

A Book Report on
*Leading With Authenticity in
Times of Transition*

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(Book Report by Gary Tomlinson)

Preface:

Change and transition are no longer periodic events. Today, they are the ongoing and natural state of many organizations. Senior-level managers are highly skilled in leading and managing the structural side of change: creating a vision, reorganizing, restructuring, and so on. But rarely do managers fully grasp or focus on the human side of change: grieving, letting go, building hope, and learning. And when leaders do pay attention to the deeper emotions and behaviors tied to difficult change, few know how to appropriately address those emotions and behaviors.

While there are many books, strategic consultants, and executive workshops dedicated to change management, few if any answer the crucial question that change poses: *how do leaders in real settings with real people help themselves and others work through difficult times?*

The answer, though complex and demanding, is grounded in the authenticity of leaders and hinges on trust. Building trust requires leaders to be honest and genuine. In today's changing times, the most authentic, effective leaders find a way to address the emotions of transition. Authentic leaders can effectively deal with the structural side of change and guide people through the transition that accompanies change.

This book is for senior-level practicing managers and those who work with them – human resources professionals, coaches, consultants – indeed, entire management teams. This book provides insight for leaders so that they can decipher and adjust their behavior to maintain the crucial balance between the structural side of leading change and the human side of leading transition.

Introduction:

The challenge of leading organizations through change goes beyond setting strategy, making plans, and implementing the structures and processes of change. Often the real struggle lies in managing the long-term aspects of recovery, revitalization, and recommitment. In other words, the significant work of managing change requires leaders to focus simultaneously on managing the business and providing effective leadership to

the people. More often than not, it is the focus on the people side of leadership that loses out.

The risk, leaders face in minimizing or ignoring the human dynamic that plays out in the context of change and transition, is twofold. First, they may prevent or undermine the organization's structural and strategic goals by failing to gain sufficient buy-in and commitment from employees. Second, they may destabilize the organization's culture and erode trust and values that engender dedication. Loyalty and trust give way to insecurity and fear, while productivity and enthusiasm are displaced by withdrawal and skepticism.

In order for leaders to effectively harness and maintain the talent and commitment needed to benefit from organizational change, they must:

1. Examine their behaviors and emotions tied to change and transition.
2. Establish and protect trust.
3. Find a balance between structural leadership and people leadership.

By presenting a framework for understanding these issues, describing specific competencies, illustrating them in a real way, and providing tips and tactics for their use, this book will assist managers who are charged with leading themselves and others in a constantly changing workplace.

Building Trust In Extraordinary Times:

Rapid, repeated change and constant transition create an emotional dynamic in organizations. Individuals and organizations are running at a higher emotional pitch than they have in decades past. Leaders often tell us they would like to pay greater attention to the emotional or human elements of leading change, but they see those as secondary when compared to the more tangible, bottom-lined business practices and demands that also require their attention and leadership. However, leaders who minimize or ignore the powerful emotional undercurrents that accompany change and transition risk the bottom line.

Valuing Authenticity: Authenticity in a leader generates trust from others. Trust is an elusive quality, but in its absence almost nothing is possible. Self awareness and a focus on learning underlie authenticity.

Change and Transition: Change and transition is not the same thing. Change is a new way of doing something. Transition represents the psychological and emotional adaptation to change. Adaptation is essentially a process of letting go of the old way and accepting the new way. Leaders need to recognize that when change initiatives are not going well, it is probably because people are stuck in some part of the transition. They may not be ready to let go because what they have to leave behind was comfortable and it worked. They may not be ready to accept because learning is never pain free. There is a

drop in competency and comfort at the initial stage of the learning curve. People resist when they feel at risk. They are grieving because they are letting go of something they value and are trying to adapt to something that is unknown. When people feel this way, they aren't able to fully appreciate and to actively commit to a change initiative. A leader's task is to connect to the personal and emotional fallout of change so that you can help individuals in the organization let go, deal with the discomfort, rebuild, and learn.

Leading Change: Here's what frequently happens in an organization when a change initiative is put into play: Accustomed to the structural side of leadership – visioning, reengineering, reorganizing, and restructuring – senior leaders see problems and opportunities, and come up with ways for the organization to deal with them. Skilled managers look at direction, structure, operations, and other factors and then develop a plan of action. Goals are set, processes are revamped, jobs are redesigned or eliminated, and new metrics are established – all under the umbrella of “change initiative.” Most managers are focused on leading this structural side of change.

