

A Self-Coaching Approach to Avoiding Leadership Landmines.

ILCMA 2019 Summer Conference

“Organizations don’t grow past the ability of the leaders.” – John Maxwell

Peter’s Plan:

1. Some leadership landmines I have known.
2. Disarming and avoiding what will harm you.
3. The path of self-coaching (self-determination) and prescriptive work-life-models.

Self-coaching is: “Awareness Cures”

Four underlying landmines:

1. Employee disengagement.
2. Leader defensiveness.
3. Not knowing if I perpetuate, create or remove landmines?
4. “Someday”

- *Here we go – increasing awareness helps us see landmines.*
- *Having a model (or two) helps us act freely to remove/avoid them.*

The Many Faces of Landmines:

I. The landmine of leadership theory:

II. The landmine of other's expectations:

III. Landmines created by your predecessor:

IV. There are landmines created by directors:

V. Self-created landmines:

VI. Landmines with elected officials:

John Maxwell's Leadership Landmines:

"There are landmines that will ruin you." - Maxwell

'If I kicked the person most responsible for my problems, I wouldn't be able to sit for a week.'

- Maxwell

John Maxwell's List:

1. Today's success – thinking that what got you here will keep you here.
2. Isolate yourself from others in the org at front lines.
3. Betrayal of trust.
4. Ignoring reality.
5. Poor timing.
6. Gap between saying and doing.
7. Advance in position but not in personal growth.
8. Personal insecurities.
9. Failure to make tough calls.
10. Failure to develop leaders.

'Amazing how much better people get when they lead well' – Maxwell

Three observations regarding landmines:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now what?

Modeling: Take a stance and grow in it. Let others do the same.

Models are general frameworks to improve presence and effectiveness. Models are prescriptive. Each person and organization fills-in their own details.

- a. Mr. Loopner and Saturday Night Live
- b. Herb Stephenson: *Gestalt Coaching* in Organization Development Practitioner. 2005. "Presence is not manufactured. It is something everyone displays at all times...However, *presence is most powerful when it embodies a compelling model or theory of learning.*"

A pioneering concept in Gestalt theory: You are most effective when you commit yourself – and express yourself – through well-reasoned models which can be shared.

Why? Useful modeling is one of the most important gifts a great leader can bring to an organization. Models create a specific pathway for leadership mindset and action while letting each person contribute.

Using effective models in effective ways is a wonderful way to tell the world: "Here I stand. Let's work together on these ideas."

Models come to life when communicated with a model for communications (of course!).
We shall see in a bit.

Peter's BIG Five Models for Leadership Influence and Working Intentionally:

Model # 1: Improve your ability to see and disarm leadership landmines by adopting a model for personal well-being. The ordinary standard at work should be that you:

-
- *feel and promote peace*
 - *are effective*
 - *love what you're doing.*
-

This is done for selfish reasons. Let people see how you created the kind of leader you are.

“Existential well-being”

- a. Body
- b. Relationship with others
- c. Relationship with self
- d. Have purpose and meaning

Lesson: Your actions and beliefs should spread personal and organizational well-being.

Model # 2: Improve your ability to see and disarm leadership landmines by practicing a form of Kolb's Adult learning model. This is a thinking, learning and growth model.

Kolb's four steps:

1. Experience (see and awareness) ->
2. Reflect (Observe what happened?) ->

3. Observe and abstract ->
4. Experiment with change.

This is “Self-coaching in a bottle.”

Lesson: Approach everyday work with this frame of mind.

Lesson: Great leaders have process-oriented mindsets.

Model # 3: Improve your ability to see and disarm leadership landmines by becoming familiar with often blown-off and ridiculed practices such as Law of Attraction, Gestalt theory and Tolle’s present-mindedness. Open your own mind.

Peter’s belief – Today’s most common leadership and management practices are *too* old school. They created what we have today. They have always been and remain inadequate for meeting high-stakes challenges and working with others. Worse, today’s leading leadership practices hardly touch on the mental side of work. Simply put, many old school practices need to be put aside or at a minimum, incorporated into new – human centered - beliefs and practices.

My interpretation of new wave of life and leadership thinking:
Be a currentist, not a futurist.

- a. 100% now – today – no goals but stillness, awareness and growth
 - i. Peter: “Lead in the present moment only.”
 - ii. Example: “Time management” is old school.
 1. Time can’t be managed.
 2. Time management is symbolic of many false leadership signals
 - a. Too many boutique sales pitches with spin of “How to”
 3. Better way via philosophy: Manage your mind - not your time.
 4. Lead with your models as your leadership methodology.
 - a. Lead through models and don’t obsess over the details of what others are doing -> unless they break a model.

b. Models allow you to lead and others to contribute

- b. Develop and articulate what you want.
 - i. Can best understand what others want when you first know what you want – with models and not egoism.
- c. Reciprocity and engagement: Grow ability and commitment to see and receive what others are saying/thinking.
 - i. “Passive participatory culture” is a huge landmine.

Lesson: Don't keep looking in all the usual places for leadership principles.

- a. Jim Clifton at Gallup – ‘Traditional leadership has failed us’
- b. Chris Argyris at Harvard – Example: ‘Communicating as you’ve been taught *causes* communication problems.’ Communication has been stripped of learning. Talking *the right way* accumulates unresolved problems that leads to explosions.

Lesson: Not addressing today's problems today, keeps us in the past – facing again and again the same old problems - a.k.a., landmines.

Model # 4: Improve your ability to see and disarm leadership landmines by having a strict model to address **your** growth, skills and abilities. Create your personal growth plan as your most important intention. Where to start?

- a. Ethics: Tell truth, be consistent, no biases
- b. Presence – how do I show up? What kind of person am I? Use models as your general “go-to” way of leading.
- c. Knowledge – what are you great at?
- d. Leadership: Employees respond to how you and directors are not what you train them to be.
 - i. Positional leadership is the great historical deception.

Lesson: Never leave your skills to chance. Be focused, determined and demanding of self. Defensive leaders substitute arbitrariness for great skills and learning.

Model # 5: Improve your ability to see and disarm leadership landmines by knowing how to hold conversations that are reciprocal. That is, a complex organization should have:

- ✓ a culture of “open mic.”
- ✓ a standard operating practice for conversations.

Part 1: Consider Edward de Bono’s (creator of lateral thinking) *Six Thinking Hats*. Idea build on key principles including: all voices matter and diverse voices matter greatly.

Part 2: Creative and useful conversations: Communication I.R.A.

I _____
R _____
A _____

Lesson: A personal and organizational standard for “How we talk” elevates conversations and creates a process through which issues and ideas are addressed with efficiency and respect.

Lesson: There are just far too many people feeling their opinion doesn’t matter and they have to go-along to get-along. Use modeling to combat this norm.

Model # 6: Models are like ethics. In the words of Groucho Marx: “These are my principles, and if you don’t like them...well, I have others.

Closure:

1. Landmines are everywhere:
 - a. Yours
 - b. Others
2. Landmines exist because:
 - a. We make mistakes.
 - b. Life and work are difficult.
 - c. Leadership and management practices, applied correctly, caused them.
3. Use self-focused/self-coached models to lead self and others.

Final Idea: Never end a presentation or meeting with “Are there any questions? Instead, ask “What are your thoughts and ideas?”

“Tomorrow is great but today is how we get there. So, let’s get today right first.” – Peter Burchard