

Circle of Impact Leadership Guides

Dr. Ed Brenegar

The following pages are conversation guides. They are the product of hundreds of conversations over the past three decades. They are used to provide a way to see complex ideas and whole situations in organizations in as simple a way as possible. They serve to provide a way to reflect on the big picture of what is happening at a particular point in time. If you have questions please ask me at ed@edbrenegar.com. Your questions and comments further the practical use of these guides. Some day there will be a book.

1. Creating Impact In Life & Work During Times of Transition - The purpose of this guide is to shift people's perception from change to transition in their experience. A transition perspective provides a way to see how the past, present and future are logically connected in a process of change. As a result, being able to recognize transition points makes it possible to gain an awareness of what one must do to move to the next level in either their personal or organization's life.

From this perspective, we pass through transition points where we make decisions that, in part, determine how we manage change. We know we enter a transition point when our performance begins to plateau or declines, or the work that we have been doing becomes harder. The awareness that we need to gain is an understanding of those strategies, actions, behaviors, or philosophies that have brought us to this transition point, and whether they are the ones to take us to the next level. In effect, we have to decide what we need to stop doing, and what we need to start doing.

2. How Leaders Manage Change To Create Impact - Leaders must manage the change or transition experience in their organizations. To do so, they must understand how people experience or view change. This guide provides a simple way of seeing a range of feeling and action. Above the dotted line, people either adapt or initiative change as a part of the on-going experience of life and work. Below the line, a person's attitude toward change becomes more problematic. To resist too much is to fail to recognize that change is a normal and necessary part of life and work. To embrace change too passionately creates an unstable and unsustainable life or work situation.

The ideal situation is a mixture of adaptation and initiative. For the leader, this requires situational awareness of the conditions that are impacting the organization. For example, economic changes, technological developments or competitive

pressures are environmental conditions that require constant adaptation and agility. To initiative change comes from clarity about the strategic direction of the organization, and the steps required to accomplish those goals.

3. What We Want From Our Life & Work - These core motivators of our life and work are ways we practically measure our involvement in the social and organizations that we are a part of every day. To be *Personally Meaningful* means that our beliefs and values are a central part of our experience. To be *Socially Fulfilling* means that our relationships are whole, healthy, and the social environment is respectful, supportive, caring, as well as open and hospitable. For our lives and work to be described as *Making a Difference that Matters* means that we see the impact of who we are and what we do. In effect, we are identifying the *change* we create by who we are, how we think, and what we do. The difference that matters is a product of our acting upon the values and beliefs that are personally meaningful, socially and relationally healthy ways, to accomplish a purpose or mission that defines who we are.

4. Circle of Impact - This is a picture of my understanding of the nature and function of leadership. It is a complex picture because leadership is not one thing, but many things operating at the same time. I've reached the conclusion that leadership begins with personal initiative, and that it is not primarily an organizational role, but a way of functioning as persons. As a result I see organizations as *communities of leaders*, each following their own personal call to make a difference that matters in collaborative, coordinated way.

In this perspective, there are three dimensions to leading - *Ideas, Relationships* and *Structure* (of both a social and an organizational type), that correspond to the organizational functions of *Communication, Collaboration* and *Coordination*. Once a person focuses on becoming a person of impact, the value of this perspective grows. Take any issue, and one of the three dimensions can be identified as the key problem area, if not each one. The solution comes from working with all three dimensions together. For example, if communication is a problem, then it isn't just being clear about what to communicate (ideas), but also understanding what people are looking to hear from you (relationships), and how that message is to be communicated in a manner that is most likely to make a difference (structure).

This alignment of the three dimensions is achieved through the *Connecting Ideas* of *Purpose or Mission, Values, Vision* and *Impact*. A *Purpose or Mission* is an identity perspective that says who we are and what we do. Our *Values* are those ideas that unite us as a congregation, and provide us the emotional commitment and resilience to do the hard work of change. A *Vision* is a picture of what it looks like for the people of this community working within their social and organizational structures to create the impact that is the difference that matters. It is a visionary perspective of the future fulfillment of one's mission.

As a result, it is important that a church or organization can identify what the impact of their life and work is, so that they can build upon it. Impact, therefore, is a picture of change or the difference that matters.

This is a complex picture of leadership as it functions in any setting. This guide is a tool for reflection and conversation that once learned can quickly become a way we see things happen in real time.

