

How Everything DiSC 363[®] for Leaders Fits into Contemporary Leadership Theory

White Paper

by Inscape Publishing

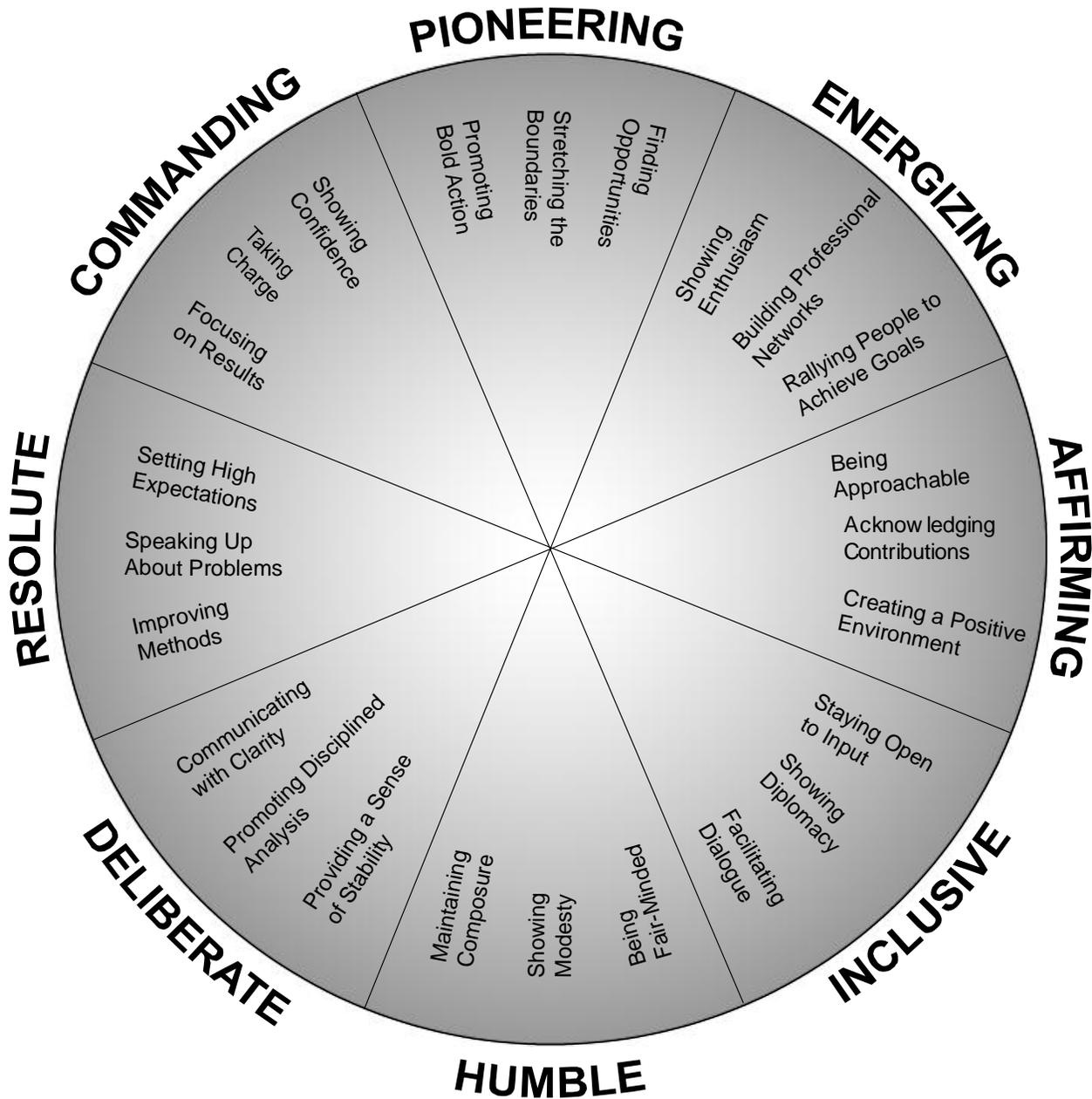


INTRODUCTION

The world is teeming with information on leadership. In fact, a recent internet search on the subject turned up an astounding 140 million results. This suggests that a) People have a lot to say about leadership, and b) People are hungry for information on how to *do* leadership. With so much information at our fingertips, it's hard to know what really matters. Through careful analysis, we boiled down this wealth of information into the Everything DiSC[®] Leadership model, which combines the simplicity of DiSC[®] with the collective wisdom of some of the most respected leadership experts of our time. This paper is designed to help you place the Everything DiSC Leadership model into the context of contemporary leadership studies.

