

# Your Top Leadership Needs Part 1



Asia Leaders Learning Community



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## Top 10 Leadership Needs — Part 1

**In 2015, a leadership survey was sent to hundreds of current and emerging YWAM leaders across Asia**, asking them to consider 49 leadership competencies and to choose which of them they most needed to personally improve in. Hundreds of leaders responded to the survey in six different languages.

Below is a list of the top 10 greatest leadership needs from the survey. The percentage next to each item represents the percentage of responses that indicated that item as an important developmental need.

1. Building Effective Teams (59%)
2. Conflict Management (45%)
3. Work/Life Balance (41%)
4. Developing Others (40%)
5. Ministry Fundraising (40%)
6. Communication Planning (39%)
7. Motivating and Mobilizing Others (38%)
8. Developing Vision and Purpose (37%)
9. Understanding Yourself (34%)
10. Decision Making (34%)

Looking at the percentages above, chances are that you would like help in at least one of the areas above, too!

# Building Effective Teams

# How to Build an Effective Team

by Jay Bransford

**What is an effective team? And how do I create one?** If you desire for your ministry to be effective, then these are 2 critical questions to ask.

**An effective team is** *“a unified group of diverse people working effectively together toward a common purpose.”*

**But what does it mean to be “effective”?** For our purposes here, we’ll define *effective* as reaching a state where we are maximizing our potential, both as individuals and as a team. It implies that we are thriving, healthy, and strong – mentally, physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually.



**What makes a team effective?** There are a number of key factors that directly contribute to healthy teams. Ask yourself and your teammates each of the following questions:

- A. Do we know WHO we are?
- B. Do we clearly understand WHERE we are NOW?
- C. Do we know exactly WHERE we are GOING?
- D. Do we know HOW we will get there?
- E. Do we know WHAT is expected of us?
- F. Do we have all the SUPPORT we need?
- G. Do we MEASURE how EFFECTIVE we are?
- H. Do we CELEBRATE our accomplishments?

If you need more of an explanation of any of the above questions, keep reading below. If you answered “no”, or “not sure” to any of the above questions, that is likely where you need to focus more time and energy in order to improve the effectiveness of your team. Any of those questions that you can not answer a firm ‘yes’ to are potential areas of weakness and can create mistrust, misunderstandings, and frustration on a team.

- A. **WHO ARE WE?** How well do my team members and I know and appreciate the unique personalities, giftings, passions, life testimonies, strengths, work preferences, and risk orientation of one another? And how well do those things match up with our ministry focus, goals, roles, and approach?
- B. **WHERE ARE WE NOW?** What is the current situation we find ourselves in? What do we know about our target audience? What are their needs? What challenges are they and we currently facing?
- C. **WHERE ARE WE GOING?** What is our ministry vision, mission and purpose? What are we trying to accomplish?
- D. **HOW WILL WE GET THERE?** What are our short and long range goals? What are our objectives and what plans have we made to accomplish them?

- E. **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF US?** What are the roles and responsibilities of each team member? Are they clear? Are they well suited to each person's skills and interests? What processes do we need to define?
- F. **WHAT SUPPORT DO WE NEED?** What prayer, resources, finances, training, mentoring or coaching does our team and staff need?
- G. **HOW EFFECTIVE ARE WE?** How often do we evaluate our effectiveness as individuals and as a team? What can we learn from that?
- H. **WHAT RECOGNITION DO WE GET?** How well and how often do we celebrate accomplishments and successes, both as individuals and as a team?

**Next Steps:** If you want to develop and maintain an effective team, here are some helpful steps to take:

1. Ask your team the questions above every year as part of an annual team retreat where you prayerfully reflect on the past year, evaluate your teamwork, celebrate successes, consider lessons learned and set goals and plans for the year ahead.

2. Identify in which of the areas above your team is functioning well, and in what areas it needs to improve.
3. Set a goal or goals and identify action items that will help you improve in those areas.
4. Follow-up. Once each month during a staff meeting, ask your team for feedback about how the team is doing at improving in the areas you chose. Ask for ideas of how to continue to improve and decide what additional actions to take.

Try these 4 steps above and your team is almost guaranteed to improve. Try it today!