5. The Five Questions that Every Person Must Ask - This is a practical tool for applying the *Circle of Impact*. Each question is intended to create clarity of perspective and understanding of what is happening. The first question is best asked as change happening within a specific time frame, like 18 months or five years. The second question asks “*What is the impact of our ideas, relationships, and structures.*” Once we have a basic understanding of our impact, then reflection upon the future will be much easier. We’ll be able to see progress or decline much more easily. The third question identifies those people and groups who are impacted by our life and work. This perspective enables us to know with whom we need to strengthen relationships or a group that may have been hidden from our view, with whom we need to give our attention. The fourth question provides us direction on where our future efforts should be. Our opportunities are based on the impact that we have, and are typically ones that we should be acting on right away. The fifth question looks at the barriers, constraints or problems that keep us from making a difference that matters. We want to resolve those issues so that we can get on with fulfilling our opportunities.

6. The Leadership of Shared Responsibility - The *Circle of Impact* is an emergent picture of leadership. By that, I mean, it is not a picture of just the different activities and tasks that leaders do. It is a whole, complete picture of leadership which is greater than the sum of its parts. This page is an emergent or whole picture of the community that is the organization, and its shared responsibility for leadership. As a result, the senior leader of the organization, from this perspective, cannot lead from a control orientation, but rather from engagement with people to facilitate their own leadership within their role in the organization.

This vision of engagement is of each person taking initiative out of their own sense of personal responsibility as a member of a community that shares responsibility for communicating, collaborating and coordinating the organization’s work. To share responsibility doesn’t mean that everyone does the same thing, but, rather, that everyone shares responsibility for their part.

7. Leadership in Organizational Structures - This is a simple guide to help people see how an emergent, collaborative approach can be incorporated into a traditional, hierarchical organizational structure. The purpose is to show that collaboration is not just a tactic or a behavior that groups can employ, but a structural component of an organization, just like hierarchy is. The key to blending these two structures is openness to the leadership initiative of individuals working within groups. For example, if the structure requires issues to rise to higher levels of management, then those responsibility for implementing solutions not only have less say in how to resolve those issues, but also less motivation to resolve them at the source. A more collaborative approach allows for those who are closest to the implementation of a decision to have greater influence over how to implement a choice of direction. A hierarchical structure that has high functioning collaboration throughout its system provide senior management a greater opportunity to focus on strategic decision-making rather than tactical problem solving. This is not a new or particularly innovative idea. It is however, an idea that should be seen as a strategic asset rather than simple a way to apply “soft skills” in the workplace.

8. Say Thanks Every Day: The Power of Gratitude in Life & Work - The previous pages are all about leadership. This page is about relationships and community as the core life of the organization. This perspective has developed out of recognition that one of the inhibitors to a higher level of relationship interaction in organization is a lack of an understanding of what constitutes a whole, healthy relationship. The core idea is that in society at large and in organizations specifically, that we are at a transition point. This transition point concerns how people live and work together. I’ve defined this shift as moving towards an approach to life and work from a place of gratitude, rather than from a position of entitlement.

Much has been written in popular psychology about the beneficial effects of being grateful. Gratitude, in my perspective, is not just a way for us to find happiness, but how to live in relationship to others in any social or organizational setting.

The five actions here can be reduced to five simple concepts. *We say thanks.* *We give back* in service. *We make welcome* people as guests in our lives through the practice of openness and hospitality. *We honor others* as the fundamental basis of all interpersonal relationships. We treat people with honor and respect, for without it community is difficult to achieve. Finally, *we create goodness* through our personal commitment to take initiative to make a difference that matters.

How To Use These Conversation Guides

The purpose of these guides is for reflection in conversation to achieve awareness leading to action. Print off the pages, and carry them with you. Begin use the Circle of Impact guide to identify the ideas, relationships and structures that are involved

in the situation that is the current issue. Seek to understand how the Connecting Ideas are linking or aligning how you think, relate or organize the work that is needed. The key to using these guides is to ask questions, and let the conversation take you to a point of clarity.

If you need assistance, just ask. These guides are the basis of my consulting and coaching work. I welcome the opportunity to help you and your organization grow to make a difference that truly matters.

Creating Impact In Life & Work During Times of Transition

A Circle of Impact Guide

1. TRANSITION, NOT CHANGE:

Every person and organization is in transition from what they once were to what they will be. We experience this transition as change. We see it as performance plateaus and decline. It requires us to change.