Unfortunately, the best-laid plans for organizational change are frequently diluted or damaged by a failure to exert strong leadership around the people issues. Sooner or later, leaders see that the change isn't working according to plan. Individuals are not performing as needed and are even resistant. In response, leaders naturally turn to their strength and habitual ways of behaving. They try to motivate their people by cheerleading, getting angry, threatening. They get impatient when employees won't get with the program. Frustration grows as leaders wonder why employees can't just do what needs to be done. Usually, the organization sheds the more resistant employees, which raises the pressure on and anxiety in the people who remain.

Change initiatives break down because people stall somewhere during the transition of change.

Leading Transition: Organizational events – restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, and financial difficulty – as well as overall uncertainty trigger all kinds of behavioral and emotional reactions. Confronted by change, people go through a time of transition. This adaptive process occurs at a different pace and in various ways for each individual, depending upon the circumstances. In an organization undergoing change, the leader's responsibility is to live through this process of transition with others in a genuine and authentic way, and to lead in a way that helps bring people through transition so that they can adapt and contribute in the long term.

Building Trust: Leaders are most effective in times of transition when they incorporate both structure – and people-related behaviors into their roles and responsibilities. By striking the right balance between the two, leaders build and reinforce trust – a core ingredient for effective leadership. Without trust from others, leaders can get, at best, a degree of compliance. But only with trust can they elicit genuine commitment from people, particularly during stressful, uncertain times. The challenge of creating an environment of trust is rooted in how difficult it is to earn that trust and how easy it is to damage it.

Keeping True – Leadership Competencies for Extraordinary Times: We often use the image of a bicycle wheel to describe the leadership competencies that are important during times of transition. On a bicycle wheel, each spoke needs to be tightened or loosened to the right tension. Otherwise, there will be strain on the other spokes, pulling the wheel out of alignment and make the bike much more difficult to ride.

Imagine, now, a wheel that has **trust** as its hub. Radiating out from that hub are the spokes, which represent the twelve competencies that support authentic, effective leadership in times of transition. Six spokes represent structural competencies; the other six represent people-related competencies. Any of the twelve competencies can be overdone, underdone, or held in a positive, dynamic balance (as the spokes on a bicycle wheel are set in a balanced tension. If a leader neglects or devotes an overabundance of energy to any one element, he or she runs the risk of skewing the opposite, pushing the wheel out of true and creating undue strain on the trust needed to lead effectively during extraordinary times.

The twelve competencies are:

1. Catalyzing Change
2. Coping with Transition
3. Sense of Urgency
4. Realistic Patience
5. Being Tough
6. Being Empathetic
7. Optimism
8. Combination of Realism & Openness
9. Self-reliance
10. Trusting Others
11. Capitalizing on Strengths
12. Going Against the Grain

Generally, the key to leading with authenticity in extraordinary times is to neither exaggerate nor downplay any of the twelve competencies.

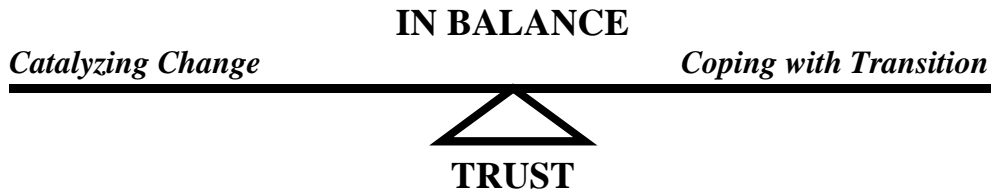
Catalyzing Change Versus Coping With Transition:

Catalyzing Change is championing an initiative or significant change. A leader who is skilled at catalyzing change consistently promotes the cause, encourages others to get on board, and reinforces those who already are. Such leaders are highly driven and eager to get others engaged in new initiatives.

Coping with Transition involves recognizing and addressing the personal and emotional elements of change. Leaders who are able to cope with transition are in touch with their personal reactions to change and transition and make use of that emotional information. They lead by example.

A leader who is adept at both catalyzing the change and coping with the complexities of transition creates a climate and culture for working through difficult times. However, the fast pace and complex challenges that typify today's organizations push most leaders to focus on catalyzing change at the expense of helping people deal with the transition during the change.