We do not present the Everything DiSC Leadership model as the be-all, end-all representation of leadership. Rather, we offer it as a simple yet comprehensive construct to help leaders become more effective in the interpersonal aspects of leadership. This model provides the foundation for our newest product, *Everything DiSC 363[®] for Leaders*, an innovative learning experience that is tailored to the individual leader. Specifically, *363 for Leaders* tells leaders something they won't find by googling "leadership": *Exactly* what their managers, peers, and direct reports think will make *them* more effective. This 360° feedback tool gives leaders constructive feedback on their leadership approaches and helps them discover three personalized strategies to expand their leadership reach. It pulls together qualitative and quantitative data from a 72-item leadership assessment, our CommentSmart technology, and our hallmark Everything DiSC[®] assessment to give leaders an accurate picture of their performance in the interpersonal realm of leadership.

Leaders can quickly learn to navigate the Everything DiSC® Leadership model, a circumplex that describes a rich spectrum of eight approaches to effective leadership: Pioneering, Energizing, Affirming, Inclusive, Humble, Deliberate, Resolute, and Commanding. As you can see below, each of the approaches is comprised of three practices, or underlying components.



In this paper, we'll explain how our model fits into the broader context of leadership theory, referencing the work of more than two dozen thought leaders to create a rich conversation around each of the eight approaches and 24 practices. The first of the eight approaches in the Everything DiSC[®] Leadership model is Pioneering.

THE PIONEERING APPROACH

Leaders who typify the Pioneering Approach encourage the group to think creatively about its options and take chances on new opportunities. In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman describe this leadership approach. They write, “One measure of a leader’s effectiveness is the number of initiatives he or she personally champions. What projects has the leader started? What outcomes have this leader’s fingerprints all over them? What has happened that would not have occurred had this leader not been present?” (p. 81). Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner also describe pioneering leaders. In *The Leadership Challenge*, they write, “Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve” (p. 17). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Finding Opportunities, Stretching the Boundaries, and Promoting Bold Action. Let’s explore what some of the thought leaders have said about these Pioneering leadership practices.

Finding Opportunities

Pioneering leaders are often great at finding new opportunities and directions for the group, and others may admire their ability to envision new possibilities. We’ve selected insightful passages from the work of Peter Drucker and Sun Tzu to help illuminate the practice of Finding Opportunities.

- In *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, Peter Drucker explains that innovation “requires a systematic policy to look, every six to twelve months, for changes that might be opportunities—in the areas that I call ‘the windows of opportunity’” (p. 84). The windows include things like “changes in industry and market structures,” “changes in demographics,” and “new knowledge.”
- In *The Art of War*, an ancient Chinese text often used in leadership studies, Sun Tzu writes about adaptability and finding opportunities. He says, “Therefore, just as water retains no constant shape, so in warfare there are no constant conditions. He who can modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning, may be called a heaven-born captain” (p. 17), and, “If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in” (p. 35).

Stretching the Boundaries

Pioneering leaders challenge the group to push beyond it’s comfort zones and help the group envision a new way of doing things. John Kotter, the writing team at Personnel Decisions International (PDI) led by Susan Gebelein, and Peter Drucker have all written about this ability to Stretch the Boundaries.

- In John Kotter’s 1995 article “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” he writes, “When is the urgency rate high enough? From what I have seen, the answer is when about 75% of a company’s management is honestly convinced that business as usual is totally unacceptable” (p. 98).
- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, published by PDI, Susan Gebelein et al write, “Let people know that innovative thinking is a part of everyone’s job, regardless of their function or level of responsibility” (p. 339).
- In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Drucker writes, “There must be clear understanding throughout the organization that innovation is the best means to preserve and perpetuate that organization, and that it is the foundation for individual manager’s job security and success” (p. 151).

Promoting Bold Action

Pioneering leaders encourage people to take bold action, and they’re willing to take chances that could broaden the group’s horizons. We’ve identified several pertinent passages from the work of Jack Welch, Robert Greenleaf, and Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner to help illustrate the practice of Promoting Bold Action.

- In *Winning*, Jack Welch writes, “Leaders inspire risk taking and learning by setting the example” (p. 76). He specifies that this includes not letting fear of making a mistake paralyze the leader.
- In his highly influential book *Servant Leadership*, Robert Greenleaf writes, “Not much happens without a dream. And for something great to happen, there must be a great dream. Behind every great dream is a dreamer of great dreams. Much more than a dreamer is required to bring it to reality, but the dream must be there first” (p. 30).
- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “Leaders know well that innovation and change all involve experimentation, risk, and failure. They proceed anyway” (p. 17).

Further Reading on the Pioneering Approach

Drucker, P. (1985). *Innovation and entrepreneurship*. New York: HarperBusiness.

Drucker, P. (1999). *Management challenges for the 21st century*. New York: HarperBusiness.

Gebelein, S., Lee, D., Nelson-Neuhaus, K., & Sloan, E. (2000). *Successful executive’s handbook: Development suggestions for today’s executives*. Minneapolis: Personnel Decisions International.