2. TRANSITION POINTS:

What these Transition Points (T) show us is that what created growth at one stage may not at the next. Sustainability is the result of growth, not trying to remain at the same level. To grow requires us to make changes.

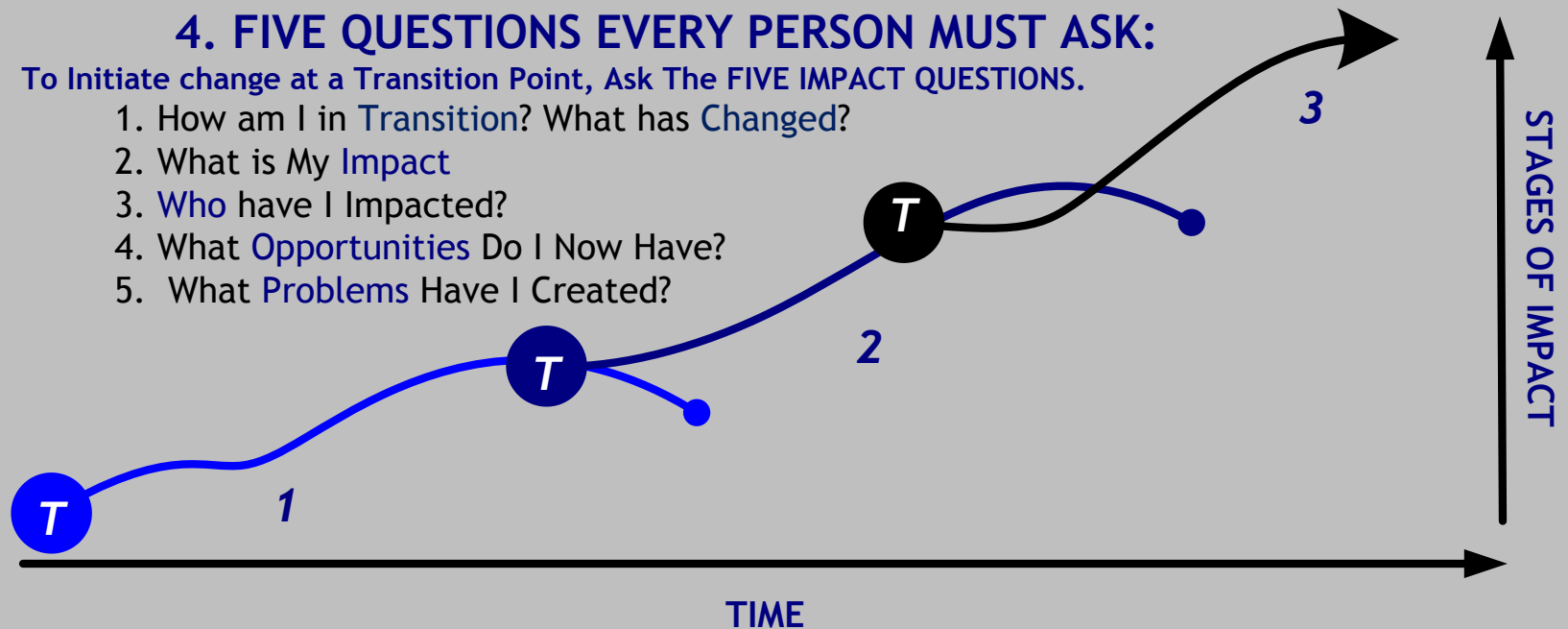
3. CREATING IMPACT THROUGH TRANSITION POINTS:

People manage Transition Points (T) by initiating change to create impact. People do this through the Three Dimensions of Life & Work - Ideas, Relationships and Social & Organizational Settings. These three dimensions form the Circle of Impact where growth occurs.

4. FIVE QUESTIONS EVERY PERSON MUST ASK:

To Initiate change at a Transition Point, Ask The FIVE IMPACT QUESTIONS.

1. How am I in Transition? What has Changed?
2. What is My Impact
3. Who have I Impacted?
4. What Opportunities Do I Now Have?
5. What Problems Have I Created?



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How Leaders Manage Change To Create Impact

CHANGE RECEPTIVE

Adapt to Changes in Circumstances

Change-phobics
resist Change

CHANGE INITIATOR

Initiate Change to Make a Difference

Change Junkies
only want Change.