## 7 Considerations for Developing a Strong Team

by Alan Lim



Here are 7 things to consider when developing a team:

1. Is your ***vision broad enough*** for others to be a part of it from their own sense of calling, passion and gifts, or is it somewhat limiting due to the uniqueness of your vision? The nature, breadth, scope and flexibility of your vision may determine the kind of people you will attract or are willing to follow you.
2. In your own opinion, are you first a ***friend*** or a leader to your team? Leadership is important, because it gives direction, clarifies vision, sets boundaries and even establishes structure for operations. But friendship establishes healthy community, creates a safe environment, encourages belonging and cultivates ownership. A leader who is also a friend is a really good thing to a team.
3. What would it take to create ***healthy relationships*** in my team? What can I do for my team mates to like



one another, enjoy each other's company, trust one another, and find satisfying friendships with each other? How do I create a fun and friendly community feeling in my team?

4. **Think Big, Start Small, Build Deep.** Have the **courage** to dream and think big, trusting and believing that the vision is not ours nor is it about us. If it is a vision from God and it is not about us, he will bring it about. Our job is to trust and obey. Have the **security** to start small, with the right people, in the right time and the right approach. Bigger or more is not always better. And have the **wisdom** to build deep, investing in and building people first rather than focusing primarily on building the project or ministry. It is "changed lives" that will "change other lives," not necessarily well run programs or activities.
5. How can I provide **accountability** for each other's lives on our team? Will one-on-ones suffice? Will small groups suffice? Will periodic meetings with me be sufficient? What general/specific areas of accountability should be covered? For example: personal relationship with God, with one another, ministry satisfaction, financial health, thought life, and personal growth needs.
6. What **growth needs** do I need to pay attention to for my team, both personal and ministry? Example, continued personal learning, cultivating reading habits, language learning, more training or schooling? How do

I find this out, maybe by asking periodically?

7. Should I create a ***feedback loop*** so we can assess how we are doing as a team? Allowing others we lead to speak into our lives about how we are leading them creates deep appreciation and security, and tells them that we care about them and their thoughts.

Which of the 7 considerations above do you feel need the most immediate attention on your team? Where will you start?

# Building a Team

by Jim Randall



Teams, not individuals, are the fundamental building blocks of any ministry. Throughout the Bible you can find examples of teams and team building. The first example of a team is found in the story of creation in Genesis; Father, Son and Holy Spirit working together to accomplish a goal. In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth. The word used for God is “Elohim” in Hebrew and it is plural. We see the Father giving direction and the Son and Holy Spirit carrying out His plan (also see John 1:1-14). Noah had his sons as a team to build the Ark. Joseph gave wisdom to Pharaoh about managing the coming famine through establishing levels of leadership (teams) to manage food growth, storage and distribution throughout the nation. Moses, by the wisdom of God spoken through his father-in-law, Jethro, established levels of leadership and teams to do the work of administering the Nation of Israel. Moses is a clear example of what can happen when a gifted leader tries to do everything himself, then receives the wisdom of God about how to become more effective in leading a ministry. Jesus had a team of twelve Apostles who later established

teams of elders and deacons for the administration of the Church. When Jesus sent His disciples, He did it two by two. Paul had a team working with him wherever he went with many being mentioned by name throughout his writings. If teams of people working together to accomplish God's work is our example from the Bible, shouldn't we also establish teams to help us accomplish our assignment from God? The greatest lesson we can learn from this is, "Don't do it alone."

Too many leaders think they must know everything and do everything themselves so their ministry will be successful. That is not the way God has designed His Church to function. It is not meant to be a one-man show. We see that churches in the New Testament had a plurality of elders assisted by deacons. They functioned in teams so that God's purposes could be accomplished more efficiently. This lesson will reveal both principles of the importance of teams as well as some methods that will stimulate thinking to get you moving in the right direction.

## Choosing Your Team

There are a lot of pressures and stresses for senior pastors and ministry leaders, but one of the compensations is this privilege: **you get to choose your team.** In principle, you should not work with people on your team that you did not choose.

If the team is not in unity, they will not have the level of success they could have if they were all working together with the same heart for the ministry.