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THE ENERGIZING APPROACH

Leaders who exemplify the Energizing Approach build enthusiasm for the group’s goals and develop a wide network of social connections. In the article “What Leaders Really Do,” John Kotter writes, “Motivation and inspiration energize people, not by

pushing them in the right direction as control mechanisms do but by satisfying basic human needs for achievement, a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem, a feeling of control over one's life, and the ability to live up to one's ideals. Such feelings touch us deeply and elicit a powerful response" (p. 48). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Showing Enthusiasm, Building Professional Networks, and Rallying People to Achieve Goals. Let's explore excerpts from select articles and books that describe these Energizing leadership practices.

Showing Enthusiasm

Energizing leaders often have a contagious sense of enthusiasm, and others may appreciate that they create a fun, lively environment. The following excerpts from the work of Warren Bennis, Edgar Schein, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, and Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner demonstrate the importance of Showing Enthusiasm.

- In *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis lists several things that the next generation of leaders will have in common, including "boundless enthusiasm" and "contagious optimism" (p. 195).
- In "Leadership and Organizational Culture," Edgar Schein describes leaders and entrepreneurs who have a great deal of energy. He writes, "It is an energy born out of strong personal convictions, which motivates the entrepreneur and builds excitement in others. Such people often literally breathe life into the organization; hence we should use a term like animator to describe this kind of leader" (p. 61).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman write, "Let people know that you will not let their ideas drop. Leaders need to capture and amplify the enthusiasm of others" (p. 75).
- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, "Although the enthusiasm, energy, and positive attitude of a good leader may not change the content of work, they certainly can make the context more meaningful. Whatever the circumstances, when leaders breathe life into our dreams and aspirations, we're much more willing to enlist in the movement" (p. 31).

Building Professional Networks

Energizing leaders create a large, influential social network, and others may admire their knack for connecting the group to resources and opportunities. Jennifer

Kahnweiler and the PDI writing team led by Susan Gebelein make some interesting points on the value of networking.

- In *The Introverted Leader*, Jennifer Kahnweiler devotes an entire chapter to networking. She tells the story of a leader who missed out on many business-related conversations by skipping a golf outing at a retreat. She writes, “In today’s corporate world, the golf course, the company gym, or the local coffee shop serves as the backdrop for much of this business. Sponsored community events such as road races or bike rides, and volunteer projects such as Habitat for Humanity, are also potential settings for these unofficial discussions. Conferences and trade shows are other venues where deals get made out of the official limelight” (p. 99).
- In PDI’s *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al write, “Consider what you can learn from people in your profession or industry and from other industries. Target the people in those organizations whom you want to add to your network” (p. 234), and “Networking involves giving and sharing in addition to seeking and receiving help. Be sure you do both with the members of your network” (p. 235).

Rallying People to Achieve Goals

Energizing leaders rally people around new goals, and others may appreciate their ability to bring the group together around a vision for the future. Gifford Pinchot, Stephen Covey, Sun Tzu, Jack Welch, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, and Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner all discuss the topic of rallying people to work toward group goals.

- In “Creating Organizations with Many Leaders,” Gifford Pinchot writes, “Effective leaders today use the tools of community building to create an environment in which many leaders can emerge. They contribute inspiring descriptions of a shared vision to align everyone’s energies” (p. 27).
- In “Three Roles of the Leader in the New Paradigm,” Stephen Covey writes, “The essence and power of pathfinding are found in a compelling vision and mission. Pathfinding deals with the larger sense of the future. It gets the culture imbued with and excited about a tremendous, transcendent purpose” (p. 152).
- In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu writes, “He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout its ranks” (p. 9).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch writes, “Leaders make sure people not only see the vision, they live and breathe it.” He says, “It goes without saying that leaders have to set the team’s vision and most do. But there’s so much more to the ‘vision thing’ than that. As a leader, you have to make the vision come alive” (p. 67).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger & Joe Folkman write, “Great leaders energize people to go the extra mile. They set stretch goals that motivate people to accomplish more than they think is possible” (p. 34).

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner write, “Leaders ignite the flame of passion in others by expressing enthusiasm for the compelling vision of their group” (p. 16).

Further Reading on the Energizing Approach

Bennis, W. (2003). *On becoming a leader*. New York: Basic Books.

Covey, S. (1996). Three roles of the leader in the new paradigm. In Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., & Beckhard, R. (Eds.). (1996). *The leader of the future: New visions, strategies, and practices for the next era* (pp. 149-159). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Schein, E. (1992). Leadership and organizational culture. In Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., & Beckhard, R. (Eds.). (1996). *The leader of the future: New visions, strategies, and practices for the next era* (pp. 59-69). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sun Tzu. (L. Giles, Ed. & Trans.). (2007). *The art of war*. Ann Arbor: Borders Classics.

Welch, J. (2005). *Winning*. New York: HarperCollins.

Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2007). *The handbook for leaders: 24 lessons for extraordinary leadership*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

THE AFFIRMING APPROACH

Leaders who use the Affirming Approach are approachable and help people feel good about their environment and their contributions. This approach is similar to what Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner refer to as “encouraging the heart” in *The Leadership Challenge*. They write, “When people are worried, discouraged, frightened, and uncertain about the future, the last thing needed is a leader who feeds those negative emotions. Instead, we need leaders who communicate in words, demeanor, and actions that they believe we will overcome. Emotions are contagious, and positive emotions resonate throughout an organization and into relationships with other constituents” (p. 31). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Being Approachable, Acknowledging Contributions, and Creating a Positive Environment. Let’s explore what some thought leaders have said about these Affirming leadership practices.