Change Tolerance Spectrum

Low

High

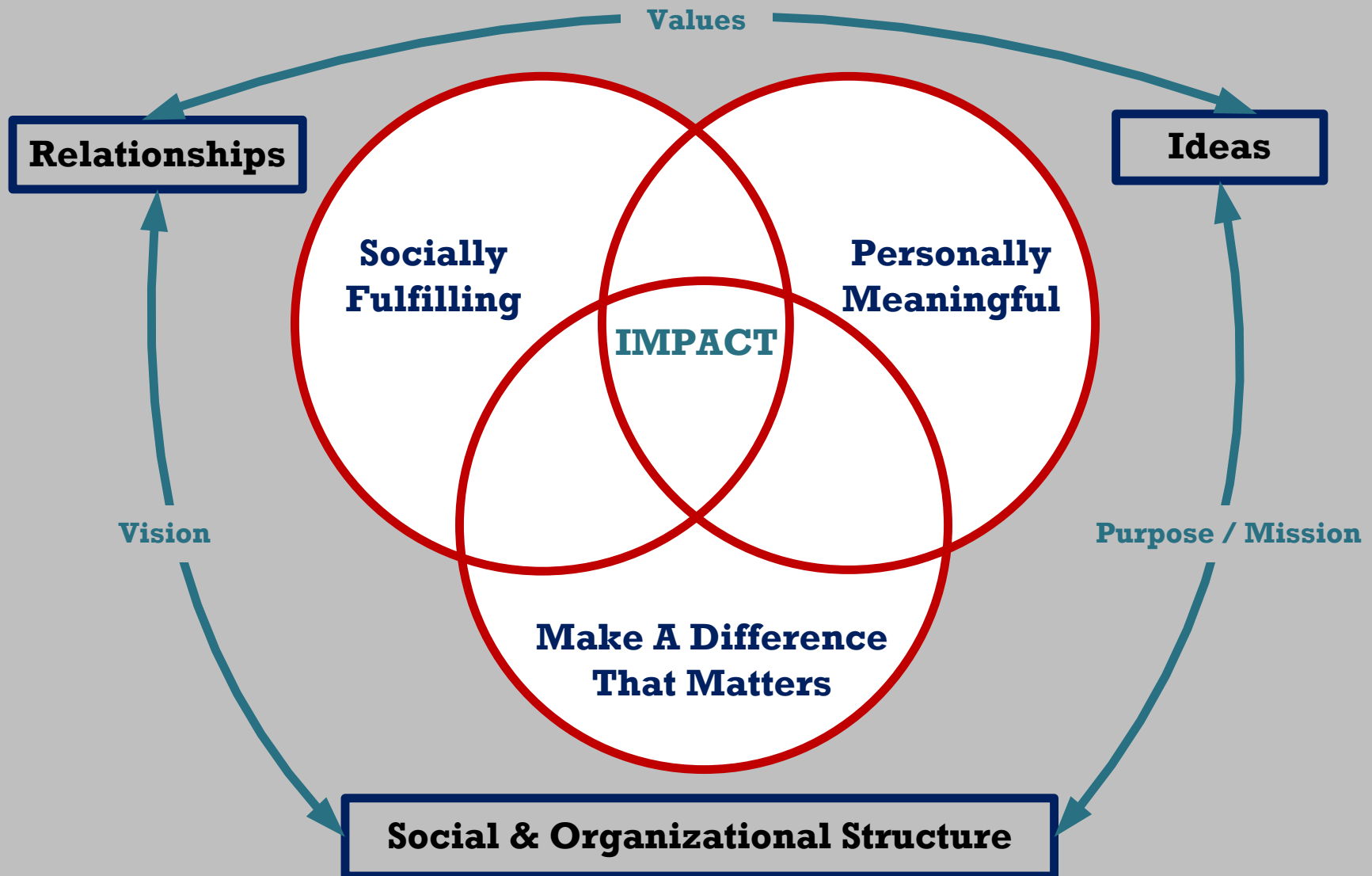
*Security and Stability Focused.
Avoids Risk.
Resistant to Change.
Continuity is Impact.*

*Open, Pragmatic, Receptive.
Calculates Risk in relation to Impact.
Adapts to and Initiates Change.
Impact is Change that Makes a Difference.*

*Embraces the excitement of Change.
Loves the adrenaline of high Risk.
Resists Continuity & Commitment.
Change is Impact.*

