

# **LADDERShifts**

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## **I. 7 LADDER RUNGS TO YOUR DESTINY**

- A. Thoughts
- B. Words
- C. Decisions
- D. Actions
- E. Habits
- F. Character
- G. Destiny

## **II. 8 NEW CHALLENGES FACING LEADERS TODAY**

Because life is dynamic, we may experience one to a lesser degree today, while one that hadn't affected us will suddenly register off the scale tomorrow.

- A. All leaders are looking for **NEW PEOPLE** in leadership
- B. All leaders are experiencing **NEW PAINS** in their journey
- C. All leaders are finding themselves in **NEW PLACES**
- D. All leaders need people to provide **NEW PERSPECTIVES**
- E. All leaders are engaging with **NEW PRIORITIES**
- F. All leaders are being fueled by **NEW PASSIONS**
- G. All leaders are embarking on **NEW PREPARATION**
- H. All leaders are excited by **NEW POSSIBILITIES**

### III. NEW PEOPLE

*My main job was developing talent. I was a gardener providing water and other nourishment to our top 750 people. Of course, I had to pull a few weeds, too.*—Jack Welch, former chairman and CEO, General Electric Company.

A. Leadership is filled with people issues. No leader is immune to them; they come with the territory.

B. The people who got you to where you are now may not be the ones who take you where you need to go. At different junctures in our lives we need different types of people in our lives.

C. 3 Types of people you will encounter:

1. Where you used to be—we reach down to assist them.

*The best use of power is to give power away—help others succeed.*

2. People who are going where you're going—we reach out to them.

3. People who are in the place that you want to be—we reach up them.

D. When you don't know how to disengage and engage with people it causes pain.

E. 8 Types of people you will deal with:

1. Positive and negative people—Agreement is not always positive and disagreement is not always negative; people can disagree with us and still add value.

2. People you have outgrown—Excellence is found on the edges, never in the middle.

*If you don't grow, you've gotta go!*

3. People who are tied to yesterday's solutions—dealing with the “old guard” is an issue that every leader has to wrestle with.

Yesterdays' solutions have become today's problems!

4. “That's not my job” people—When engaging leaders and other personnel you have to look at 3-C's:

A. Character—“Can I trust them?”

B. Competency—“Can they do the job?”

C. Chemistry—“Will they fit who we are?”

5. People who have not moved on—When the vision and movement of the leader and organization are out of sync it calls for realignment leading to organizational congruence.

***“Who is going to take this journey with me and who is not?”***

6. People who can give you new perspective—The first three months of a new leader or employee are their best in giving perspective and feedback. After that they assume the DNA of the organization.
7. People you can be transparent with—Why is it so difficult to find people to talk to? It’s because the stakes are higher.

There are fewer people who fully understand the reality of your new position at this juncture in your life.

8. People who can celebrate your success—You want people who can help you celebrate your journey.

#### F. 3 Growth Principles:

1. The way to get your organization to grow is to grow your leaders in numbers and depth.
2. Surround yourself with people who challenge you to grow. If we only surround ourselves with people like us, our weaknesses are never challenged.

### **The Company You Keep**

*It is better to be alone than in the wrong company.*

*Tell me who your best friends are, and I will tell you who you are. If you run with wolves, you will learn how to howl. But, if you associate with eagles, you will learn how to soar to great heights. “A mirror reflects a man’s face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses.” The simple but true fact of life is that you become like those with whom you closely associate – for the good and the bad.*

*The less you associate with some people, the more your life will improve. Any time you tolerate mediocrity in others, it increases your mediocrity. An important attribute in successful people is their impatience with negative thinking and negative acting people. As you grow, your associates will change. Some of your friends will not want you to go on. They will want you to stay where*

*they are. Friends that don't help you climb will want you to crawl. Your friends will stretch your vision or choke your dream. Those that don't increase you will eventually decrease you.*