Being Approachable

Affirming leaders often come across as approachable, and others may feel comfortable going to them for help or advice. The following excerpts from the work of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, and Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan help describe the practice of Being Approachable.

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “The most genuine way to demonstrate that you care and are concerned about other people as human beings is to spend time with them. This time shouldn’t be yet another business meeting; instead, plan on unstructured time to joke and kid and learn more about each other as parents, athletes, musicians, artists, or volunteers” (p. 274).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman note that leaders with strong interpersonal skills build trust with others. They write, “When conflicts arise, they deal with employees’ feelings as well as the technical aspects of the issue. They stay approachable” (p. 34).
- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write, “Making a personal connection has nothing to do with style. You don’t have to be charismatic or a salesperson. I

don't care what your personality is. But you need to show up with an open mind and a positive demeanor. Be informal, and have a sense of humor" (p. 64).

Acknowledging Contributions

Affirming leaders tend to focus on acknowledging the contributions of others, and this makes people feel that their efforts are valued. In their work on leadership, John Kotter, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Peter Drucker, and Jack Welch all write about the importance of Acknowledging Contributions.

- In "What Leaders Really Do," John Kotter writes, "Finally, good leaders recognize and reward success, which not only gives people a sense of accomplishment but also makes them feel like they belong to an organization that cares about them. When this is done, the work itself becomes intrinsically motivating" (p. 48).
- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, "It's part of the leader's job to show appreciation for people's contributions and to create a culture of celebration" (p. 19).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman write, "Praise others' hard work and efforts in furthering a good cause" (p. 71).
- In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Peter Drucker writes, "Entrepreneurial companies always look for the people and units that do better and do differently. They single them out, feature them, and constantly ask them: 'What are you doing that explains your success?' 'What are you doing that the rest of us aren't doing, and what are you not doing that the rest of us are?'" (p. 157).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch's Rule #8 is simply stated, "Leaders celebrate" (p. 78).

Creating a Positive Environment

Affirming leaders tend to be hopeful, and others probably appreciate that they create an encouraging, positive environment around them. The importance of Creating a Positive Environment is discussed by the team behind *Primal Leadership*—Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee—as well as Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, and Susan Gebelein et al.

- In "Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance," Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee write, "The most effective executives display moods and behaviors that match the situation at hand, with a healthy dose of optimism mixed in. They respect how other people are feeling—even if it is glum or

defeated—but they also model what it looks like to move forward with hope and humor” (p. 49).

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “Giving encouragement requires us to get close to people and show that we care. And because it’s more personal and positive than other forms of feedback, it’s more likely to accomplish something that other forms cannot: strengthening trust between leaders and constituents” (p. 321).
- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al write, “Imagine people at their best and help them visualize their potential. Assume that others are acting with the highest motives” (p. 189).

Further Reading on the Affirming Approach

Bossidy, L., & Charan, R. (2002). *Execution: The discipline of getting things done*. New York: Crown Business.

Drucker, P. (1985). *Innovation and entrepreneurship*. New York: HarperBusiness.

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THE INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Leaders who typify the Inclusive Approach get a variety of people involved in the decision-making process and show concern for their opinions and feelings. In *The Psychology of Leadership*, David Messick explains that humans are an extremely social species. He writes, “Allowing people to be a member of a group is to permit them to

share vicarious pleasures of others' successes. We all experience a satisfaction when the strangers who represent *our* team are victorious over the strangers who are *their* team....But the underlying psychology remains the same. People want to belong, and good leaders provide inclusion" (p. 86). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Staying Open to Input, Showing Diplomacy, and Facilitating Dialogue. Many of today's leadership thought leaders have written about these Inclusive leadership practices.

Staying Open to Input

Inclusive leaders show that they're open to input, so people may appreciate that their opinions are taken seriously. The importance of Staying Open to Input has been noted by many great thought leaders, including Warren Bennis, Diane Coutu, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Jack Welch, Peter Drucker, Peter Senge, and Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.

- In *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis writes, "Leaders need people around them who have contrary views, who are devil's advocates, 'variance sensors' who can tell them the difference between what is expected and what is really going on" (Bennis, pp. 188-189).
- In Diane Coutu's *Harvard Business Review* interview with Abraham Lincoln historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, the biographer describes how "...Lincoln surrounded himself with people, including his rivals, who had strong egos and high ambitions; who felt free to question his authority; and who were unafraid to argue with him" (p. 44).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch says that in many companies, the voice and dignity of many people are repressed. He writes, "I'm not saying that everyone's opinions should be put into practice or every single complaint needs to be satisfied. That's what management judgment is all about. Obviously, some people have better ideas than others; some people are smarter or more experienced or more creative. But everyone should be heard and respected. They want it and you need it" (p. 57).
- In his foreword to *Leader of the Future* (edited by Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard), Peter Drucker describes effective leaders he has known. He writes, "They were not afraid of strength in their associates. They gloried in it. Whether they had heard it or not, their motto was what Andrew Carnegie wanted to have put on his tombstone: 'Here lies a man who attracted better people into his service than he was himself'" (p. xiii).