When leaders balance catalyzing change and coping with transition, the way in which others perceive their behavior is based on two elements: what they say and what they do.



Leaders who are skilled at *catalyzing change*:

- understand the rationale for a shift in direction
- communicate the vision with enthusiasm and energy
- demonstrate how the change is a win for the organization and its people
- engage those who are resistant
- make themselves accessible for formal and informal discussions
- talk the talk and walk the walk
- listen to understand other points of view
- marshal the resources to drive the change
- speak truth to power when necessary

Leaders who *cope well with transition*:

- are in touch with their own reactions and feelings about the change
- understand the difference between change and transition
- give themselves and others permission to experience and express loss and grieving
- model vulnerability so that others are able to move through transition stages
- are realistic about the challenges people can handle
- communicate with staff at all levels
- tell people as much as they can about the situation
- push back on senior management when appropriate
- celebrate successes along the way

Making It True: Here are the steps you can take to strike a balance between catalyzing change and coping with transition:

1. **Communicate:** Effective leaders are relentless communicators. Good communicators are also good listeners, so pay attention both to what is said and to what is not said.
2. **Don't dismiss the old:** Ignoring, demeaning, or dismissing the way things used to be prevents people from moving through the transition process. Help people through transition by acknowledging their history and attachments. The new is built on the old.

3. **Make yourself more visible:** If you communicate well, you won't be out of sight. But be sure to be visible and accessible as much as possible; people can't be influenced by behavior they don't see.
4. **Be genuine:** This involves making more of yourself available. Let people see who you are.
5. **Reinforce authenticity:** Learn to recognize and reinforce authentic, resilient behavior patterns in others. You will send a signal that these genuine behaviors are noticed and rewarded. This will help spread your good intention throughout the organization.
6. **Find inspiration:** You need your own touchstones or reminders about what you are trying to accomplish, what your problems are, and how you want to behave.

Sense of Urgency Versus Realistic Patience:

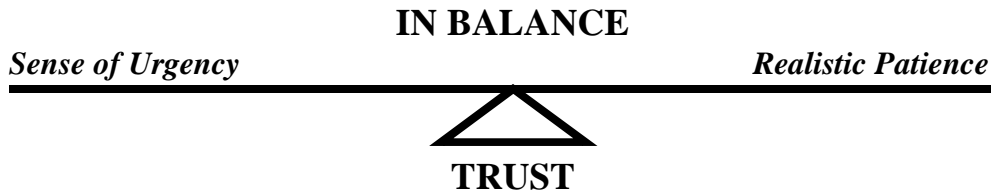
One of the most critical responsibilities of a transition leader involves maintaining energy, momentum, and productivity in the face of change. Having a sense of urgency or a need to “get on with it” is an important element of the revitalization process for the leaders and for other members of the group. Leaders who have a strong sense of urgency move on issues quickly and motivate others to work at a rapid pace, stay focused, and get results. They value action and know how to get things done.

Equally important, but rarely addressed in times of change, is the importance of having enough patience with the transition process. Realistic patience involves knowing when and how to slow the pace to allow time and space for people to cope and adapt. This means, recognizing that people need differing amounts of time and effort to understand and adapt to change. As in any grief or loss experience, there is a natural cycle to the process of letting go of the old and connecting with the new. Leaders must learn how to honor this cycle in others if the transition effort is to be successful in the long term. Failure to have patience with people can actually increase their resistance, and thereby hinder their process of adapting.

Leaders who balance sense of urgency and realistic patience focus on four key actions:

1. **They articulate expectations.** Clearly explaining why, how, and when things need to happen sets up expectations and creates a healthy level of stress and pressure.
2. **They accurately gauge pace.** When such leaders say something is urgent, it really is. They don't panic, overreact, or make everything equally urgent or important. They are able to prioritize.
3. **They give support through the struggle.** These leaders make a conscious effort to provide extra support and guidance when appropriate. They give feedback so they know whether they're getting it or not. They foster credibility by achieving a balance between urgency and compassion.

4. **They demonstrate flexible control.** Leaders who set the right tone between control and flexibility are respected and viewed as competent – as well as caring and in touch with employees.



