



LEADERSHIP FOR THE 2010s: LEADERS IN TRANSITION?

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Leadership has been described as an ineffable quality – you know it when you see it but it's hard to precisely define. Scholars far more ambitious than I have focused on this question more than enough to keep us all reading for many years. But this is not the question that drives me. I, perhaps like many of you, have spent my professional life focused on whether one can learn leadership, develop it, or teach it to others. *For 30 years, I've operated from the belief that indeed one can both learn and teach leadership or, at a minimum, help others become better leaders.* What does this mean – to be a 'better leader?' Type knowledge has helped me understand that this is a very personal question, answered uniquely by each person in their role. I have seen evidence that individuals can become a 'better leader' if they have a compelling reason to do so. While each leader must find their reason, we, as type-knowledgeable practitioners, can help them find their path. If you join me at the BAPT Conference, we will explore these paths together.



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But how do the leaders find the compelling reason? Many traditional leaders say that what keeps them up at night is not what decision to take. They lie awake wondering how to get the people in their organizations to change in the right ways, at the right speed, and at a low enough cost, that they can beat out their competition (internal or external). I have found that type and temperament knowledge provide clues

as to what drives them.

It doesn't seem to matter whether the change is implementing a new strategy, entering a new market, simplifying and streamlining operations, integrating an acquisition, or introducing a critical new operating process (patient care teams, drug development, portfolio management, ERP implementations, or the like). Before long the conversations turn to "how can I get people to do what I need them to?" Perhaps you would think, as many leaders I've worked with do, that if the leader just points the way, the people will do as they're asked. And the changes will happen. And perhaps at one time, this did work.

"... I've operated from the belief that indeed one can both learn and teach leadership or, at a minimum, help others become better leaders."

But it no longer does. The leader's job has changed, because our organizations have changed. The modern organization is more complex, operates in many countries and across invisible boundaries (as the internet allows), and moves faster. The job of the leader has changed profoundly – no longer does the leader have all (or even most of) the information they need to make the right decisions – they are dependent on a wider group across which information is distributed. More people to involve, more people to influence.

And today's organization lives in a state of constant change. No time for 'grieving, letting go and adapting, before coming around to the better, new way, followed by a period of stabilization with the 'new normal.' Now it's change, change, change – and in many places, at the same time, with fewer resources, and more time urgency. More people to persuade, more people to motivate, more people to empathize with. This might be motivation enough for any leader to want to become more effective! But is it really different from earlier leadership challenges?

Join me for a quick flashback to the mid-1980s. Back when I studied for my MBA, my classmates and I were taught via the typical ‘case study’ method – we spent our time reading cases – for economics, marketing, statistics, finance, but also for strategy, operations and organization behavior. We read about leaders at different levels, studied their actions in various situations, and practiced standing in their shoes – imagining what we would do if we were them. We crunched numbers, applied models, and ‘practiced’ thinking like leaders. We debated with our business school professors, learned academics with years of research and publication behind them, and we defended our positions, ultimately deciding for ourselves whether we would choose as the original leaders did, or whether we would have taken a different path – and whether we thought that would have led to better results.

We were extraordinarily lucky. At Stanford, we had many global leaders come and speak to us – executives from major corporations, successful start-ups, governments, public trust organizations, and more. We heard first-hand from these powerful corporate and organizational leaders about their important choice points, how they had evolved as leaders, and what influenced them most. We asked many questions – what was your biggest mistake; if you could do one thing differently in your career, what would it be; what advice do you have for someone in my position today (as a student, presumably one who wants to be just like you). As a young ENTP, I soaked it all in, as you can imagine. I wasn’t really sure what I would do with all those bits of stories, fragments of other people’s lives, packaged and shared in such a public, yet private, way.

What has stayed with me over these decades is this: the most successful leaders always talked about *managing* businesses, but *leading* people. They reflected most on how they became better leaders to their people. Choose people that fit your organization’s culture; make sure you know how to motivate different people; be authentic as a leader; enact your values so employees will trust in you. Their powerful advice: learn to motivate and influence people, and create a climate where they will tell you the truth, to keep you honest.