- In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge writes, “openness emerges when two or more individuals become willing to suspend their certainty in each other’s presence. They become willing to share their thinking and susceptible to having their thinking influenced by one another. And...they gain access to depth of understanding not accessible otherwise” (p. 284).
- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “The simple act of listening to what other people have to say and appreciating their unique points of view demonstrates your respect for others and their ideas” (p. 249). They also say, “Knowing that trust is key, exemplary leaders make sure that they consider alternate viewpoints, and they make use of other people’s expertise and abilities” (p. 247).

Showing Diplomacy

Inclusive leaders show diplomacy when communicating, and others may appreciate that they show concern for people’s feelings. Daniel Goleman and his coauthors, as well as the PDI team and Jack Welch illustrate the importance of Showing Diplomacy in leadership.

- In their *HBR* article, “Primal Leadership,” Daniel Goleman et al write, “Socially aware executives do more than sense other people’s emotions, they show that they care. Further, they are experts at reading the currents of office politics. Thus, resonant leaders often keenly understand how their words and actions make others feel, and they are sensitive enough to change them when that impact is negative” (p. 49).
- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Gebelein et al write, “Avoid personal attacks or put-downs when you challenge someone’s idea or analysis. This will help you both focus on the substantive issues and avoid damaging your relationship” (p. 248).

Facilitating Dialogue

Since Inclusive leaders tend to create open dialogue, others may admire their ability to help people find common ground. Many thought leaders have described dialogue as a key component of effective leadership. We’ve selected excerpts on this topic from the work of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, Robert Greenleaf, Peter Senge, and Kerry Patterson et al.

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. To enlist support, leaders must have intimate knowledge of people’s dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions, and values” (p. 15).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman write, “One of the best ways to communicate is to get others to communicate! Interestingly, the worst communicators focus solely on getting their message across. The best communicators check people’s reactions and get their ideas” (p. 35).
- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write, “Only the leader can set the tone of the dialogue in the organization. Dialogue is the core of culture and the basic unit of work. How people talk to each other absolutely determines how well the organization will function” (p. 25). They also write, “Her [the capable leader’s] leadership skills are such that everyone present is engaged in the dialogue, bringing everyone’s viewpoint out into the open and assessing the degree and nature of buy-in. It’s not simply for her managers to learn from her and she from them; it’s a way to diffuse the knowledge to everyone in the plan” (p. 33).
- In *Servant Leadership*, Robert Greenleaf writes, “Some find silence awkward or oppressive, but a relaxed approach to dialogue will include the welcoming of some silence. It is often a devastating question to ask oneself—but it is sometimes important to ask it—‘In saying what I have in mind will I really improve on the silence?’” (p. 31).
- In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge writes, “The discipline of team learning starts with ‘dialogue,’ the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‘thinking together.’ To the Greeks dia-logos meant a free-flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually” (p. 10).
- In *Crucial Conversations*, Kerry Patterson et al define dialogue as, “The free flow of meaning between two or more people.” They write, “When it comes to risky, controversial, and emotional conversations, skilled people find a way to get all relevant information (from themselves and others) out into the open” (p. 20).

Further Reading on the Inclusive Approach

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Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillian, R., & Switzler, A. (2002). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when the stakes are high*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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THE HUMBLE APPROACH

Leaders who model the Humble Approach maintain a modest, composed demeanor and can be relied upon to make decisions fairly. In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins writes, “Level 5 leaders are a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless” (p. 22). Some may be surprised to see humility included in our Eight Approaches to Leadership, but in his research, Collins found that, “Those who worked with or wrote about the good-to-great leaders continually used words like *quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild-mannered, self-effacing, understated, did not believe his own clippings; and so forth*” (p. 27). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Maintaining Composure, Showing Modesty, and Being Fair-Minded. Let’s

explore what several thought leaders have said about these Humble leadership practices.

Maintaining Composure

Since Humble leaders tend to maintain composure during stressful situations, people may be less worried about delivering bad news or unfavorable feedback. We discovered interesting passages about Maintaining Composure from the Center for Creative Leadership, Susan Gebelein et al, and Tim Irwin.