The challenge is in selecting the right people. Always remember, “Good is only a substitute for God’s best.” We must always follow to the leading of the Holy Spirit in this God given responsibility. “God always gives the best when we leave the choice to Him.”

In selecting a team, you must first define the job description for each position you need to fill. I find it helpful to write a job description defining the functions of the job you want to fill, not just have some ideas in your head. “A plan (or a job description) is only a dream until it is written down.” This will help you to easily recognize the person with the skills you require.

**Ask yourself these questions when you consider adding a person to your staff or team:**

1. **Do they share my values?** In other words, are you sure they have not only the same vision but the same values and standards that you set for your ministry.
2. **Are they FAT?** No, I don’t mean overweight but rather, are they **Faithful, Available and Teachable?** Have they been faithful in small things? Can you count on them to do what

you ask? Do they have a teachable spirit or do they want to argue about the way you want things done?

3. **Do they have the skills necessary to do a good job?** Make sure they have the knowledge and experience you need on your team. Some new things can be learned along the way but they must already have a basic skill level that will get the results you want for the team.
4. **Are they a risk taker?** It is better to have someone willing to take risks and grow into something new than someone who always plays it safe and doesn't use his talent like the servant in "The Parable of the Talents." A certain amount of stretching (or taking a risk) to reach the next level of performance is necessary.
5. **Are they humble?** Look for people who are willing to be known for who they really are. Humility does not mean that a person will not speak up when they need to say something but rather someone who speaks and acts in such a way that he is not trying to make himself to be better than others.
6. **Are they honest?** Anything less than the whole truth is a lie. Do not allow dishonest people or those who use marginal deception to be a part of your team. Marginal Deception is telling enough of the truth, but holding back part of the truth, so that the hearer draws a wrong conclusion.

It has been said that, "A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. A normal man learns from his own mistakes but a fool

learns from no one's mistakes.” Much of the teaching you will hear in your life originated from the learning of those who have made mistakes. You don't have time to make all the mistakes yourself so learn to apply the lessons made from the mistakes of others and build a great team.

# Conflict Management



# 9 Steps to Manage Conflict

by Jay Bransford



You and I experience conflict every day of our lives. We experience conflicts with regards to our time, spending money, making decisions, and in our relationships at work and home and everywhere in-between. Conflict is a natural part of life. Thus, the existence of conflict in your life is not necessarily an indicator of how unhealthy your life is. A better indicator might be in looking at HOW you handle and resolve conflict.

## 9 SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO MANAGE CONFLICT:

1. **Anticipate Conflict (Be Proactive).** Often times conflict can be avoided if we think in advance about how an upcoming situation, decision or action might affect other people. What kind of response are you likely to have to this upcoming conflict situation? How could you help to lessen other people's surprise or shock? How could you soften the blow? How can you better incorporate other people's thoughts and feelings BEFORE speaking,

deciding or taking action? How can you prepare yourself to respond in a more professional, caring or wise way?

2. **Acknowledge Conflict.** Identifying the fact that a conflict has started is sometimes half the battle. The longer we take to notice a conflict, the more negative or entrenched a conflict can quickly become and you can risk the conflict getting out of control.
3. **Change Your Attitude Toward Conflict.** Once you acknowledge the conflict, it's critical to say so and to CHOOSE to have a positive attitude toward the conflict. If you think of conflict as a time waster or as a terribly painful chore, you are likely to bring that same negative attitude into resolving the conflict. But if you think of the acknowledgement of conflict as a great opportunity for making progress, understanding and valuing others, building consensus and unity, and making the best possible group decision, then you are likely to work toward achieving those actual results.
4. **Seek First to Understand Others.** Before you let loose with your tongue and explain to the other person every clear and obvious reason why your way is right or best, humble yourself and let the other person speak first. Allow them to express their thoughts, ideas, needs, concerns, and questions. Let their side be told. Let them get it all out.