*Consider this:*

- *Never receive counsel from unproductive people.*
- *Never discuss your problems with someone incapable of contributing to the solution, because those who never succeed themselves are always first to tell you how. Not everyone has a right to speak into your life. You are certain to get the worst of the bargain when you exchange ideas with the wrong person.*
- *Don't follow anyone who's not going anywhere. With some people you spend an evening: with others you invest it.*
- *Be careful where you stop to inquire for directions along the road of life.*

*Wise is the person who fortifies his life with the right friendships.*

- Anonymous

3. Focus on your organization's context and not its packaging—this will attract new people. What attracts people is becoming part of an organization that's going somewhere, that's doing something, that's changing the world.

#### **IV. NEW PAINS**

***God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.***—C.S. Lewis, Author, "The Problem of Pain"

- A. Today's leaders are facing new pains
  1. Exploding rate of change
  2. Rapid technological innovations
  3. Finding honest and competent people
  4. Serving a multi-cultural milieu
  5. Building programs
  6. Increase / Decrease in membership
  7. Ever increasing need for resources
- B. When you're the CEO, you're never off

C. You will grow only to the threshold of your pain. Your willingness to handle pains you encounter will determine the level of leadership to which you'll rise.

D. 3 kinds of pains all leaders face.

1. External pains such as cultural changes, external pressures and competitive realities.

Cultural shifts demand new ways of looking at things and new vocabularies. You are no longer in control—the things you had control of begin wriggling from your grasp.

Heeding those pains can keep you from becoming irrelevant.

Irrelevance is irreverence!

2. Organizational pains such as conflict, decision making and higher stakes.

The success of a growing organization brings new pains. The angst of the struggle to make the right decision always brings pains.

3. Internal pains such as discovering yourself and your limits, inadequacies and relationships.

Things don't turn out as we expected. Often, there is an inability to articulate internal realities. It is harder to keep our minds and words synchronized with what we're seeing internally. All leaders must bear the pains of criticism.

New pains will always be part of your life as you continue to climb the ladder to your destiny.

## V. NEW PLACES

*The next sea change is upon us. We must recognize this change as an opportunity to take our offerings to the next level...*--Bill Gates, co-founder and chairman, Microsoft.

A. Remaining in the same place produces mediocrity.

B. 3 Things required to get to new places:

1. Develop a clear vision of your destination.
2. Disengage with activities and people not headed in that direction. Don't think that disengaging is easy.

3. Connect with activities and people who are already at your desired destination. Investing resources in where you're going is a choice. You cannot remain static if you want to be moving.

C. 4 Principles that can help you navigate the terrain of any unfamiliar territory:

1. Be ready to give up the familiar and make friends with the unfamiliar. God is always pushing us from the familiar to the unfamiliar—ask Abraham, David, Daniel, Peter—it causes us to trust God in new ways. This is difficult individually but even more difficult with an organization
2. Develop a level of comfort with ambiguity. You are not a pioneer traveling across the landscape—you're the captain of a ship navigating the changing and uncharted waters of a seascape. You are dancing in the moment.
3. Be flexible in your direction. Shifting lanes are par for the course.
4. Emphasize seascapes over landscapes—this is a leader's primary responsibility in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## VI. NEW PERSPECTIVES

*He not busy being born is busy dying.*—Bob Dylan, Singer/Songwriter, “It’s Alright Ma (I’m Only Bleeding)”

A. Getting perspective means forcing ourselves to think in new ways. We have to be healthy enough to admit that we cannot be strong in every area.

B. 6 Primary origins of our perspective:

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Foes

In difficult times keep your friends close and your enemies closer.

4. Culture
5. Education
6. Ancient Wisdom

C. Attempting to be strong in every area creates an independent spirit. It is healthier to have a trans-dependent spirit.

Trans-dependence keeps me rooted in my past, gives me context for my present, and offers me perspective for my future.