- In “Leadership Skills and Emotional Intelligence,” the Center for Creative Leadership states that emotional intelligence leads to better straightforwardness and composure. They write, “In general, co-workers seem to appreciate managers’ abilities to control their impulses and anger, to withstand adverse events and stressful situations, to be happy with life, and to be a cooperative member of the group. These leaders are more likely to be seen as participative, self-aware, composed, and balanced” (p. 3).
- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Gebelein et al give advice about maintaining one’s composure during conflict. They write, “Maintain a relaxed attitude and keep your mind open to a number of solutions,” and, “Use humor to lighten up tense or delicate negotiations. Humor can lower people’s defenses and make them more receptive to your point of view. It can also help you get over tough spots” (p. 207).
- In *De-Railed: Five Lessons Learned from Catastrophic Failures of Leadership*, Tim Irwin writes, “Any number of things in a workplace may provoke strong feelings, but when we begin to act like Scarlett O’Hara, our authenticity and credibility plummet. If you are a leader or aspire to be one, check the melodrama at the door” (p. 117).

Showing Modesty

Humble leaders are usually quite modest, and people may appreciate that these leaders recognize their limitations and put others needs above their own. Many thought leaders on leadership describe the importance of Showing Modesty, including Jim Collins, Diane Coutu, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jack Welch, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, and Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman.

- In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins writes, “Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It’s not that

Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves” (p. 21).

- In Diane Coutu’s *HBR* interview with Doris Kearns Goodwin, the Lincoln biographer says, “Basically, you want to create a reservoir of good feeling, and that involves not only acknowledging your errors but even shouldering the blame for the failures of some of your subordinates” (p. 44).
- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “Leaders are simply great learners. They have, to begin with, a great sense of humility about their own sense of skills and abilities, and many leaders, despite what may objectively be ‘extraordinary’ achievements are loath to attribute them to some extraordinary competency on their part” (p. 216).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch writes, “Leaders also establish trust by giving credit where credit is due. They never score off their own people by stealing an idea and claiming it as their own. They don’t kiss up and kick down because they are self-confident and mature enough to know that their team’s success will get them recognition, and sooner rather than later. In bad times, leaders take responsibility for what’s gone wrong. In good times, they generously pass around the praise” (p. 71).
- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write, “The more you contain your ego, the more realistic you are about your problems. You learn how to listen and admit that you don’t know all the answers. You exhibit the attitude that you can learn from anyone at any time. Your pride doesn’t get in the way of gathering the information you need to achieve the best results. It doesn’t keep you from sharing the credit that needs to be shared.” (p. 83).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman discuss humility in the context of character and leadership. They write, “Be willing to laugh at yourself. Don’t flaunt your authority. Humility will make you approachable. It opens the door to building relationships” (p. 23). They also say, “Hiding mistakes only makes their outcome worse. Share your pain, and the problem can begin to be solved. Be sure to inform those who will be affected by the mistake!” (p. 67).

Being Fair-Minded

Humble leaders strive to be fair in their decisions, and people may appreciate that these leaders don’t let their biases or emotions sway them. Psychologist David Messick and the PDI team led by Susan Gebelein describe this important leadership practice.

- In *The Psychology of Leadership*, David Messick writes, “There is ample research that indicates that people obey laws and other rules not because they fear the consequences of disobedience, but more because they see that the laws and rules are just and legitimate and that they pertain to everyone, including themselves. A necessary condition for this acceptance seems to be that the follower must believe

himself to be a valued member of the group, that is to say, one who is treated with dignity and respect (by leaders)” (p. 91).

- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Gebelein et al discuss the importance of treating others fairly and consistently. They write, “People are very cognizant of how they are treated compared to others inside or outside their group. If you tend to treat one group more or less favorably, even if it is unintentional, it can harm your reputation and your ability to work with them. It is important that you monitor how you treat various groups, and make a conscious effort to be consistent in your behavior” (p. 267).

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THE DELIBERATE APPROACH

Leaders who demonstrate the Deliberate Approach provide a sense of stability for the group by communicating clearly and ensuring that decisions are made carefully.

In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Peter Drucker writes, “Only when people with

proven performance capacity have been assigned to a project, supplied with the tools, the money, and the information they need to do the work, and given clear and unambiguous deadlines—only then do we have a plan. Until then, we have ‘good intentions,’ and what those are good for, everybody knows” (p. 155). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Communicating with Clarity, Promoting Disciplined Analysis, and Providing a Sense of Stability. These Deliberate leadership practices appear in the work of many top leadership experts.

Communicating with Clarity

Since Deliberate leaders make a point of communicating with clarity, people don’t have to worry about ambiguous or unclear messages. Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, Gifford Pinchot, the PDI team led by Susan Gebelein, and Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman all discuss the need for leaders to Communicate with Clarity.

- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write, “Leaders who execute focus on a very few clear priorities that everyone can grasp.” They go on to say, “A leader who says ‘I’ve got ten priorities’ doesn’t know what he’s talking about—he doesn’t know himself what the most important things are. You’ve got to have these few, clearly realistic goals and priorities, which will influence the overall performance of the company” (p. 69).
- In “Creating Organizations with Many Leaders,” Gifford Pinchot writes, “[Effective leaders] share information so that everyone can see how the whole organization works and how it is doing” (p. 28).
- In the *Successful Executive’s Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al advise, “Use clear reasoning, make compelling points, and have relevant supporting information, such as examples, statistics, analogies, and quotations from experts” (p. 205).
- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman write, “Leaders with strong directing tendencies are often prepared with well-organized plans that they communicate clearly” (p. 38).