Leaders who demonstrate a healthy *sense of urgency*:

- create clear expectations and timelines
- explain why the urgency
- provide data to support the urgency
- set and adjust priorities
- provide resources and clear obstacles
- remind about deadlines
- encourage more than berate
- articulate the “now” and the vision
- walk the talk
- make timely decisions
- create healthy level of stress and pressure
- monitor the team’s ability to deliver

Leaders who exhibit *realistic patience*:

- explain the why and how of what needs to be done
- coach people who are struggling
- are patient with the emotional realities – their own and those of their followers
- understand that performance may initially lag
- set interim targets for people
- put things into different words or contexts to help bring people along
- don’t stay patient forever – but give people space and time to learn and cope
- set a range of outcomes so people have a chance to be successful

Making It True: Here are some guidelines you can take to strike a balance between demonstrating both a sense of urgency and realistic patience:

1. **Meet them where they are:** If you want to lead people somewhere new, you need to understand where they are. Try as you might, you can’t shake people hard enough to put them on your timetable for acceptance and recovery.
2. **Prioritize and pace:** Be sure to set and honor priorities. Arrange activities and events in a way that will build to the new reality in stages. Whenever

possible, create interim milestones that will allow people to achieve success along the way.

3. **Take time to listen:** It is important to allow people the time and space to vent their concerns and voice their alternative strategies – even if nothing can be done to alter the overall plans.
4. **Avoid swift judgment:** Don't dismiss, write off, or label employees too easily or too quickly. Displaying the patience that encourages people to work their way to a healthier commitment can pay huge dividends in the end.
5. **Don't squash resistance:** Establish a climate that processes resistance rather than attempting to squash it. Generally there is useful information in the way people resist change and transformation. The nature of resistance can inform you about what people value and what they are afraid of losing. At a minimum, that sense of loss needs to be acknowledged.
6. **Coach, teach, and model:** Spend some of your time and energy is coaching, teaching, and modeling the adaptive process for others. If you can honor the past and model the present and future, you will encourage others by your example.

Being Tough Versus Being Empathetic:

A leader must be tough enough to make difficult, bottom-line decisions that serve the overall needs of the organization. Being tough involves being decisive and unafraid to take a stand in the face of public opinion or strong resistance.

On the other hand, the ability to be empathetic encourages loyalty and trust – even understanding of and support for difficult decisions. Being empathetic involves taking others' perspectives into account when making decisions and taking action. It means being able to accurately anticipate or at least recognize the emotional impact of decisions and actions.

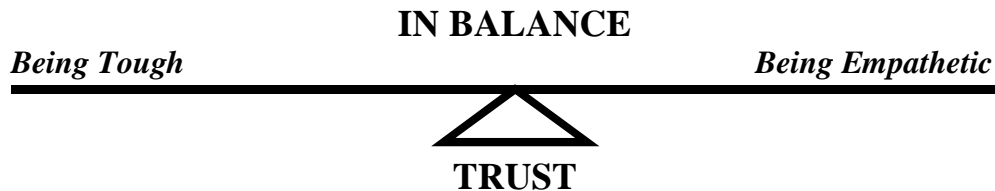
This dimension is one that is incredibly difficult for many leaders to get right. Often they have been taught to shut down their emotional connections or empathy in order to make the difficult decisions. They worry that if they let their soft side show, it will be viewed as weakness or as a lack of commitment to the decisions. However, the exact opposite is true in times of significant change and crisis. People want to know that their leaders can be tough, committed, and decisive, but they want them to be human – and humane – too.

When leaders temper toughness with genuine empathy, the vision and direction are clear. Targets, goals, and expectations seem high, but attainable. People know how to get where they're going. Individuals feel valued and heard, and leaders are viewed as genuine. This happens because such leaders are equally comfortable in addressing two apparently paradoxical needs:

1. **They don't shy away from difficulty.** Leaders who strike a balance between toughness and empathy hold themselves as well as others accountable, even in

challenging situations. Demonstrating perseverance, they accept difficulty but do not use it as an excuse or crutch.

2. **They pay attention to emotions.** While driving for results and change, these leaders listen carefully with an honest intent to understand. They recognize and respond to the emotional impact their demands and decisions are causing. They stay connected to their own emotional reactions to the organization and its situation so that they can authentically communicate with and relate to others.