5. **Show That You Listened and Understand.** Wait! It's still not yet time to share your amazing wisdom with the world. First, demonstrate to the person or people that you truly heard them. Nod your head. Give appropriate eye contact. Provide an occasional verbal acknowledgement like 'yes' or 'ok' or 'alright'. Write down what they said (preferably on a flipchart, when possible). Paraphrase or summarize what they said.
6. **Admit What You Agree With.** As you summarize what they told you, highlight the things that you agree with them about. Make sure they understand that you both have areas of agreement. Believe it or not, this can help tremendously in avoiding them thinking that you are 100% against them and everything they stand for.
7. **Add in Your Needs and Perspective.** Now it's finally your turn to explain your perspective. Using key words like "And", "Also", "In Addition", and "I Wish", try to add to things that they have already said and that you agree with. For example, you could say, "In addition to your idea of holding the event on a Friday evening, which I think is a great idea, it would also be wonderful if we could avoid holding it on a day where the school has a sports game." Add to the list of needs and options that the other person already verbalized. You may also need

to respectfully explain any concerns you have about possible options or solutions that others have suggested.

8. **Propose and Be Open to Creative Solutions.** Now that you can see the needs and ideas of everyone involved with the situation, suggest the idea of considering some creative solutions or alternatives. Let everyone get creative, but take a rational look at the suggestions according to the felt needs everyone has expressed.
9. **Re-affirm the Importance of the Relationship.** Hopefully by now you have been able to come to a conclusion that is acceptable to everyone involved and you have successfully managed this conflict! Before you part ways for the day, make sure you acknowledge to everyone how much you value and appreciate them. After all, life is about relationships, not about always getting exactly what you want, right?

### **APPLICATION:**

Think about an existing or recent conflict situation you have faced and then re-read through the 9 suggestions above. What do you see as your strengths in managing conflict? In which areas could you improve? Try printing out this list and using it to walk through your next conflict situation today. You may be surprised how much it can help!

# Conflict in Asia: Obstacles or Opportunities?

by Garth Gustafson



Conflict is not a problem, it is a reality and therefore it is neither good nor bad, it is neutral. The question isn't whether we will have conflict or not, but rather how we manage conflict. This will determine if it is destructive or productive, and if it is an ***obstacle or an opportunity***.

## **CONFLICT CAN BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**

In over 15 years of ministry I recognized that leadership requires difficult conversations and confronting conflict. No one enjoys these types of situations but I have seen in my own personal life, as well as many other leaders, if conflict is managed well it can actually be one of the biggest ***opportunities*** for growth as a leader.

*In your leadership have you viewed conflict to be productive or destructive?*

*Do you see it as an obstacle or an opportunity?*

## MANAGING CONFLICT IN ASIA

In Asia, people in conflict can tend to smile and nod, but they can also come back like a ninja and attack when unexpected. (This can be true in any part of the world but is more prevalent in our context here in Asia). Most people tend to perceive conflict as negative and all cultures have the idea of “*saving face*.” The combination tends to cause most of us to avoid conflict for fear of losing face and from negative connotations of conflict. In Asia, we often play the cultural game of respectful greetings and honoring words to maintain relationship, which many times results in withholding our honesty about our true feelings and previous offenses. Because of this we often times pretend like there is no conflict, or we deal with it in unhealthy ways including:

- **Backbiting:** Agreed upon decisions turn out later on to not be supported as people speak negatively about them outside of the meeting.
- **Going Slow:** Instead of talking directly about a conflict some will intentionally slow down work as a way to make their opinion known without confronting.
- **Fighting in the Shadows:** When conflict starts to spread at times the group mentality will feed the problem as people make excuses for each other, and

cover up each other's mistakes as a way to get back at someone for a decision.

- **Erupting Volcano:** When people suppress their emotions eventually they will explode in anger.

All of these are very unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict that will only become huge **obstacles** that end in pain, hurt, bitterness and ministries, churches and organizations unraveling. As leaders, we must be able to sense these unhealthy tendencies of how people deal with conflict and utilize these as growth **opportunities**.

*How have you seen these tendencies of unhealthy ways of dealing with conflict in your ministry?*

*Have you fallen into these traps?*

## **PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**Pray:** Before engaging in managing conflict we must always start by seeking God's heart for the situation, for the people involved and His desired outcome.

