tendency to think that only those at the top of the hierarchy are leaders, but that simply isn't true. Leaders can be found at all levels of an organization and in all walks of life. Some of the most powerful leaders don't have the official title but are individuals who have made a tremendous positive impact through the power of their personal example and influence.

That said, horror stories of corporate greed and/or poor decision-making from just a few senior leaders can be enough to bring a whole company down along with a lot of good people in the process. For example, the fall of Enron (and Arthur Anderson along with it) is not the result of the majority of people not doing their jobs well.

I am not an expert on what happened, but I did watch the compelling 2005 documentary entitled "The Smartest Guys in the Room" which highlights the fact that having only intellectual prowess is not enough to be an effective, credible leader.

Granted, the Enron debacle is an extreme example of corporate fraud and a lack of ethics. Nevertheless, as Enron survived the dot.com bubble burst in 2000, it was named as the "most admired" corporation by Fortune magazine for the sixth year running.

Clearly, Fortune magazine missed the Darwinian worldview of the Enron corporate culture which had a review committee which graded employees and annually fired the bottom 15 percent who were deemed unsuitable for the company's objectives. **This created a highly competitive and brutal working environment where trust and teamwork, never mind ethical behavior, could not survive.**

My purpose here is not to talk about Enron but to highlight the confusion around what real leadership is and how to cultivate it. The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are requiring greater flexibility and adaptability than ever before. Management guru Peter Drucker described these demands by saying, **"Leaders require the capacity to analyze, to think, to weigh alternatives, and to harmonize dissent. But they also require the capacity for quick and decisive action, for boldness, and for intuitive courage. They require being at home with abstract ideas, concepts, calculations, and figures."** That sounds like the intellectual capabilities that were emphasized when I got my MBA.

But Drucker went on to add, **"They also require perception of people, a human awareness, empathy, and all together a lively interest in people and respect for them."** That sounds a lot like the emotional intelligence that Daniel Goleman and others have popularized in recent years understanding that leadership is ultimately about understanding people and how to work with and through others.

I was thrilled to have the opportunity to be interviewed on Atlanta Biz Radio recently on "Building Bridges with Emotional Intelligence and DiSC" which you can [listen to here](#). My interview starts at about 18 minutes in as there were multiple guests at the studio that morning.

**In short, effective leadership is quite multidimensional requiring intelligence, emotional savvy, and flexibility to navigate beyond one's comfort zones to become well-rounded and more fully expressed. It requires the ability to respond to rapidly shifting circumstances which requires access to a full range of leadership behaviors most of us just haven't practiced enough.**

As a people-whispering leader, the first step is the first component of emotional intelligence which is self-awareness. **We need to be aware of our strengths and gifts yes, but it is not enough to focus on those alone as many popular management books would have us believe. Since leadership requires such a broad range of competencies and behaviors, leaders must also understand their "blind spots" by understanding their psychological drivers, motivations, and default settings or comfort zones. Without a multidimensional model for leadership, the one-dimensional leader may lack the diverse skills needed to deal with complex challenges and would often choose the most comfortable and inadequate response.**

The second step is to understand the strengths and "blind spots" of others or, in emotional intelligence speak, to have social awareness. Third, stopping at awareness is not enough. We must learn to adapt to speak to the other in their language and this requires us to broaden our repertoire of leadership skills and grow in new directions.

For this we need a model of leadership that is multidimensional. I am excited to announce the forthcoming book to be released by Inscape Publishing authors called **The 8 Dimensions of Leadership** based upon the DiSC model which does just that.

The book provides a leadership framework for an individual leader to understand their primary leadership dimension and the psychological drivers, motivations, and "blind spots" typical of their behavioral style. It also provides solid suggestions on what is most important to their leadership development depending upon the stage in one's career a person is and the leadership lessons that will help them to get from where they are now to where they want to go. These lessons relate to the other two components of emotional intelligence which are self-management and relationship management.

I will be offering keynotes and workshops about the book as soon as it is released so stay tuned. It is exciting in that the model will expand your perspective about what effective leadership is and will help you to chart your own course towards becoming a better leader. As you learn to stretch and grow, you can expect to become more comfortable in your own skin as a leader. While your "default" style is valuable you can build upon it by understanding your strengths and your areas for growth.

For assistance on your journey, please feel free to contact me at (404) 327-6330 or via email at [Laura@lauraadavis.com](mailto:Laura@lauraadavis.com).