Promoting Disciplined Analysis

Deliberate leaders insist on conducting disciplined analyses before choosing a direction, so people often see them as good decision makers. This analytical leadership practice is described in the work of Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, John Kotter, Peter Drucker, Sun Tzu, and Gloria Duffy.

- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman assert that the ability to analyze and solve problems are important leadership skills. They write, “These skills include the ability to define problems, analyze them, and come up with solid recommendations for resolving complex issues” (p. 26).
- In “What Leaders Really Do,” John Kotter writes, “But developing good business direction isn’t magic. It is a tough, sometimes exhausting process of gathering and analyzing information. People who articulate such visions aren’t magicians but broadbased strategic thinkers who are willing to take risks” (42).
- In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Peter Drucker writes: “Systematic innovation therefore consists in the purposeful and organized search for changes, and in the systematic analysis of the opportunities such changes might offer for economic or social innovation” (p. 35).
- In *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu writes, “Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes but few calculations beforehand. Thus do many calculations lead to victory, and few calculations to defeat: how much more no calculation at all! It is by attention to this point that I can foresee who is likely to win or lose” (p. 5)
- In her 2006 commencement address to the Graduate School at the University of San Francisco, former US defense official Gloria Duffy said, “Visionary leaders integrate many kinds of information to form a judgment. They collect information thoroughly, ask rigorous questions, fully analyze their decisions, and avoid basing judgments on best-case scenarios or wishful thinking.”

Providing a Sense of Stability

Deliberate leaders strive to create a sense of stability for themselves and the people around them, and others may appreciate having a structure to follow. The following excerpts from the work of Warren Bennis, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Edgar Schein, and Peter Drucker help illuminate the practice of Providing a Sense of Stability.

- In *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis writes, “Whatever surprises leaders themselves may face, they don’t create any for the group. Leaders are all of a piece; they stay the course” (p. 150).

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “There are no economies in always changing; constant changes in direction and in the ways things are done are confusing and costly to everyone” (p. 190). They go on to say, “The issue isn’t whether to have routines but which routines to have. Those few essential routines that serve the key values of the organization should be worshiped” (p. 190).
- In “Leadership and Organizational Culture,” Edgar Schein includes a section called “Maintaining: The Leader as a Sustainer of Culture,” in which he describes how some of the energy that goes into building an organization must eventually be channeled into more stabilizing forces.
- In *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, Peter Drucker writes, “People need to know where they stand. They need to know the people with whom they work. They need to know what they can expect. They need to know the values and the rules of the organization. They do not function if the environment is not predictable, not understandable, not known” (p. 90).

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THE RESOLUTE APPROACH

Leaders who model the Resolute Approach create high standards for the group and insist on using methods that maximize efficiency. In *Good to Great*, Jim Collins writes, “It is very important to grasp that Level 5 leadership is not just about humility and modesty. It is equally about ferocious resolve, an almost stoic determination to do whatever needs to be done to make the company great” (p. 30). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Setting High Expectations, Speaking Up About Problems, and Improving Methods. Let’s explore what’s been written about these Resolute leadership practices.

Setting High Expectations

Since Resolute leaders tend to set high expectations, others are likely to have confidence that the group will deliver top results. Several great leadership minds have discussed the importance of setting high expectations, including Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jack Welch, and Harvard University Professor J. Richard Hackman.

- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman note that leadership isn’t always easy. They write, “Sometimes it’s up to you to do the unpopular thing. You may need to fire unproductive workers or push people to do better work” (p. 79).

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner write, “The high expectations of leaders aren’t just fluff that they hold in their minds to keep a positive outlook or to psych themselves up. Another person’s belief in our abilities accomplishes much more than that. The expectations that successful leaders hold provide the framework into which people fit their own realities” (p. 323).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch writes, “Companies win when their managers make a clear and meaningful distinction between top- and bottom-performing businesses and people, when they cultivate the strong and cull the weak. Companies suffer when every business and person is treated equally and bets are sprinkled all around like rain on the ocean” (p. 37).
- In “Rethinking Team Leadership,” J. Richard Hackman writes, “The performance target set for a team must be neither too demanding nor too easy. Too great a stretch, and people do not even bother to try; too small a stretch, and they do not need to try.” (p. 126).

Speaking Up About Problems

Resolute leaders speak up when the group’s processes aren’t working, and others may appreciate that they don’t let problems slip through the cracks. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, the *Crucial Conversations* team led by Kerry Patterson, and J. Richard Hackman all discuss the importance of Speaking Up About Problems.