Leaders who demonstrate a good *level of toughness*:

- hold themselves and others accountable
- set clear goals and expectations for performance
- challenge people to adopt an attitude of continuous improvement
- display perseverance through adversity
- are firm and assertive, but fair and evenhanded
- maintain focus and alignment with corporate goals
- identify, prioritize, and measure key activities
- don't tolerate nonsense, but operate in a reasonable manner
- can be demanding and tough without being a bully

Leaders who demonstrate a good *sense of empathy*:

- listen with an honest intent to understand
- set aside preconceived notions
- value people as well as results
- give honest and direct feedback in a genuine manner
- are kind but not soft
- make allowances for difficult situations
- value diversity and appreciate different perspectives
- understand the emotional impact of demands
- consider individual limitations and barriers
- communicate openly
- use analogies and stories to make points

Making It True: To strike a balance between being tough and being empathetic, consider the following guidelines:

1. **Define *toughness* and *empathy* for yourself:** Where is the toughness line for you? Where is the empathy line for you?
2. **Pay attention to unintended consequences:** Always ask, “What are the unintended consequences of this decision?”
3. **Reassess trade-offs:** Review your decisions from time to time to see whether the trade-offs continue to make sense. Do your original assumptions still hold true?
4. **Customize your approach:** Make sure that you don’t take the easy way out and use a one-size-fits-all approach.
5. **Don’t shun challenging issues or avoid conflict:** By avoiding the difficult people or difficult issues, you can do great harm to yourself, your coworkers, and your organization. As a leader, you are obligated to be tough enough to deal with challenge and conflict.
6. **Get comfortable in the hot seat:** As a leader you will bear the brunt of many people’s anger, frustration, and confusion. Not everyone will interpret your behavior as you intend it. People will notice any inconsistency between your talk and walk. Both your behavior and your words might be reported out of context. Accept that this is part of a leader’s life!
7. **Don’t over-personalize business:** You cannot be responsible for taking care of everyone, nor can you ensure that everyone will be successful.

Optimism Versus Realism and Openness:

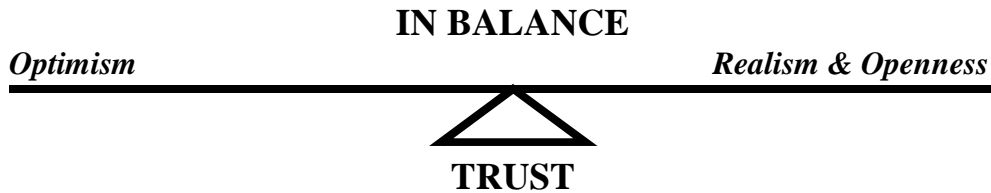
Leaders have a key role to play in maintaining hope and commitment in the face of transition. When people are stressed by a crisis or major upheaval, they look to their leaders for positive energy and confidence. A leader who exudes optimism is a “glass is half full” kind of person who communicates and conveys that optimism to others.

But optimism must not be blind or ungrounded. It should be balanced with and validated by realism and openness. This means having a grounded perspective and a willingness to be candid. Leaders who are realistic are clear and honest about assessing a situation and prospects for the future. They are candid and open in communicating what is known and not known. When managers exhibit realism and openness, they speak the truth, don’t sugarcoat the facts, and are willing to admit personal mistakes and foibles. Credibility is essential for leading through change and transition.

Leaders who are both optimistic and realistic display two important characteristics:

1. **They are genuinely committed to the change, strategy, or initiative.** True optimism comes from belief in the purpose or direction of change. The authentic leader is committed to the fundamental approach for achieving goals, yet is able to adapt and improvise in order to get there.

2. **They aren't afraid of the truth.** A commitment to genuine change requires honesty and clarity. An effective leader won't shy away from reality. In fact, such leaders will ask the hard questions and foster an environment of honesty and candid discussion.



Leaders who demonstrate a good *level of optimism*:

- offer hopeful projections of the future
- generate a contagious level of energy, enthusiasm, and optimism
- are creative and thoughtful about the challenges of the change process
- create and communicate a clear vision
- push themselves and others to set and strive for stretch targets
- consistently walk the talk
- authentically present the range of possible strategies and risks
- offer engaging ideas and plans
- know what others need to be successful

Leaders who demonstrate a good *sense of realism and openness*:

- make others comfortable by sharing of self
- have open channels of communication
- trust the team to be capable of handling the truth
- are honest and engaging in discussions
- acknowledge setbacks and mistakes
- don't try to mask real problems
- use candor to engender trust and respect
- recognize barriers and limitations, and don't try to hide them
- share and empathize in a genuine way

Making It True: Here are ways to balance optimism with realism and openness:

1. **Show your enthusiasm:** Energy and optimism are contagious. But you can't fake it. If you aren't truly committed to where you are going, people will most likely see that as well.
2. **Seek to understand obstacles and to learn from other perspectives:** Don't overdo optimism and self-confidence to the point of not recognizing genuine barriers, obstacles, limitations, or mistakes. Use candor and honesty as vehicles for cultivating a higher level of trust and respect.