What We Want From Our Life & Work

A Circle of Impact Guide



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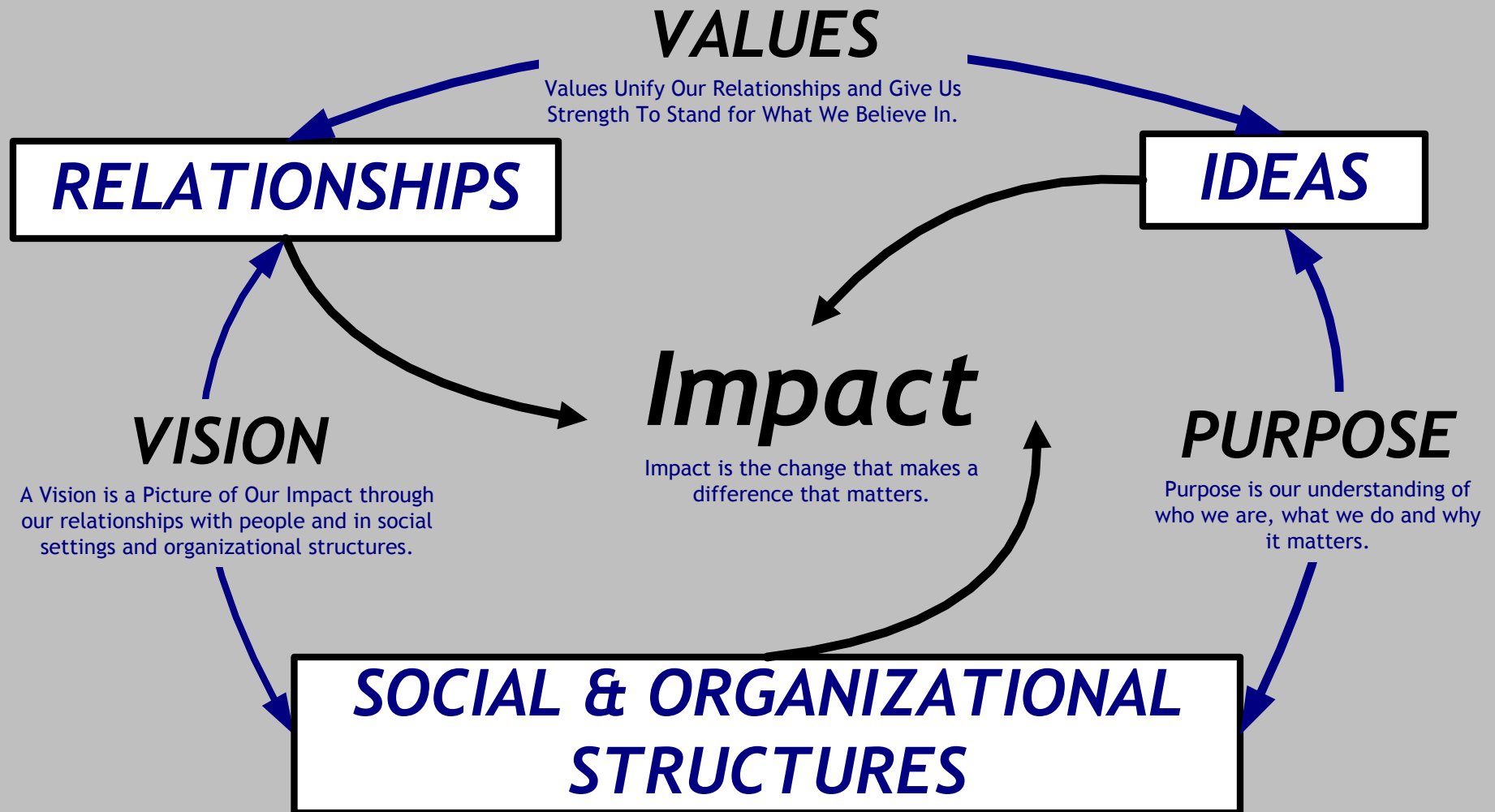
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THE CIRCLE OF IMPACT

Integrating the Three Dimensions of Life & Work for Making a Difference That Matters



