



STAGES OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Effective leaders increasingly perceive their ministries in terms of a lifetime perspective. J. Robert Clinton in his book *Making of a Leader* (Nav Press, 1988) defines five developmental phases that God wants to take us through. A developmental phase is a unit of time in a person's life that God uses to bring a person to his greatest point of usefulness. In real life these phases are not as cut and dry as they are presented here. Many things happen concurrently. These phases have been adapted to fit our situation within Campus Crusade.

SOVEREIGN FOUNDATIONS

Sovereign foundations are the things you were born with--your heritage, basic personality, inherent intelligence, family background, etc., that God, in his providence, works into the life of the leader-to-be. The potential leader has little or no control over these foundations but he can choose how to respond to them. The lesson to be learned is that God has sovereignly been in control and he will use your family background, personality, and experiences--both good and bad to uniquely shape you to accomplish his purpose. There is nothing wasted in God's economy. You can play the hand that is dealt to you. In order to grow as a leader we must, little by little embrace these foundational aspects of our lives and help others to do likewise. How we view these foundations will color everything about us. Like Joseph we need to learn to see the hand of God in our past and say, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done..."

INNER LIFE GROWTH

This phase occurs during in the first two or three years of ministry. During this phase the leader learns by doing, in the context of ministry. Development

of a strong devotional life is the one indispensable ingredient to Christian leadership. Without learning to be a self-feeder, the leader will never now how to feed others. Without learning to pray, he will never learn dependence on the Lord.

The most effective way of transmitting convictions and skills at this stage is through modeling. The "spiritual imprints" received will stick with them the rest of his life. Remember this: The quality of these first few years will in many ways shape the ministry destiny of the leader. Learn to view this time as the foundation for a lifetime of ministry. You have the privilege of laying the most important convictions and skills he/she will ever receive.

In this phase a leader needs to be gaining knowledge, skills and ministry experience. This is his/her "Basic Training" experience. They need to become an expert in the basic skills of campus ministry--evangelism, basic follow-up, leading a small group and personal Bible study. Their ministry will be an extension of these for the rest of their life.

The critical life lessons a person needs to learn, if he or she is going to develop into a leader are: dependence on the Lord, submission to authority, being a part of a team, and faithfulness. Leaders who have trouble submitting to spiritual authority will usually have trouble exercising it. If a person can't function as part of a missional team they will never know how to direct one. If a person can be faithful in the little things--the small tasks, then God can move them on to greater responsibilities. Faithfulness is the yardstick by which God measures maturity.

Faithfulness is often seen in how a person manages their time. Your team members need to learn to live under a workweek schedule before they will know



how to be productive in a flexible schedule. You do your team no favors by letting them settle for mediocrity.

Although this is a strong training phase, the real training program is in the heart of the person. The major thrust of God's development is inward. While we are evaluating fruitfulness, productivity and activities, God knows that we need to minister out of who we are.

MINISTRY MATURING

The second phase occurs when the leader moves into his or her "productive" years in ministry. The goal is to identify and use their spiritual gift or "gift-mix." Most of this will be done by experimentation. A person at this stage of life needs to try many things in order for gifts to surface. An emerging leader needs to search out and say "yes" to many different opportunities and areas of potential giftedness. They really don't know what to say "no" to because they haven't said "yes" to a sufficient amount of challenges. Those who are frustrated in their later year in ministry are often frustrated because they have never discovered what they are really good at and developed it. They play it too safe in these early years. Your job is to help affirm and recognize their spiritual giftedness.

A personal philosophy of ministry should be formulated and embraced as the emerging leader recognizes from the Word and from experience principles of life and ministry. As a leader takes on more and more diverse opportunities he may realize the need for more training. It must be recognized that in order for a leader to grow they need to take responsibility for their development. Reading, personal study, training programs, mentoring, or formal schooling are needed if the leader is to continue to grow and develop. Teach your team how to get the resources they need to keep growing.