“... most successful leaders always talked about managing businesses, but leading people.”

Nearly 30 years later, I hear much the same things from the leaders I work with. What keeps them up nights? Getting people to believe in the change, ensuring solid sponsors who will promote the change, getting people excited to play an active role in creating the change (even though it wasn’t their idea). And even more so: getting people to work across organizational ‘siloes,’ to not take change personally, and to find the ‘greater good’ for the organization. Encouraging people to speak out about the risks they see, rather than be passive aggressive. While the business context for leaders is different – faster and more complex – the issues seem quite similar. Perhaps the greatest difference is the increased urgency to close the leadership skills gap!

So, yes, the challenges facing today’s leaders are more complex. But is their job really different? I see that the most important jobs a leader has remain the same: they must set clear direction for their organization; they must empathize with, engage and motivate people to come along on their journey; and, they must make it easy for people to systematically change the organization as needed, so that the organizational system does not calcify. This last part may be the hardest – it requires enormous leadership courage to stand up to peers inside a large organization.



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From both my research ([type, leadership and emotional intelligence](#)) and work with organizational leaders, I believe every person has strengths and blind spots in their leadership. I have seen leaders develop and improve. I have seen leaders fail to do so. I can say with confidence that it isn’t easy to cultivate better leadership. But I can also say that leveraging type knowledge simplifies the work.

What do you think? How much do you think the leader’s job has changed and in what ways is it the same? How does type knowledge help grow better leaders? What has changed in the last few decades, and what will continue to evolve over the next few?

I hope to see you, along with Jane, Katherine, Elizabeth, Susan and many others at the BAPT Conference this Spring. I look forward to hearing about your experiences developing leadership, in yourself or others, and to continuing to leverage the richness of type theory to help grow more successful leaders for our global world.

TAKING EXERCISES FROM GOOD TO GREAT

JANE KISE (INFJ)



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If I've learned one thing in 20 years of teaching type, it's the importance of experiential exercises. You almost have to wonder whether John Dewey, an American philosopher whose ideas still shape education, had been to a boring, lecture-only type workshop when he wrote:

An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has a vital and verifiable significance. An experience, a very humble experience, is capable of generating and carrying out any amount of theory (or intellectual content), but a theory apart from an experience cannot be definitely grasped even as a theory.

(Dewey, 1916, p.144)

Kind of a mouthful, but eternally true!

People often contact me saying, "I've only got 30 minutes to introduce type. Guess I'll just talk about the preferences?" I reply, "No, give them an experience with just one preference pair and you'll leave them wanting more."

In other words, trust type. If you set up an activity properly, people will grasp that there are significant differences in how normal people perceive and judge - and that there are patterns that make this theory useful. If, note, you set it up properly. Here are three things I've learned - often the hard way! - about doing just that.

Plan for Processing

Often, the key to understanding isn't so much the exercise you choose but the way you process it. For example, to clarify Extraversion and Introversion I might provide a definition and teach through five or six bullet points that describe each preference. Then I insert a simple exercise. With teenagers, I often have them sit silently for 2 minutes.

To process, we first discuss what we saw. Many of those who prefer Extraversion start

toe-tapping or looking around while giggling after about 30 seconds. Those who prefer Introversion often close their eyes and lean back in their chairs while smiling. It's simple, but it illustrates the heart of the preference pair: are they energized through action and interaction or through reflection?

Second, we process their reactions. I ask, "Who's sure you prefer Extraversion? How does staying silent for 2 minutes relate to being quiet in real life? What happens?" They'll often talk about getting in trouble at school or how they love to talk through problems with friends. Then I ask those who prefer Introversion. They might describe exhaustion in noisy classrooms or how much they like the morning bus ride (when everyone's tired and quiet) versus the afternoon bus ride (when all the students who prefer Extraversion are energized and talkative after a day of interaction).