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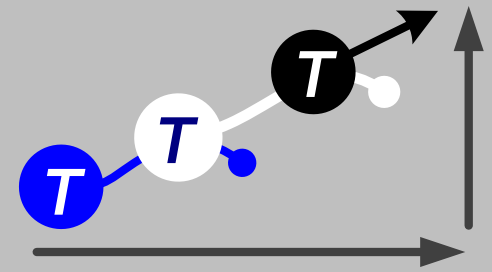
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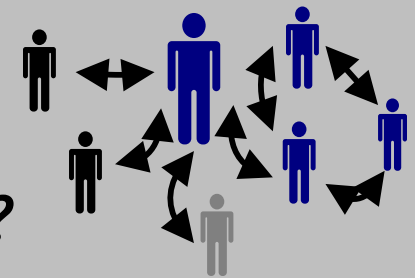
The FIVE QUESTIONS Every Person Must Ask

A Circle of Impact Guide

1. What has *Changed* in my Life and Work? How am I in *Transition*?



2. What is My *Impact*?

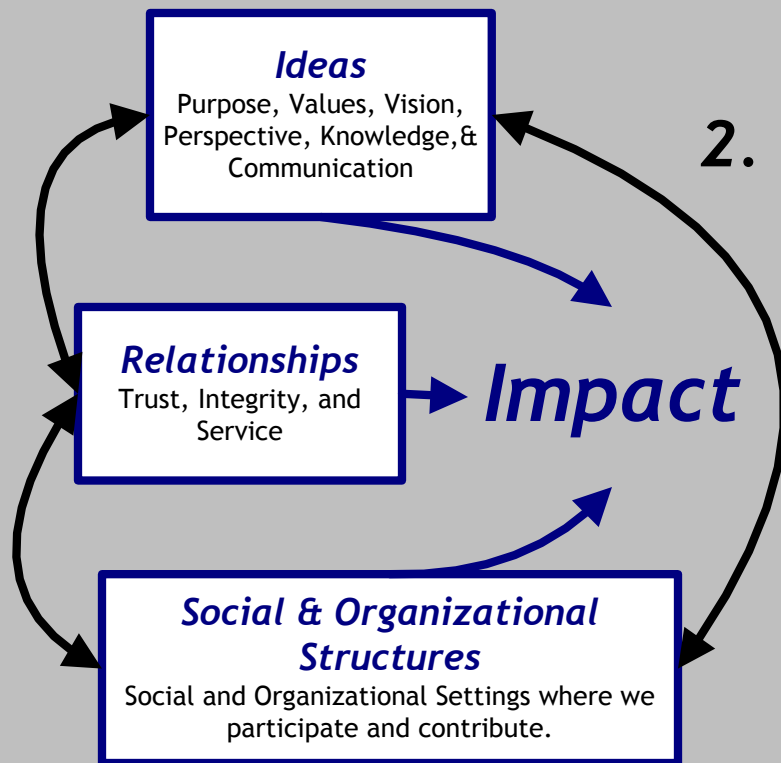


3. Who am I Impacting?

4. What *Opportunities* Do I Have Now?



5. What *Problems* Have I Created?



The Circle of Impact

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The Leadership of Shared Responsibility