3. **Maintain open channels of communication:** You have to set the tone and model the behavior that makes truth telling okay. Make it clear that you want your employees to share their concerns as well as their constructive ideas.
4. **Trust people to be capable of handling the truth:** Tell them what you know and own up to what you don't know. Most people don't expect their leaders to be superhuman, emotionless, or infallible. Indeed, they will be skeptical and cynical if you wear a mask and try to pretend to be something that you are not. Fight the urge to play the hero.
5. **Don't hide from your reactions:** Don't try to bury or deny your own human reactions to ongoing events.

Self-Reliance Versus Trusting Others:

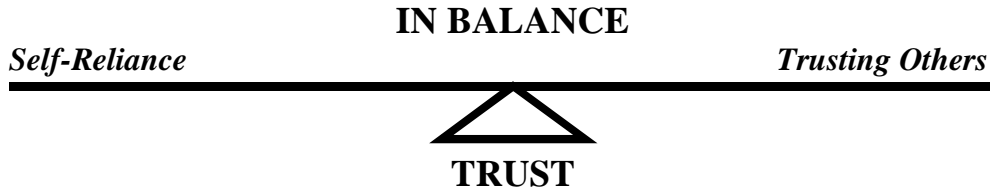
Self-reliance involves a willingness to take a lead role and do something yourself when necessary. A leader who is self-reliant has a great deal of confidence in his or her own skills and abilities and is willing to step up and tackle most new challenges as they arise.

Trusting others involves being comfortable about allowing others to do their part of a task or project. A leader who trusts others is open to input and support from colleagues and friends. Such a leader respects others and demonstrates trust through a willingness to be vulnerable with them.

When a leader is able to combine self-reliance with trust in others, a win-win atmosphere is established. People believe they have meaningful work and understand that the important contributions they make will be valued. And the leader doesn't feel isolated and alone in tackling emotional and operational changes. People feel free to speak truth to power – providing input, guidance, support, and feedback. This collaborative, confident approach contributes to individual and organizational learning that would otherwise not occur.

When leaders effectively balance self-reliance and trusting others, they exhibit three crucial behaviors:

1. **They demonstrate high confidence in individuals and their ability to deliver results.** Leaders are able to genuinely place trust in others who have been encouraged and supported in their work and development.
2. **They take a team approach to handling difficult issues.** The greater the complexity of a situation, the more important it is to draw on the expertise and perspectives of others.
3. **They can step in without micromanaging or undermining.** When a pattern of trust has been established, the authentic leader can judiciously step in and advise, adjust, and, if needed, override. This is different from constant micromanaging and undermining.



Leaders who demonstrate a good *measure of self-reliance*:

- have confidence in their abilities
- have strength and energy that comes from within
- don't require validation from others
- have a comfortable self-knowledge of both strengths and weaknesses
- are secure enough to access others when needed
- influence others with personal knowledge and experience
- set direction and expectations
- are resourceful and creative
- are open to learning new things
- are effective at self-management and seizing opportunities

Leaders who demonstrate a good *level of trust in others*:

- trust others to know them as total people
- stay open to input and support
- are comfortable knowing others' strengths and relying on them
- practice listening to understand
- have confidence in themselves and others
- communicate what is expected of others
- are empathetic and understanding
- know others' strengths and rely on them
- engage actively when delegating (not blind trust)
- support others in doing their work their way

Making It True: Here are some guidelines you can practice on self-reliance and trusting others:

1. **Gain an accurate sense of self.** The expression of true self-reliance is contingent upon knowing and owning your personal strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Coming to terms with your own assets and liabilities will give you the courage to be more open in accepting the input of others.
2. **Don't isolate yourself.** Create an environment in which others feel safe to offer guidance, input, and support. The higher you go in leadership roles, the less likely people will be to offer suggestions, reactions, and feedback to you.
3. **Don't shoulder the burden alone.** Trusting others to carry a share of the load is a core element of effective transitional leadership.

