

White Paper on the Road to Overcoming Overload



Living Your Leadership Sweet Spot

Describing your sweet spot, the world renowned author Max Lucado writes, “*Golfers understand the term. So do tennis players. Ever swung a baseball bat or paddled a Ping-Pong ball? If so, you know the oh-so-nice feel of the sweet spot. Connect with these prime inches of real estate and **kapow!** ... Life in the sweet spot rolls like the downhill side of a downwind bike ride.*”ⁱ

Back in the 1600s Shakespeare wrote “*All the world’s a stage, and all the men [and women] merely players: They have their exits and entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts.*”ⁱⁱ On the stage of life you and I are most effective when our roles are well matched with our sweet spot. Finding the sweet spot that Max Lucado describes requires that we be highly intentional and involved in the influencing, if not selecting, the roles we play. The world is crying for great leaders. The objective of this paper is to engage you in thoughts that may help you live your leadership sweet spot.

In our work life each of us performs different roles on three distinctly different stages as illustrated in **Diagram A**:

✓ On the **Operational Stage** you leverage routine and predictability. Some of the roles you are likely to play are that of a doer, a helper, trouble shooter and or overseer.

✓ On the **Project Stage** you leverage organizational or structural progress and change. There you may play the role of a planner, organizer, resource, and/or change agent.

✓ On the **Leadership Stage** your focus is on people and the impact you are likely to have on their lives. Among the roles you play on the leadership stage is that of a coach, mentor, advisor, a model, and/or visionary.

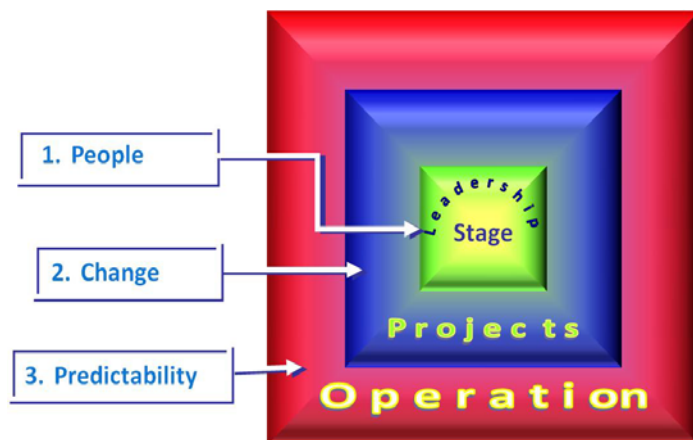


Diagram A

Please note: In any given period we all play on **all** of these three stages but where is your sweet spot? Where does your star shine the brightest? Where do you feel most fulfilled and challenged? Where are you likely to deliver the highest value to yourself, your community and

the common good?

Please also note: We **do not** imply that one of these stages is more important than the other. The priority is totally based on your talents, where you feel you fit best, and where you complement others the most.

Using your calendar, take a moment and examine your last one or few work weeks. Where did you invest your life? **Guesstimate** the percentage of activities, time or effort you spent on each of the referenced stages. In order to live fully in your sweet spot, do you see a need for change in your time allocations? In the following table, write your present and desired allocation along with any comments, observations or the reason for desired change.

Stage	Present %	Desired %	Why, Comment, Observation, Reason
Operational Stage			
Project stage			
Leadership Stage			

In two other white papers we deal with living your sweet spot on the operational stage and the project stage. This paper is for you if you desire a higher impact on your leadership stage. Borrowing concepts from Dr. Thom S. Rainerⁱⁱⁱ our objective is to help you examine your leadership sweet spots and develop an action plan that will enhance your effectiveness in your leadership roles.

As we review people around us, we see that there are differing types of leaders. This is illustrated in **Diagram B**. As you examine the following leadership types, try to identify your leadership sweet spot.

The Called Leader: Regardless of your state in life **you are a leader**. By your actions, words or even your silence you are a leader. The problem is that you may not be intentional and your leadership is totally dictated by the labels or titles others give you. Your leadership, or lack of, is totally based on the assumption and expectations of others and how they interpret these labels and titles. **Title based expectations** are often a cause for the unfocused overloaded lives, disappointments and possible burnout.