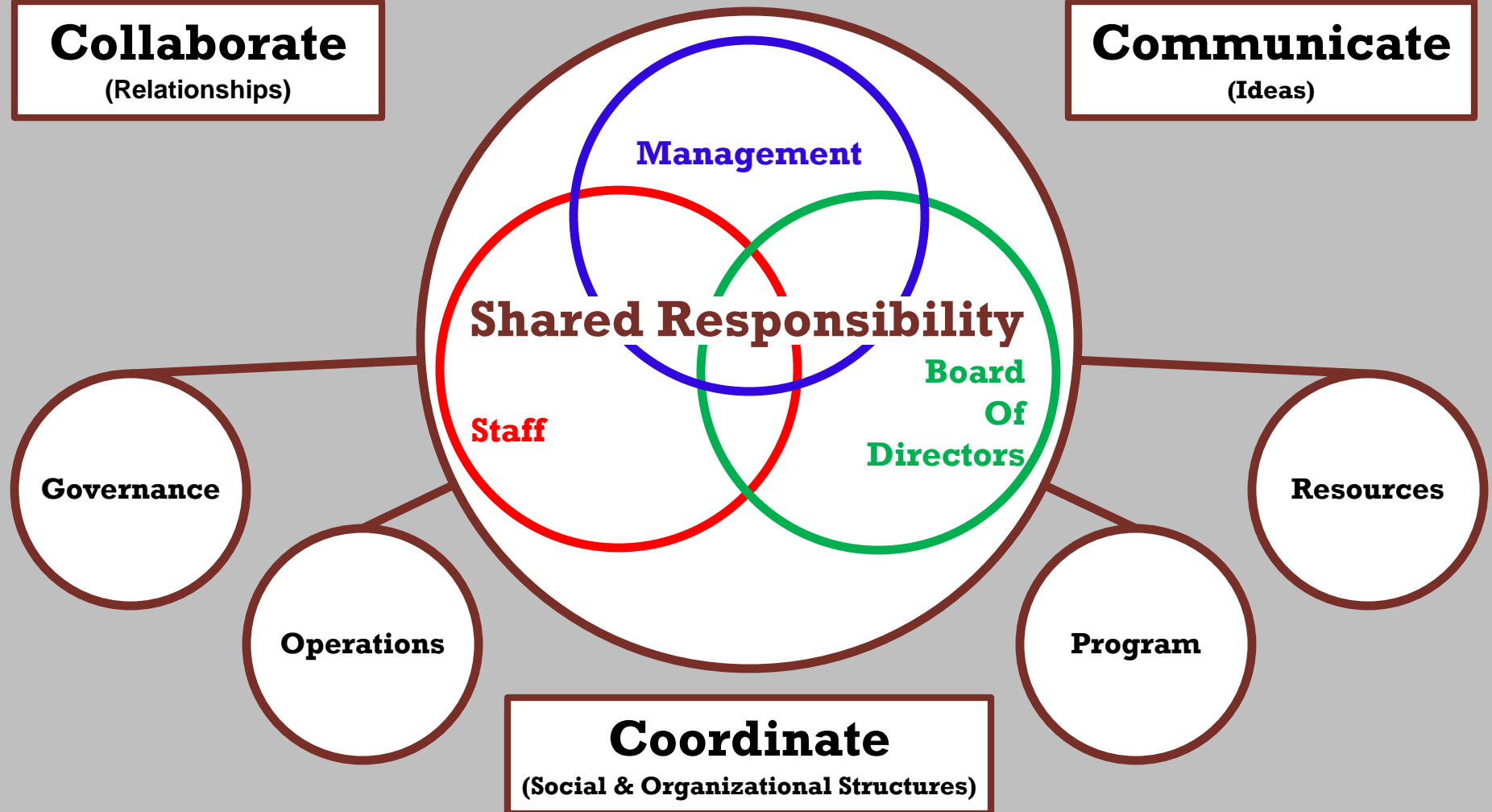
A Circle of Impact Guide

Collaborate

(Relationships)

Communicate

(Ideas)



Communicate with Connecting Ideas (Values, Purpose/Mission, Vision & Impact)

Collaborate with Relationships of Respect, Trust, & Mutual Contribution

Coordinate Organizational Structures to Align with Connecting Ideas & Collaborative Relationships