- 1) **Agree on the Right Timing:** Timing is truly everything and navigating conflict at the wrong time can cause disaster.
- 2) **Avoid Personal Attacks:** As leaders, we use "I" statements to avoid others feeling attacked (using "you" can cause people to feel defensive) and we set the environment that this will be a win as we grow through this conflict.

- 3) **Assume Responsibility:** The first step in conflict management is acknowledging our contribution to the conflict.
- 4) **Apply Listening Skills:** Active listening is intentionally trying to understand another person's perspective.
- 5) **Focus on the Core Issues:** Don't get side-tracked by emotions or bringing up every one of the person's mistakes, stay focused on resolving the core issue.
- 6) **Keep the Shared Visions & Values Central:** Centering our conversation on what we share in common will help us pursue conflict resolution.

*Which of these principles have you utilized as opportunities in your leadership?*

*Which principles can you use as opportunities to grow in the future?*

### **THE CONFLICT TRUMP CARD: HUMILITY ALWAYS WINS**

Human tendency is that when others are wrong we blame their character and yet when we are wrong we blame the situation. For example, Lee is always late because he doesn't value the team, or in other words this is a character flaw. I was late because my kids were sick, and everyone knows as the leader that I'm more busy than everyone else. *In reality we all tend to self-justify our own weaknesses, while self-judging everyone else's weaknesses.*



Many times I have experienced that if I am willing to take ownership even for a small part, the act of humility can act like a trump card or an **opportunity** to swing the conflict towards being resolved. In several cases where I actually didn't see anything that I had done as wrong, I was simply able to say "*I am sorry that you felt that way.*" By acknowledging the person's feelings, the conflict started to disintegrate. Because of this we have learned that in conflict management a golden rule is that "*Humility Always Wins.*"

*How have you seen humility as an opportunity to resolving conflict?*

*How have you seen the lack of humility as an obstacle and creating greater conflict?*

**Note:** *Much of this article has come from personal reflection while reading John Ng's book "Smiling Tiger, Hidden Dragon" about Managing Conflict in Asia. I would encourage leaders in Asia to read this for further insight on successful conflict resolution*

# Principles of Conflict Resolution

by Jim Randall



The following 10 steps will help you to resolve conflict. These principles will help you resolve conflict between yourself and others or between staff members. Begin by going on a fact finding mission. Allow the Holy Spirit to precede you without having pre-conceived ideas.

1. **Change your thinking.** Anger is a secondary emotion and happens when a belief system has been violated. You believe that people should always do what they agree to do. When they don't carry out your request, you have an opportunity to become angry. **Confrontation** usually means a face to face encounter with a hostile situation. All emotions involved are negative and filled with stress, anxiety, anger, separation and hostile feelings. It creates avoidance (procrastination). **Resolution** on the other hand means to resolve the problem and create peace, acceptance and restoration. It is not about conflict but adding value to people through Coaching, Teaching, Training, Mentoring, Problem Solving and

Communication which will bring them to a higher level of competency. Positive feelings bring growth and change. Not discussing a problem is a form of disrespect.

2. **You must choose the right Timing.** NEVER put yourself in a position where you must make a decision “NOW.” You will probably **react** in the flesh if you do it too soon but are more likely to **act** in the Spirit if you wait for the right timing. Don’t deal with a problem when you are angry or you will turn it into conflict and confrontation. Don’t procrastinate but deal with it before it gets worse or hurts others. If you wait, you send a negative message that they or the issue is not important. Ephesians 4:26 says, “Don’t let the sun go down on your anger” but the next day is OK.
3. **You must create a Safe Haven for meaningful communications.** If a person feels safe and secure, they will be more likely to share what’s on their heart. The four basic ingredients for good communication are:
  1. Ask Questions
  2. Listen with your heart
  3. Create a Safe Harbor (environment) where they feel free to talk.
  4. Honesty - They must feel that they can share with you without fear of you re-acting.

#### 4. Ask Questions

1. To get the facts from their perspective.
2. Learn their motivation, where their heart is.
3. Allows you to relax and view the session as a fact finding session.
4. Don't ask questions that are in an accusing way.
5. The highest form of respect is to ask people what they think.