4. **Open up.** Seek out a few trusted colleagues with who you feel safe opening up about your work and your leadership role.
5. **Don't narrow your view.** Cultivate diversity. Trust the good intentions of others unless they give you cause to do otherwise.
6. **Listen to others.** Create a safe place for others to speak truth to power. Block out some time each day to simply pause and listen to those out on the front lines.

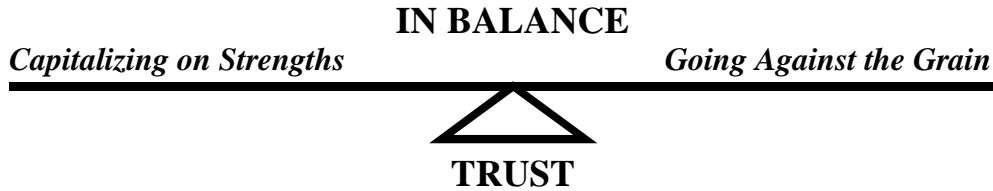
Capitalizing on Strengths Versus Going Against the Grain:

Capitalizing on strengths entails knowing one's strengths and attributes, and confidently relying on them to tackle new challenges. Some one who knows how to capitalize on strengths trusts the abilities that have generated success, rewards, recognition, compliments, and promotions in the past and uses them in new situations.

For experience managers, it's easy to capitalize on strengths. They have a history of being rewarded for what they already know how to do and doing it in a way they already know how to do it. It is comfortable. But relying too much on strengths can cement leaders into behavior patterns that may no longer work. Failing to recognize conditions that demand different capacities and new learning can be disastrous. Sometimes it's necessary to leave one's comfort zone, challenge preferred patterns, and learn and try new things – in other words, to go against the grain.

By finding the appropriate balance between capitalizing on strengths and going against the grain, you foster the ability to learn. Openness to new ideas is balanced with a respect for experience and expertise. Leaders who achieve this balance pay attention to three critical things:

1. **They accurately assess their strengths, weaknesses, preferences, and default behaviors.** Authentic leadership is based on a clear sense of self. Self-awareness allows leaders to distinguish between habitual patterns and true strengths, work to mitigate weaknesses, gain new skills, and practice different behaviors.
2. **They seek out diversity.** With an accurate sense of themselves, leaders can intentionally leverage the diverse talents, experiences, opinions, and perspectives of others. This helps prevent tunnel vision and groupthink.
3. **They value learning.** Without possessing and promoting a learning orientation, leaders are not likely to see the full potential of any change initiative.



Leaders who *capitalize on their strengths*:

- focus on what they are good at and have experience with
- let others do what they are good at
- get people involved and engaged
- learn from people around them
- capture good ideas and stay open to them
- surround themselves with diversity and a wide range of character and experience
- acknowledge what they don't know
- focus attention on repeating success
- exploit talent effectively in a diverse environment

Leaders who *go against the grain*:

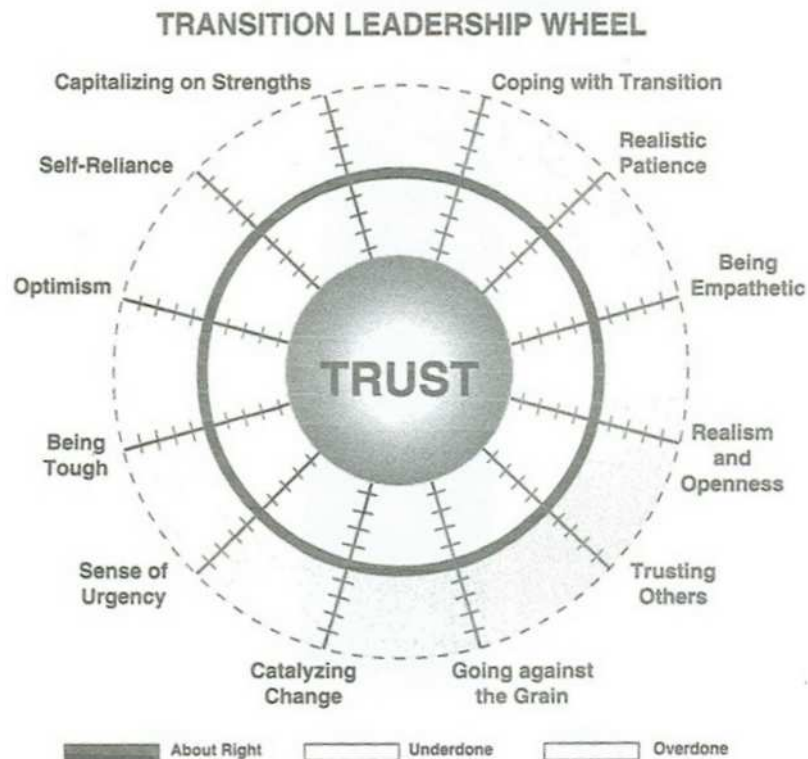
- are prepared to challenge assumptions for the sake of learning
- are not afraid of taking risks or making mistakes
- ask different and difficult questions that challenge the status quo
- challenge at the appropriate time and with the right amount of pressure
- engage others who will assist in going against the grain
- understand and define obstacles
- have a plan and objectives for moving forward
- understand the corporate culture and how it may hinder change
- operate with honesty and integrity
- are creative and entrepreneurial

Making It True: Here are some suggestions for striking a balance between capitalizing on your strengths and going against the grain:

1. **Pay attention to your patterns.** Take time to systematically reflect on your lifelong learning history. Your goal is to gain a better sense of who you are and how you came to be that way.
2. **Leverage strengths intentionally.** Understand your strengths and practice using them mindfully. When you default to your strengths, you lose opportunities for creativity and growth. Instead, ask yourself whether an approach or response is really the best way – or simply a habit.
3. **Avoid complacency.** Be purposeful in providing stretch assignments to team members. With too little stretch, people won't be pushed to go against the grain; with too much, they will seek comfort and confidence by reverting to

prior strengths. Pair a new learner with a mentor or coach. Establish realistic deadlines for demonstrating that a new skill or behavior pattern has been implemented.

4. **Value learning.** Never allow yourself or those around you to become complacent enough to believe that they have fully arrived. Reward managers for developing others and supporting continuous learning. At some point, people will realize that the ability to learn is a core competency and that new strengths will always be required in a changing world.
5. **Learn from failure.** Create an environment where people sense that it is safe to debrief their failures as well as their successes.
6. **Don't limit yourself or others.** Seek out diversity. Encourage group members to challenge and defend opposing points of view and take stands on major decisions.
7. **Encourage new thinking.** Honor and reward those who are willing to put time and energy into exploring novel problem solutions – even when their attempts might be viewed as incremental, expansive, tried before, rule challenging, or just plain stupid.



Summary:

Leaders are most effective in times of transition when they incorporate both structure – and people-related behaviors into their roles and responsibilities. By striking the right balance between the two, leaders build and reinforce trust, which is a core ingredient for effective leadership. Using the image of a bicycle wheel, remember that **TRUST** is the hub of the wheel. Radiating out from that hub are the spokes, which represent the twelve competencies that support authentic, effective leadership in times of transition. Six spokes represent structural competencies; the other six represent people-related competencies.

Any of the twelve competencies can be overdone, underdone, or held in a positive, dynamic balance (as the spokes on a bicycle wheel are set in a balanced tension). If a leader neglects or devotes an overabundance of energy to any one element, he or she runs the risk of skewing the opposite, pushing the wheel out of true and creating undue strain on the trust needed to lead effectively during extraordinary times.

Generally, the key to leading with authenticity in extraordinary times is to neither exaggerate nor downplay any of the twelve competencies. Striking a balance will enhance your ability to cultivate trust and increase the likelihood that you will lead in an authentic fashion – particularly during times of change and transition.

Message from Gary Tomlinson:

I hope you enjoyed reading this book report. It's important for you to understand that this book report should not take the place of you reading *Leading With Authenticity in Times of Transition*. This book is for senior-level managing-leaders and those who work with them – human resources professionals, coaches, consultants – indeed entire management teams. This book presents a framework for understanding the competencies required to respond to the demands of maintaining the business while attending to the equally important “people” concerns. It provides insight for leaders so that they can decipher and adjust their behavior to maintain the crucial balance between the structural side of leading change and the human side of leading transition.

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