- D. Jim Collins in *Good to Great* reminds us that years of research has proven that all “Level 5 Leaders” have an odd mix of genuine personal humility and an intense professional will.

Leaders with huge egos are detrimental to their organizations.

- E. You must get comfortable with people who know more than you. When you’re searching for new perspectives, the place to find it is by connecting to other people. Try not to be the smartest person in the room—that’s a sad place to be.

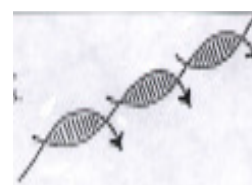
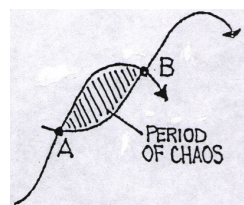
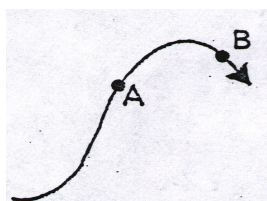
***I need to be around people who know more than me because then I can walk away knowing more than I did when I walked in.***

- F. Healthy leaders don’t see other’s ideas as threats rather as gifts. When you are healthy you can ask “what do you think?” and receive their perspective.

- G. 10 Tools for gaining new perspective:

1. As yourself the Peter Drucker questions:
  - a. What is our mission?
  - b. Who is our customer?
  - c. What does our customer value?
  - d. What is our plan?
  - e. What are our results?
2. Examine and clarify what you offer constantly.
3. Offer who you are.
4. Recertify yourself each year.

Change is always necessary. We cannot assume that just because something works today, it will continue to work tomorrow. You must either evolve or stagnate.



Given that we're always encountering cycles of change, we have to stay ahead of the curve by regularly asking ourselves, "What changes do I need to make?" If we don't, we'll just become part of the landscape. We need to ensure that we're regularly recertifying ourselves by making changes before the need becomes critical.

5. Commit to a personal development plan—PDP
  - a. Personally
  - b. Professionally
  - c. Financially
  - d. Relationally
  - e. Spiritually
  - f. Educationally
6. Focus on personal disciplines—this is the critical factor.
  - a. Tell the truth
  - b. OHIO
  - c. Respond
  - d. Respect everyone
  - e. Read widely.
7. Remember that the learners beat the learned.

In times of change learners will inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.—Eric Hoffer.

8. Be content to be "a work in progress." Receiving correction is all part of the process.

9. Remember, it's not the destination; it's the journey. Do we ever outgrow the "Are we there yet?" syndrome? Mistakes are not viewed as fatal.

10. 3 questions to ask yourself at the end of each day:

- a. What did I learn today?
- b. How did I grow today?
- c. What will I do differently?

## VII. NEW PRIORITIES

*There is surely nothing quite so useless as doing something with great efficiency what should not be done at all.*—Peter F. Drucker, Business Analyst/Author

A. Whenever your organization focuses on a few essential priorities, it gains strength.

B. Your vision is the source of your priorities.

C. 3 Important questions to gain critical focus:

1. What are my priorities? Once you are sure of this then you will not allow others to set your priorities for you.
2. How should I implement these priorities?
3. How can I effectively communicate my priorities within my organization?

D. Every decision and every business activity is headed for obsolescence the minute it begins.

E. Effective leaders are constantly re-evaluating.

F. Your priorities affect how you invest your time. When you are clear about your vision you will schedule your priorities rather than prioritizing your schedule.

G. 6 Questions to ask while implementing your priorities:

1. How does this priority support our vision? Look for Organizational Congruence.
2. In what specific ways can we implement this priority?
3. Who will be responsible for these activities?

4. What's the timeframe for accomplishing this priority?
5. Do we have the capacity to undertake this right now? Do we have the necessary finances, people, facilities?
6. How will we measure success?