Too often, we rush through this processing stage, but it's essential for helping many participants clarify type.

Plan for Illustrating Clear Differences

A second key step for effective experiential exercises is ensuring that even those new to the theory can spot type differences. Let's take the common "Write about a ____" often used to illustrate Sensing and Intuition. I used to simply display a Salvador Dali picture and say, "Write about this image. You have two minutes. No questions, no talking." When they finished, I displayed definitions of Sensing and Intuition, asked for volunteers to read their writing, and had the group try to categorize their responses.

Sometimes this worked. Typical Sensing responses for "The Enigma of Hitler", one that as of yet none of my participants have recognized, include lists of objects in the picture - dish, crumbs, shoreline, umbrella, shadowy figure, etc. Typical Intuitive responses include "This is a depiction of the day after a nuclear disaster" or the start of a fantasy story about sea monsters.

Often, though, examples aren't clear. They start

with a list and then switch to a story. Or, a dominant Feeling type might write, “This picture makes me feel depressed with all of its dark colors and that creepy, melting phone,” seemingly mixing themes and descriptions.

Now as people write, I circulate the room to find the three clearest writing samples for each preference, placing green sticky notes by the Sensing ones and pink notes by the Intuitive ones. I then display the definitions and have “green notes” read first, then “pink,” and ask people to describe the difference between the sets.

I invite others to share if they wish, but make some other key points:

- This isn’t a definitive test for Sensing or Intuition since how you respond can be influenced by school experiences, training, or by second-guessing the facilitator’s intentions
- If I’d asked, everyone could have described the picture and everyone could have written a fictional story. You’re trying to discern what you *prefer*, where you’d naturally begin.
- These preferences are about the information we naturally pay attention to—do we start with reality or do we start with hunches, connections or analogies?

Use Observers

If some participants aren’t sure of their preference, I’ll ask them to be observers as type-alike groups work on a task as a way to clarify their own type. Frequently, group responses look very similar, but there’s a huge difference in how they work together - and the observers can help you by conveying what they saw and what they learned about which group would be easier for them to join.

For Sensing and Intuition, I might ask the two groups to draw floor plans of the hotel we’re in. Usually, all of the drawings are fairly accurate, with little that reveals differences in how we perceive. The observers, though, report that the Sensing types *use* reality to draw it - they walk out into the lobby or they access Google Earth on their iPads and draw from the satellite picture of the building’s footprint. In contrast, the Intuitive groups start with a short discussion of the general outline of the floor and then brainstorm connections among their impressions as to various lobby and restaurant features.

As the observers report out, conversation usually turns to how often participants have bumped into these different ways of perceiving information in real life, as well as how they’ve been shut down when in the minority.

Look Ahead

One overarching danger of exercises is that you won’t have a diverse group. If I’m working with groups of less than a dozen people, I often bring examples from other groups to ensure I can demonstrate the differences. I also do this when I suspect a larger group may lack diversity - I once worked with a high-tech marketing team who all preferred Intuition and Thinking, for example.

I might hand out cards with the Dali writings from previous participants and have people work in pairs to sort them for Sensing and Intuition. I also have pictures of ideal office spaces drawn by

groups who prefer IJ, IP, EP and EJ.

My point? Take pictures of flip charts. Save writing samples and other artefacts for future groups to analyze and discuss!

Debriefing

There is a limit to how much groups can process, though. Further, the less they know about type, the shorter their attention span will be for listening to reports from preference-alike or type-alike groups - especially if you form groups based on the eight dominant functions or all 16 types. Images, not words, can better help them process the different types.

I often give each type-alike group markers and a sheet of copy paper on which to draw a symbol of how their group leads, influences, serves others - whatever fits



with the goals of the workshop. They also add a one-line answer to a question such as, “What is most frustrating in meetings?” “What is your motto?” “What one rule would improve this place?” Then for report-outs, one person has 10 seconds to describe their symbol and read their line while I tape the sheets up to form a type table “quilt.” You’ll find participants studying the images at every break.