### **DiSC® Assessment Application (s):**

#### **1) Atlanta Event for Atlanta Clients and Friends:**

**Come to ASTD Atlanta's session on "How Does Personality Help or Hinder Leaders Facing Daunting Challenges?" DATE AND TIME AND PLACE: Gwinnett Medical Center Resource Center, Monday April 25, 2011, 6 PM**

Dr. Mark Scullard, coauthor of *The 8 Dimensions of Leadership* and head of Inscape's research team, will discuss what part personality plays in helping leaders meet the challenges of leading in a global economy. Leaders can learn their style-specific leadership lessons that represent the "what-I-wish-I-had-known-sooner" truths of mature leaders and discover 8 specific approaches to leadership.

#### **2) Virtual Showcase: 363 for Leaders, May 3, 2011, 4 PM to 5:30 PM Eastern**

This virtual showcase gives you first-hand experience with the new Everything DiSC 363 for Leaders Profile. From the comfort of your office, you can participate in a webinar featuring Inscape's newest product, the Everything DiSC 363 for Leaders. This isn't just any 360. It combines the best of 360's with the simplicity and power of DiSC, plus 3 strategies for improving leadership effectiveness.

You will see the benefits of the 363 for Leaders assessment during the 90 minute webinar hosted by Inscape Publishing's training experts. You'll learn how this unique product provides leaders with 360 feedback, a clear map of their strengths, and specific strategies for greater effectiveness that are ideal for coaching conversations.

#### **3) Virtual Showcase: Everything DiSC Application Library for Management, Sales, and Team Applications, June 1, 2011, 4 PM to 5:30 PM Eastern**

**Enhance your internal management, sales, and employee training programs with The Everything DiSC Application Library product line.**

From the comfort of your office, you will participate in a webinar featuring the entire family of *Everything DiSC Application* products.

One of the biggest benefits of having you and your team take any of these profiles is the ability to run Comparison Reports on any two individuals for free. This is excellent information for coaching for performance or for conflict resolution, etc.

If you or your internal training staff are interested in learning more, join me for the upcoming webinars led by the experts at Inscape Publishing.

You will experience the Everything DiSC Workplace profile as pre-work, and then participate in an interactive, 90-minute webinar from the comfort of your office

**SPACE IS VERY LIMITED SO CALL OR EMAIL ME ASAP IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ANY OF THESE EVENTS!**

**TO REQUEST A SAMPLE REPORT AND/OR PARTICIPATE IN THIS FREE OFFER,** send your name, company name, approximate number of supervisors/managers, your title, phone number, city/state to [Laura@lauraadavis.com](mailto:Laura@lauraadavis.com). The relevant information will be sent to you electronically.

**INTERESTED IN A TEST RUN CONVERSATION WITH ME PERSONALLY?**

Schedule a DiSC Strategy Session with me. During this 45 minute complimentary discussion, we'll discuss your business objectives and challenges, talk about your organization's leadership capabilities, and see what assessment and coaching/training tools would best benefit you and your team/organization's needs. You are under no obligation to make a purchase and there is no pressure, just a process of education about your options.

Call us at 404-327-6330 and/or email me to have a conversation about how these tools can help your organization start on the path towards more effective talent development today!

**Transformational Coaching Tip:**

This month's coaching tip is short and sweet. It is simply, **know what pushes your buttons and start to notice your patterns so you can be proactive about responding and not reacting to your triggers.**

We all have pet peeves about people or events that can irritate us until we just want to scream. Perhaps you have a coworker who is overly dramatic and who has to communicate everything as if it were the first act of a dramatic play. You, on the other hand, tend to be a more subtle and calm communicator such that their dramatic behavior really gets your goat.

Often our buttons are pushed by people displaying behavior that is the opposite of what we deem appropriate to the situation at hand based upon our style.

Knowing who and what pushes your buttons is essential to developing the ability to take control of those situations, maintain your poise, and calm yourself down. Knowing why your buttons are pushed can open doors to managing your reactions to your triggers.

Jot down a list of your major triggers and see if you can detect any patterns. In future issues, I will further develop the self and relationship management strategies that will allow you to successfully manage these situations with grace.

Of course, it is easier to stay focused in an empowering direction with the assistance of a trained coach. For assistance in operationalizing any of these best practices into your workplace for more powerful, effective results, feel free to call us at (404) 327-6330 or email [Laura@lauraadavis.com](mailto:Laura@lauraadavis.com).

To your inspired success!