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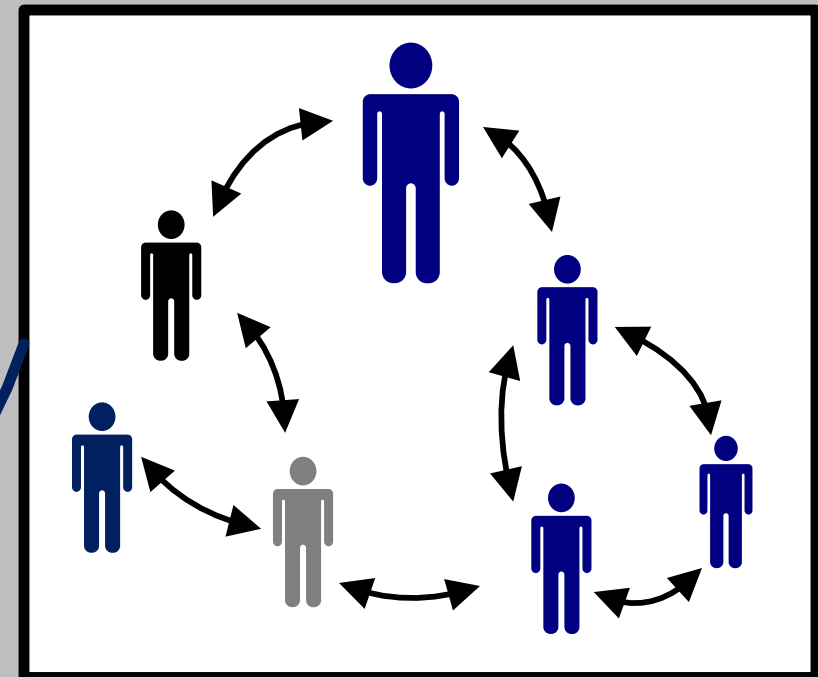
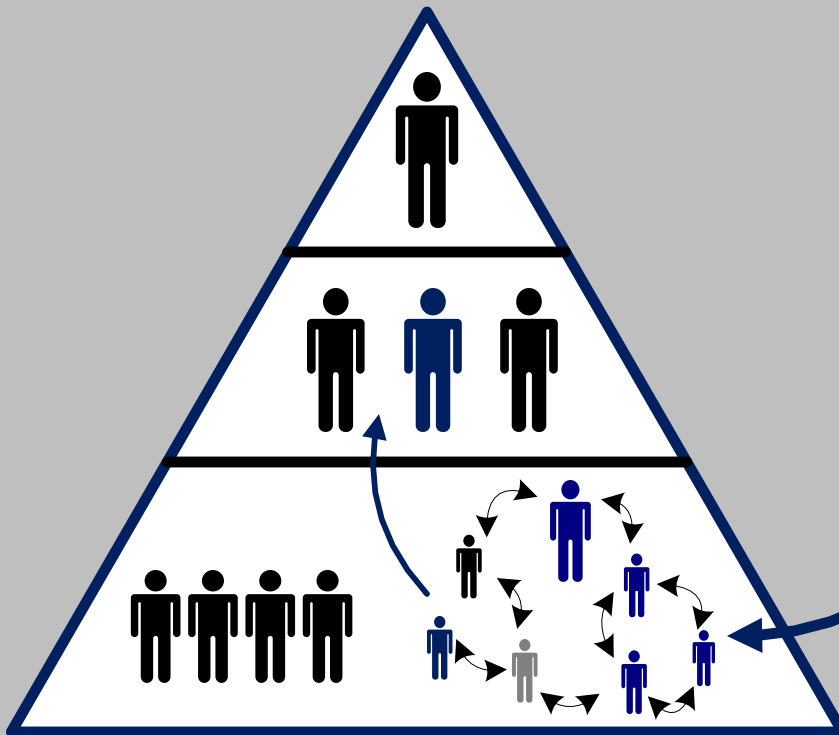
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Leadership in Organizational Structures

Leaders Take Initiative To Create Impact with Ideas, through Relationships, and in Organizational Structures.

The Four Dimensions of an Organizational Structure are Governance, Products, Operations, and Resources.



Hierarchical, Vertically Integrated, Compartmentalized

Collaborative, Emergent, Personally Connected

Leadership: Based on Authority and Position

Leadership: Shared Responsibility of First Among Equals

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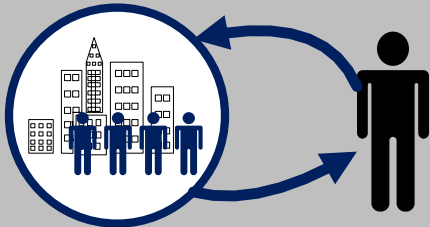
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Say Thanks Every Day

The Power of Gratitude in Life and Work

The Five Actions of Gratitude Create a Difference that Matters

Give Back



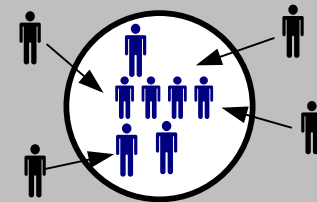
Serve people and communities who have made a difference to you.

Say Thanks



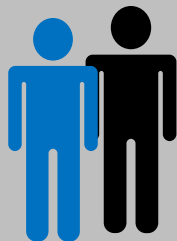
Say Thanks Every Day in appreciation for the contributions that people and communities make.

Make Welcome



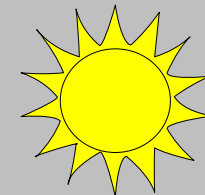
Practice a hospitality of openness and opportunity for people to make a difference.

Honor Others



Honor people and communities for their contributions and example.

Create Goodness



Foster an environment for the creation of goodness through personal initiative.

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