Following these guidelines - planning for clarity, noting group processes rather than just results, readying examples for homogenous groups, and using symbols - frees me up to boldly go where no type practitioner has gone before. I can trust type to deliver even with exercises I’ve never tried. That keeps this work as fresh and exciting for me as it was 20 years ago when I first learned how seemingly unfathomable differences among people could be explained - and bridged - through this rich theory we shepherd called psychological type.

I’m looking forward to my first BAPT Conference in March and hope you plan to attend – the sessions are sure to be chock full of more ideas for taking type exercises from good to great!

References

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INSTEAD OF INSIDE-OUT, TRY OUTSIDE-IN!

KATHERINE AND ELIZABETH HIRSH



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While self-discovery is often seen as an internal process, one that is focused on getting to know your core self through introspection, there is important information to be found in your external environment. Look around. What do the structures you have created and/or inhabit tell you about yourself and your values? Surveying the different contexts in which you live, work, and play can indicate the hopes, dreams, and concerns of your internal world. They also point to what brings you meaning and satisfaction as well as what might be “weighing you down”, holding you back, or keeping you stuck. The usual advice encourages an “inside-out” approach, but why not try going from the “outside-in” instead?!

What might this look like? Ask yourself four simple questions: who, what, where, and when? And, as you ask, consider what is working for you now, what could work for you in the future, as well as what has worked for you in the past (perhaps including what brought you joy as a child). Answers to these questions offer clues to the external manifestations of your inner compass.

Who?

Who is and has been supporting you and encouraging you to be yourself and live your values? Who would you like to know better or see more often because they seem to bring out your best? Who challenges you to think deeply and act courageously? What do these people have in common? What are they telling you about who you are and who you hope to become? How do these people illustrate ways in which you can engage with Thinking and Feeling in a way that supports your growth and development?

What?

What objects are in your home and the other spaces you frequently inhabit (like your place of employment or favorite restaurant) and do you see any patterns in the objects that are present? Do the objects tell you a story about who you are and what you find pleasing? In these places, consider the number of objects, their arrangement, their color, their feel, their scent, etc. and what this says about what makes you feel energized, safe, happy, or on the other hand, not so energetic, safe, and happy. How might your style of taking in information be expressed in the objects surrounding you and what alterations might help you experience Sensing and Intuition more richly?

Where?

Where do you feel most alive? Where do you feel most comfortable? Are there locations – near or far, actually visited or merely longed for – that are especially wonderful to you? What is the vibe or energy of those places? What does this say about what might be missing in your life? Where, perhaps, should you be spending more time and in what locales are you perhaps spending too much? How might this inspection give you new insights into the balance of Extraversion and Introversion in your life?

When?

When do you feel your best: morning, noon, or night; weekdays or weekends; winter or summer; moving slow or moving fast? Think about the times when you are relaxed and happy, when you are free of self-consciousness, when your focus is on the moment and the goodness it brings. When does this usually occur? How might you structure your life, work, and/or play to take advantage of your natural flow and energy cycles? How might getting more in touch with these patterns illuminate the workings of Judging and Perceiving in your world?

Your external environment is a window to your internal environment. Studying who and what's around you and where and when you feel your best, determining what makes these contexts appealing, and then making an effort to see what they have in common can help you seek and attract more situations that engage the best of who you are. This can also provide clues as to what you may want to eliminate or limit in your life.

Armed with knowledge about with whom, what, where, and when you feel most yourself can help you appreciate and honor your preferences. This understanding can also indicate fun and simple ways to utilize the gifts of your non-preferred for optimal growth. How can you become more conscious of who you are and who you are not to celebrate and sustain your core self from the outside in? Join us at BAPT to cultivate a more adventurous and curious attitude toward your external world and by so doing create more congruency between who you are and how you live!

Adapted from *The Self-Discovery Digest*, March 2012 <http://selfdiscoverydigest.com/2012/03/>