H. 4 Principles for communicating your priorities and casting vision:

1. Keep it simple. Few words—short sentences.
2. Make it memorable. It should be short enough to fit on a tee shirt.
3. Have a stable vision. While visions do change, they don't change drastically on a daily basis.
4. Be patient. It takes time. People don't understand the solution you're proposing until they understand the problem.

## VIII. NEW PASSIONS

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.*—Solomon (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

- A. Dreams that were compelling to you at one time, now are losing their intensity. It is typical for visionary leaders to become comfortable with the status quo.
- B. Put a gifted visionary in an operating environment for too long and they become restless, bored, and ready for another challenge.
- C. You must stay aware of when this is happening to you. Visionaries have to learn to slow down and listen to themselves—activity isn't always progress.
- D. Navigating changing passions is easier when you can:
  1. Admit when things have changed.
  2. Look for godly discontent.
  3. Leave on a high note.
- E. Uncovering new passions will reignite the fire within you.
- F. 6 Questions in discovering your path:

1. What do I really care about?
2. What makes me pound the table with passion?
3. What do I dream about?
4. Where do I get my greatest fulfillment?
5. When I daydream, what values are at work?
6. What have I liked most about what I've done?

*The jump is so frightening between where I am and where I could be...Because of all I may become, I will close my eyes and leap!*—Mary Ann Radmacher

## IX. NEW PREPARATION

*Forewarned is forearmed. To be prepared is half the victory.*—Spanish proverb

- A. We must realize we control very little.
- B. Preparation and planning are different.
  1. Planning is narrow in focus, while preparation is broader in scope.
  2. Planning is to achieve a specific goal, while preparation is for wider opportunities.
  3. You prepare for ministry you plan for church services.
  4. You prepare in school you plan for a career.
- C. I know too many organizations whose realities have changed, but they are still following the strategic plan associated with landscape.
- D. 6 Areas to constantly prepare:
  1. Personal preparation.
  2. Professional preparation.
  3. Relational preparation.
  4. Family preparation.
  5. Financial preparation.

6. Educational preparation.

***Opportunities come to those who are prepared.***

***The opportunity of a lifetime must be utilized in the lifetime of the opportunity.***

***Opportunities are never postponed; they are lost forever.***

E. 3 Areas affected by lack of preparation:

1. Remain blind to obvious opportunities.
2. Cannot mobilize quickly enough to take advantage of new opportunities.
3. Do not attract the right partners.

F. Success is the intersection of our preparation and opportunity.

Preparation + Opportunity = Success

## X. NEW POSSIBILITIES

***The future is not the result of choices among alternate paths offered in the present. It is a place created – created first in the mind and the will; created next in activity.—***  
Walt Disney, Founder of Disney Entertainment

- A. You need to wonder out loud—What makes your destiny so compelling? It’s not just any future; it’s your future.
- B. When unanticipated circumstances threaten, transformed leaders don’t become rigid, demanding or controlling because they have:
  1. Altered attitudes
    - a. “What is it about me that I need to change?”
    - b. “What are the possibilities if I had a team I could trust?”
    - c. “How can I become a change leader?”
      - (1) As a catalyst
      - (2) As a solution giver
      - (3) As a process helper

(4) As a resource link

d. “What about me is holding the organization back?”

2. Transformed thinking

a. “How can I become a lifelong learner by reading widely, probing others and asking insightful questions?”

b. “Since knowledge is currency and power do I share it willingly?”

c. A vision without a strategy is a dream.

d. Transformed leaders can quickly spot relationships and possibilities that others miss.

e. Transformed leaders are adept at futuring.

3. Uncommon commitments

a. The world expands with new possibilities as you communicate across generations, cultures and the globe.

b. New possibilities become a natural everyday occurrence.

c. Scanning the horizon and forecasting trends is rooted deeply in uncommon commitment.

d. It doesn't mean that your rose colored glasses magically enable you to declare every glass as “half full”. However you are always aware that new possibilities can emerge from any and all situations.