Obedience, integrity, and learning to discern God's will are essential if a person is to go on to the next stage. If a person cannot discern the voice of God in their own life, it will be difficult for them to convince potential followers that they have discerned God's will for the organization. Communication skills should be in the honing stage--not just public speaking but relating to superiors, peers, and subordinates.

In the final analysis a leader is one who implements change. Teach your team how to make good decisions

and empower them to do so in significant areas of responsibility.

LIFE MATURING

In this phase a leader has identified and is using his or her spiritual gifts in a ministry that is personally satisfying and probably fruitful. This person has figured out that which they do well in ministry. They know themselves and are comfortable with who they are. They do not accept every ministry challenge. They are comfortable saying "no" to different ministry opportunities because they recognize that they don't have to do everything well but only that which God has called them to do. In many cases they have moved from a generalist to a specialist--a person who is operating from their giftedness and values. If they have the opportunity, they gather around themselves a team of people whose strengths complement their strengths.

In the Life Maturing Phase you begin to focus on the unique contribution you are making to the team or organization. The scope of your ministry and influence has broadened--not necessarily upward in the organization but broadly with your peers. At this stage is your life you should be living out your job description--not that you just do what you want but that the job you are asked to do is a good "fit." Generally speaking you look forward to your work week. To be living in this phase is an earned privilege--earned through faithfulness, knowledge of self, and knowledge of God.

CONVERGENCE

Convergence occurs when the leader's potential is maximized. God moves a leader into a role that matches giftedness, experience, temperament, spiritual maturity, destiny, and geographical location. It occurs when a leader is running on all eight cylinders and is making their greatest contribution. These are the most productive years of ministry. Winston Churchill explained it this way: "There comes in the lifetime of every man that special moment when he is figuratively tapped on the shoulder, and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to him and fitted to his talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds him unprepared for the work, which could be his finest hour."

HOW TO TELL IF YOU HAVE PLATEAUED



Leaders have a tendency to cease developing once they develop some skills and have some experience. When a leader develops a certain level of competence but fails to continue they will tend to coast on experience and giftedness. Leaders plateau when they become complacent about their development and the contribution they are making. Here are some questions to ask yourself: Are you still recognizing leadership challenges and opportunities? Are you willing to accept new challenges and are you recruiting others for them? What have you learned in the past six months that has helped you do your job more effectively? What ministry challenges have you accepted in the past six months? Have the past five years been five years of experience or one year multiplied by five?

NOTES FROM ERIK ERIKSON

Psychologist Erik Erikson has defined the life stages that each of us will pass through in this lifetime. Each stage presents us with a choice that needs to be settled before we pass on to the next stage.

In adolescence the issue is identity versus confusion. Failure to achieve a strong sense of identity will result in role confusion. In young adulthood we are faced with the choice of intimacy versus isolation. The developmental task is to form intimate relations with a spouse and with lifelong friends. Failure to achieve intimacy often leads to alienation and feelings of isolation. During middle age we either contribute or stagnate. There is within each one of us a desire to go beyond the borders of self and family in order to help the next generation. In later life, as we look back on our life, we will either have what Erikson calls “ego integrity” or despair--depending on how we answered the choices that faced us earlier in life. These are stages that all people go through. And you will pass through them as will all of those on your team. You, as the team leader, can help people face the issues of life and help them to choose wisely.

HOW CAN I REACH CONVERGENCE?

Convergence is best reached by being faithful to the call of God and doing our best in the level we are at. As we simply are faithful to do what He wants us to, each step of the way, God will bring us to our highest point of usefulness.

WHAT IS YOUR PART?

- Learn to see your team not as tools to be used for a season to accomplish your objectives but rather as leaders who are entrusted to you for their care and development.
- Help your team to recognize and embrace the growth phases in their lives. As they begin to understand where they are going, the chances are they will be more cooperative in the process.
- We help others to grow by growing ourselves. Your team needs to see development and growth as the normative experience of a Christian leader.