While **the Called Leader** is totally unintentional, the wise leader examines and seeks to manage the impact of his or her leadership sweet spot. We suggest we each may be one or more of the following **leadership types**:

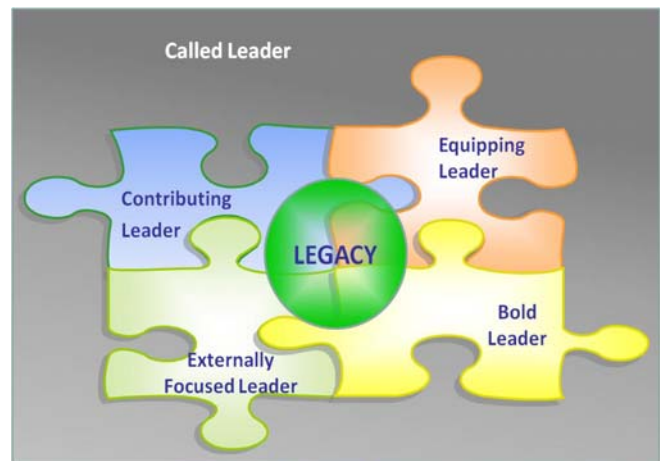


Diagram B

- 1. The Contributing Leader:** The contributing leader is more focused on delivering tasks based on corporate or personal demands or objectives. These are often associated by specific, relatively controllable performance indicators and benchmarks.
- 2. The Equipping Leader:** When you think of equipping leaders you think of good coaches. They are seldom visible during the game. Their life investment is in the disciplined rigor of knowing each of their team members, planning appropriate rehearsals and regular practice. While you do not hear their voices on the field, their words in the locker rooms echo loud and clear. Their thoughts and attitudes linger in the minds and hearts of well chosen team players who shine because of their coaches and leaders.
- 3. The Externally Focused Leader:** Seeking opportunities and initiatives outside the walls of his or her enterprise is the passion of the externally focused leader. This leader is always in search of new partnerships to collaborate with, competitors to turn into customers or old enemies to turn into allies and friends.
- 4. The Bold Leader:** The exhilarating rush of joy that comes with big ideas motivates the bold leader. Whether it be opening new business horizons or calling a nation to put a man on the moon and return him safely, such are the visions and risks that energize bold leaders and captivate the minds of those who follow them.
- 5. The Legacy Leader:** Focus on the impact left behind long after he or she has exited the stage of life is the objective of the legacy leader. While organizational loyalty is unquestionable, the legacy leader seeks for an impact that survives normal organizational life expectancy. The legacy leaders intentionally invest their life with a view of what they will leave behind.

As we consider the issue of legacy, it is important to note that in some measure, whatever leadership type we may be, we each leave our own mark and personal legacy. Good or bad our footprints will leave some tracks on the sandy shores of life.

Please Note: As you examine your sweet spot and leadership type, it is important to note that these are not placed in any order of priority or value. For example, we do not suggest that a bold leader is more valuable than a contributing leader or vice versa. Rather like a jigsaw puzzle, as Diagram B illustrates, there are strong possibilities of interdependent relationships between the various leadership types.

While there is no hierarchy of value, there are often great opportunities for personal and corporate growth and development in moving from one leadership type to another. For example, there is a multiplying value if a contributing leader can expand his or her sweet spot by focusing on coaching or mentoring less experienced team members. Should an equipping leader become externally focused, there are often new opportunities for multiplied benefits in the broader enterprise or community.

EXERCISE, PUTTING IT INTO ACTION:

1. As you examine your leadership stage:
 - What leadership type best exemplifies your present leadership?
 - Which leadership type is likely to be your sweet spot where you would like to direct your primary focus?
2. Select your desired leadership sweet spot by completing the following sentence:
“I want to be known as a _____ leader.”
3. Examine the following roles list. Select the role that best matches your desired leadership type. You may add other roles to the list. **Write it here.** _____. Later, using the same process, you may add other roles.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activator | <input type="checkbox"/> Encourager | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Enforcer | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advisor | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneur | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitator | <input type="checkbox"/> Peacekeeper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arbitrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Peacemaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Planner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Helper | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catalyst | <input type="checkbox"/> Influencer | <input type="checkbox"/> Promoter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Champion | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator | <input type="checkbox"/> Prospector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change agent | <input type="checkbox"/> Interrogator | <input type="checkbox"/> Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coach | <input type="checkbox"/> Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Resource |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commander | <input type="checkbox"/> Listener | <input type="checkbox"/> Sounding board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Mediator | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decision maker | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomat | <input type="checkbox"/> Model | <input type="checkbox"/> Trendsetter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developer | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivator | <input type="checkbox"/> Troubleshooter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Devil’s advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiator | <input type="checkbox"/> Visionary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enabler | <input type="checkbox"/> Observer | <input type="checkbox"/> - |