##### Sample questions:

- a. Joe, help me understand what happened yesterday.  
(no accusing, blame or ridicule)
- b. If Joe is repentant, ask additional questions.
- c. Ask open ended questions to get to the root of the problem; not yes & no answers.

#### 5. **Listen to the answer.** Force yourself to listen with your heart and five things will become clear.

1. What you (or they) said.
2. What you meant to say.
3. What they heard you say.
4. What they say about what they heard you say.
5. What you say about what they heard you say.

Let them talk and share everything that is on their mind. Criticism is OK but **not disrespect**. Don't let them or yourself be disrespectful.

#### 6. **Maintain respect and dignity** – allow for opportunity to save face.

7. **Identify the issues.** Move from the past (mistake) to the present (identifying the issue that remains) and onto the future (resolution).
8. **Establish expectations.** Create an atmosphere of resolution and restoration. Let them know what you expect from this moment on.
9. **Understanding** – Make sure they understand by getting confirmation of what you expect in the future. Don't ask if they understand what you said but rather get them to repeat back what they heard you say. Ask them to respond to any requests you make.
10. **Create Options.** Try to create multiple choices or options to explore so that people don't feel stuck or backed into a corner. And make sure that you are comfortable accepting each option if it's truly being offered as a possible choice.

Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you will have peace. In the world (and in ministry) you will have tribulation (*thlipsis* – meaning pressure) but be of good cheer (*tharseo* – have courage), I have overcome the world." Jesus wants us to be at peace and have courage to face conflict with the confidence that He has a solution that leads to peace.

# Work / Life Balance

# The IQ of Balance

by Linda Hermann



## **Ahh – the ‘smart’ phone...**

It may be ‘smart’, but are we?

Does it control you or do you control it?

What’s the first thing you do each morning – spend time with Jesus and His Word, or check your emails/Facebook/text messages?

When do you turn your phone on in the morning and when do you turn it off at night?

I spend a lot of time with a lot of YWAM leaders all over Thailand. When I ask them those questions, what do you think their answers are? What are yours?

I confess when I wake, I often check my emails before the Word. And last thing at night, I may check my emails or the news before bed. Think I sleep well? When was the last time you heard good news on the news?

## **My balance is slipping.**

And I know the cost. I’ve been ‘burnt out’, and it’s not a pretty sight. Burnout doesn’t happen in a day. It’s a slow

slide. Your work-life-rest balance starts to lean more into the work until even your 'rest' becomes work, one more thing to accomplish on your 'to do' list.

I know Jesus had the same problem – John 4:6 says he was so tired, He sat down by a well and sent his disciples into town to get food. But the story that hits me, that really lets me know Jesus understands how busy we get sometimes, is Mark 3: 20-21: “And He came home and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him, for they were saying “He has lost His mind”.

He didn't though. He did stop. He escaped the crowds, even His own disciples, to go to the mountains. Do you really think He prayed all night when He did that? Or did He simply sit on the hillside and enjoyed be-ing? Breathing in, breathing out, looking at clouds, letting the wind sing soft songs to Him.

### **Balance. Does your life have it?**

- Answer the questions at the beginning of this article.
- Ask your family, your friends, your children, your teammates.
- Ask God.
- For two weeks, write down what you do in a day.

**Balance. Find it. Keep it.**

**Be smarter than your phone.**



# Living Our Priorities

by Jay Bransford



“Help!” the woman screamed. “Things are falling apart all around me. I just can’t keep up with it all!” The wise sage answered, “I can help. I’ll teach you to juggle.”



We’re all jugglers in training, metaphorically speaking. In our hands we hold numerous juggling balls, each labelled with a specific role, task or responsibility we have. Some of those juggling balls are large, some small. Some are heavy, some light. Each morning we wake up to a new day of tossing those juggling balls of responsibilities into the air,

and hoping that none of them get lost or broken before we lay our head back down on our pillow that evening to sleep. Some days we juggle our roles exceptionally well and other days we fail miserably. But if we aren't careful, we can get into a habit of juggling too much, too often – and letting too many of our important roles and responsibilities drop. And before we know it, we can find that we've seriously damaged our relationships, our credibility, and our own health and well-being. Juggling our roles and responsibilities in life is serious stuff!