- In *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner write, “Go find what needs fixing in your organization. Wander around the plant, the store, the branch, the halls, or the office. Look for things that don’t seem right. Ask questions. Probe” (p. 199).
- In *Crucial Conversations*, Kerry Patterson et al write, “Within high-performing companies, when employees fail to deliver on their promises, colleagues willingly and effectively step in to discuss the problem. In the worst companies, poor performers are first ignored and then transferred. In good companies, bosses eventually deal with problems. In the best companies, everyone holds everyone else accountable—regardless of level or position” (p. 11).
- In “Rethinking Team Leadership,” J. Richard Hackman writes, “Leadership involves moving a system from where it is now to some other, better place. That means that the leader must operate at the margins of what members presently like and want rather than at the center of the collective consensus. To help a team address and modify dysfunctional group dynamics, for example, often requires challenging existing group norms and disrupting established routines, which can elicit anger and resistance from group members. Leaders who behave courageously are more likely than their more timid colleagues to make significant and constructive differences in their teams and organizations—but they often wind up paying a substantial personal toll in the bargain” (p. 137).

Improving Methods

Resolute leaders find ways to improve the group's methods, and others may appreciate how their practical, common-sense approach leads to greater efficiency. The importance of Improving Methods is discussed in the work of Susan Gebelein et al, Edgar Schein, and Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan.

- In the *Successful Executives Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al suggest, "Champion and guide innovative efforts that stem from perceived problems, expressed customer needs, and research findings (research is often ignored). Any of these three reasons will provide a solid rationale for experimental initiatives" (p. 343).
- In "Leadership and Organizational Culture," Edgar Schein writes that leaders of the future will need to have "New skills in analyzing cultural assumptions, identifying functional and dysfunctional assumptions, and evolving processes that enlarge the culture by building on its strengths and functional elements" (p. 68).
- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan discuss the value of conducting onsite business reviews to challenge employees and to monitor the effectiveness of methods. Bossidy writes, "When you go to an operation and you run a review of the business, the people may not like what you tell them, but they will say, 'At least he cares enough about my business to come and review it with us today. He stayed there for four hours. He quizzed the hell out of us.' Good people want that. It's a way of raising their dignity." (p. 63).

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THE COMMANDING APPROACH

Commanding leaders take charge of situations with confidence and urge others to get results. In PDI's the *Successful Executive's Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al write, "The primary purpose of a driving, demanding leadership style is to set the expectation that individuals and teams should achieve critical organizational goals in an efficient, effective, and timely manner" (p. 224). The three practices that comprise this approach are: Showing Confidence, Taking Charge, and Focusing on Results. These Commanding practices may seem quite obvious, yet much has been written about them by prominent voices in the leadership field.

Showing Confidence

Commanding leaders speak and act with conviction, so others are likely to feel assured and confident in these leaders' abilities. Judith Bardwick and Susan Gebelein et al describe the importance of leaders Showing Confidence.

- In "Peacetime Management and Wartime Leadership" Judith Bardwick writes, "Psychologically, leaders lead because they convince others that they understand the issues better than anyone else. People follow them because they speak about solutions with persuasive conviction, project confidence when others are uncertain, and act decisively" (p. 138).
- In the *Successful Executive's Handbook*, Susan Gebelein et al include a chapter called "Mature Confidence." They write, "Mature confidence comes when an

executive knows what he or she has to offer and is willing to do it to the best of his or her ability” (p. 351).

Taking Charge

Commanding leaders tend to step up and take charge when necessary, and people appreciate that they provide direction for the group. Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, as well as Jack Welch, write about the need for Taking Charge.

- In *The Handbook of Leaders*, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman write, “The best leaders see when something is falling through the cracks and immediately step in to make certain it is handled” (p. 26). They go on to say, “Extraordinary leaders wake up in the morning with a plan and put it into effect. They don’t always wait for permission before moving ahead.” (p. 31).
- In *Winning*, Jack Welch writes, “Leaders have the courage to make unpopular decisions and gut calls” (p. 72).

Focusing on Results

Since Commanding leaders focus on results, people on their teams may see themselves as part of a productive, goal-oriented group. Many thought leaders have discussed the importance of Focusing on Results, including Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, Jim Collins, and Peter Drucker.

- In *The Handbook for Leaders*, Zenger & Folkman write, “Leadership is ultimately about producing results,” and, “Leaders who tend to focus on results are ‘in the driver’s seat, with a foot on the accelerator—pressed to the floorboard most of the time” (p. 29).
- In *Execution*, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write, “Much has been written about Jack Welch’s style of management—especially his toughness and bluntness, which some people call ruthlessness. We would argue that the core of his management legacy is that he forced realism into all of GE’s management processes, making it a model of an execution culture” (p. 22). They go on to say, “You need accountability for results—discussed openly and agreed to by those responsible—to get things done and reward the best performers” (p. 23).
- In *Good to Great*, when defining the “professional will” observed in Level 5 leaders, Jim Collins notes that a Level 5 leader “Demonstrates an unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult” (p. 36).
- In Peter Drucker’s forward to *Leader of the Future*, edited by Frances Hesselbein et al, he writes, “An effective leader is not someone who is loved or admired. He or she

is someone whose followers do the right things. Popularity is not leadership. Results are” (p. xii).

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