4. From the list of attributes provided in **Appendix A^{iv}**, select **the five best attributes** that describe your chosen role.
5. Reflect on your character, strength and natural abilities. Do you see some similarity in adjectives or attributes? If your answer is:
 - o **YES**, you may have found your **Leadership Sweet Spot**. Move on to step **6** in our exercise.
 - o **NO**, honestly examine your roles and priorities to identify opportunities for change that can lead to growth and enhanced fulfillment.
6. In the table provided as **Appendix B**:
 - o List the five attributes you selected
 - o For every attribute write one clear objective^v. Later on you can add more objectives if you wish
 - o For every objective write 3 goals. Note: **SMART** goals need to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**greed upon and have the support of your important people and **R**ealistic and **T**ime dependent.
7. Make it happen by putting actions to your goals. Plan appropriate activities and commit to them by putting them into your calendar.
8. Share your objective, goals, and plans with others. Why?
 - o Some of this thinking may be counter-cultural and you need the support of others to make it happen.
 - o As you change your focus you need to delegate and collaborate with others who will fill the gap you are leaving behind. This represents opportunities for them to grow in their role and sweet spot.
 - o If you want to be a master of an art, teach it. Others can benefit from your insight and experience.

Please note: In your desire to focus, be prepared for the challenge of balancing:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| A. Your desired focused roles and attributes | B. Your present organizational structure and needs | C. The assumptions and expectations of others as well as the support you are likely to effect the desired change. |
|---|---|--|

Most people do not like change but they welcome progress. This challenge will require constant realignment and negotiation.

Appendix A - Attributes

- **Ambitious**, Energetic, Goal oriented, Hard working, Motivated, Self disciplined
- **Action Oriented**, Impatient, Learning, Practical, Results oriented, Tenacious
- **Adaptable**, Calm, Flexible, Productive, Reassuring, Responsive
- **Analytical**, Dispassionate, Interrogative, Logical, Objective, Rigorous
- **Coordinative**, Adaptable, Creative, Flexible, Innovative, Resourceful
- **Belief and Values Oriented**, Altruistic, Dependable, Family-oriented, Responsible, Spiritual
- **Commanding**, Clear, Confrontational, Direct, Honest, Risk taking
- **Communicative**, Articulate, Captivating, Conversational, Descriptive, Expressive
- **Competitive**, Aggressive, Aspiring, Challenging, Driving, Striving,
- **Connected**, Accepting, Caring, Considerate, Humble, Spiritual
- **Consistent**, Balanced, Ethical, Even handed, Fair, Unprejudiced
- **Context Oriented**, Counterintuitive, Experienced, Interrogative, Perceptive, Reflective
- **Deliberate**, Careful, Contemplative, Private, Serious, Vigilant
- **Developing**, Challenging, Coaching, Encouraging, Helpful, Nurturing
- **Disciplined**, Efficient, Exact, Orderly, Predictable, Structured
- **Empathetic**, Anticipating, Appreciative, Kind, Sensitive, Understanding
- **Focused**, Collaborative, Efficient, Goal oriented, Independent, Impatient
- **Futuristic**, Energizing, Foresighted, Inspirational, Motivating, Visionary
- **Harmonious**, Agreeable, Deferential, Non-confrontational, Peaceable, Personable
- **Ideas Oriented**, Abstract thinking, Contemplative, Conceptual, Creative, Visionary
- **Inclusive** , Accepting, Connecting, Loyal, Non-judgmental, Social
- **Individualizing**, Encouraging, Impatient, Intuitive, Listening, Observant
- **Acquisitive**, Quick to learn, Inquisitive, Interested, Interrogative, Studious
- **Intellectual**, Inquisitive, Introspective, Reflective, Studious, Thoughtful
- **Studious**, Assimilative, Energetic, Inquisitive, Motivated, Studious
- **Maximum Oriented**, Demanding, Discriminating, Focusing, Productive, Refining
- **Positive**, Energetic, Energizing, Enthusiastic, Light-hearted, Optimistic
- **Relational**, Caring, Close, Genuine, Risk taking, Sharing
- **Responsible**, Conscientious, Dependable, Ethical, Hardworking, Available
- **Restorative**, Analytical, Fixing, Identifying, Rekindling, Resuscitating
- **Self-Assured**, Certain, Confident, Independent, Risk taking, Self-confident
- **Significance oriented**, Achieving, Credible, Focused, Goal oriented, Independent
- **Strategic**, Intuitive, Observant, Predicting, Problem solving, Reflective
- **Woo-Charismatic**, Conversational, Friendly, Initiating, Networking, Sociable

Appendix B – Goal Setting Templates

Attribute	Objective	SMART Goals	Target Achievement Date
5		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
4		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
3		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
2		1.	
		2.	
		3.	
1		1.	
		2.	
		3.	

ⁱ Max Lucado, *Discovering the Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot* (Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group, 2006), pages 1-2.

ⁱⁱ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959), II, vii, 149.

ⁱⁱⁱ Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005)

^{iv} Based on the book by Tom Rath, *Strength Finder 2.0*. (New York Gallop Press 2007)

^v **An objective statement** is a brief description of what you believe you hope to see happen at a future point. Make it active by starting your objective statement with an active verb.