For your first juggling lesson, the wise sage has 4 questions for you to consider, along with some practical advice...

### **1. How many balls are you juggling?**

*Translation: How many roles and responsibilities do you have?*

**The Sage's Advice:** The average person has many roles in life, and thus many hats to wear. How many of the following roles do you currently hold?

- Father/Mother
- Husband/Wife
- Son/Daughter
- Brother/Sister
- Leader/Boss/Supervisor/Manager
- Ministry Staff/Employee
- Colleague

- Friend
- Student/Learner
- Small Group Facilitator
- Church Member
- Other:
- Child of God\*

\*As a child of God, we actually have 4 responsibilities (see Luke 2:52). We should be growing in our relationship with God, in wisdom, in our relationships with others, and in our physical health.

## 2. What is the maximum # of balls you can juggle at once?

*Translation: How many roles and responsibilities can you realistically take on?*



### **The Sage's Advice:**

The maximum # of roles you can juggle at once is unique to you, and unique to your situation at the moment. You can't and shouldn't compare yourself to others and their

capacity levels. Your key roles in life will change over time, and their demand for your time will change, as well. For example, the expectations of you as a father/mother may be much more intense at certain ages of your children's lives.

### 3. Do all juggling balls have the same value and importance?

*Translation: Are some of your roles and responsibilities more important than others?*



#### **The Sage's Advice:**

Not all of your roles are equally as important. You absolutely **MUST** prioritize. And at times you may need to release yourself from some of your roles in order to focus on what's most important right now. Look back at your answers from #1 and prioritize your answers. **Hint:** Hopefully your role as a child of God comes first! That means prioritizing your spiritual, mental, relational, and physical health.

#### 4. How can you pro-actively select the right juggling balls for today or this week?

*Translation: How can you schedule your time on a daily and weekly basis, according to your life priorities?*



#### **The Sage's Advice:**

Each week, make a habit of looking through your calendar for the week ahead and scheduling in what you have now determined as your priorities in life. When will you spend time with God. When will you exercise? When will you spend quality time with your spouse or children – and how? What are you going to learn this week and when?

The key to “living your priorities” is to first identify your priorities in life. Next, you must constantly re-assess your priorities and pro-actively schedule them into your calendar and thus into your life. Be strong in following through on your scheduled priorities. Don't cancel that date with your wife, child or friend unless you absolutely have to. Life

throws us some curve balls, and we have to be flexible and adjust. But any time you change your schedule in a way that affects your prioritized roles, make sure it is a conscious choice done in prayer, and by first considering your priorities. That is why it's called "living your priorities".

**Now, go practice your juggling!**

# Living Within Limits – How is Your Sabbath?

by Phil Porter



When I first began receiving leadership coaching 4 years ago, we spent the first year just trying to get me untangled from too much admin work that was robbing me of the ability to really lead well. I was constantly busy and always feeling overwhelmed by the length of my to-do list. During that process, I discovered Ruth Haley Barton's book, "Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership", which uses Moses' life as a template for spiritual leadership. One of the many nuggets in this book is her point that **every leader must eventually learn to face the reality that there are physical limits to time and space**, strength and energy. She says, "When we refuse to live within limits, we are refusing to live with a basic reality of human existence. God is the infinite one. I am not."

A profound illustration of God's intent for us was His institution of the Sabbath. God Himself rested on the seventh day. His instructions about the Sabbath were clear

long before the Law of Moses. And Israel's observance of the Sabbath was to be a constant reminder that "God is the infinite one. I am not." He expects us to trust Him to carry the work and weight of the world while we rest. Why? Because like all other creation, we are finite beings.

A survey of 20,000 Christians around the world, conducted by Michael Zigarelli, an associate professor of management at the Charleston University School of Business, revealed that, in his words, "it may be the case that:

- 1) Christians are assimilating a culture of busyness, hurry and overload, which leads to
  - 2) God becoming more marginalized in Christian's lives, which leads to
  - 3) deteriorating relationship with God, which leads to
  - 4) Christians becoming even more vulnerable to adopting secular assumptions about how to live, which leads to
  - 5) more conformity to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload
- and then the cycle begins again.





Paradoxically, it is a work of faith to stop and rest on the Sabbath. Let me repeat. It is a WORK of FAITH to stop and rest on the Sabbath. We may even feel guilty for doing so. It goes against everything the world tells us. We must work to overcome the lies of the Enemy. We must put our faith in our Infinite God. And we must accept our reality of being a finite human. But if we recognize the wisdom and value of the Sabbath, it will become a gift that allows us to maintain joy and peace in our life and ministry. In her other book, “Sacred Rhythms”, Ruth’s description of what the Sabbath was meant to be sounded so delicious to me, I began to long for it and make it a priority.

Living within limits allows us to say “no” when necessary, and not feel guilty. It allows us to give ourselves grace for not being a superhero. As Ruth states, “I am not God. God is the only one who can be all things to all people. God is the only one who can be two places at once. God is the one who never sleeps. I am not. This is pretty basic stuff, but many of us live as though we don't know it.”

But the writer of Hebrews reminds us, “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:9-11)

So let me ask you, “How is your Sabbath?” If you’re feeling overwhelmed, stressed from overwork, out of balance, it’s probably time to review the basics. Genesis chapter 2, verse 3: “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”

## 6.5 Minutes

by Steve Cochrane



### **Have You Reached For Your Phone in the Last 6 1/2 Minutes?**

I tried. I really did. After reading recently a study that people reach for their smartphones every 6 1/2 minutes, or approximately 150 times a day, I determined not to do it! But as many reading this have learned, reaching for it again seemed inevitable. Living a life that masters time and obligations rather than being a slave to them has never been easy. But has it gotten more difficult now? With the advent of a 24/7 global communication world, particularized in smartphones at our fingertips, an argument could be made that it is harder than ever to live integrated, soul-enriching lives.

Often the answer for us as Christian leaders seems to be to find one more tool for our over-stressed lives. The problem is the tools are also often accessed on the smartphone!

When my family gave me one for Christmas this year, I noticed an app called **Coach Me**. There were many apps on everything from exercise programs to scheduling helps. There were even 750 personal coaches available for hire to chat with via message or phone call! There is nothing inherently wrong with having a program like **Coach Me**. I have even used a simple exercise program from this app. But it can become another tool on a smartphone that takes up even more of our 24/7 connected life. I'm sure you can cite other tools you've used or heard of with a similar nature.

But is there another way than trying to find external coaches or apps to help us manage more and more? I think there is. It is to cultivate something quite different in our lives. Something called “self-awareness”. To quote a book title of one of my favorite authors, it is “To Know as We are Known”. As we live in revelatory truth of being loved by Father God, we are able to live in the light of self-awareness. This has been an important part of my journey towards more wholeness in life and leadership. Being self-aware enables us to know why we are reaching toward the smartphone or overpacking our schedules. It enables us to ask key questions of ourselves in partnership with the Holy Spirit. Painful questions. Questions we love to avoid!

How do we become more self-aware? Throughout Christian history, probably originating in the monastic rhythms of the desert in the 2-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia,

a form of question-asking called the **Examen** was used. This spiritual practice/discipline has taken many forms in later centuries with different questions, but is focused towards instilling a self-awareness in the user. Self-awareness practiced as a regular discipline, whether daily, weekly, or even monthly, allows the hidden (or not so hidden!) desires, motivations and resistances to God's Spirit to be revealed.

## **CREATING BALANCE THROUGH SELF-AWARENESS**

Here is one version of Examen questions I have used for several years, grouped around four “movements” in our lives.

### **Recollection and Thanksgiving**

11. For what things, today, am I most grateful?
12. Where did I experience life, peace, honesty, courage, etc.?

### **Attentiveness to God's Action**

- In what ways did You invite me to experience Your love and to see You at work in my life today?

### **Honesty about My Choices**

- Where did I notice my choices to receive and respond to You?
- What signs of avoidance or resistance to Your invitation do I sense?

- What choices or habits have been keeping me from living in the freedom of Your love?

### **Trust in God's Loving Initiative**

- It ends with a prayer: Gracious Spirit, I open my heart to You. Teach me to trust You to lead me into greater freedom and love as You live in me tomorrow. Amen.

I encourage you to practice the Examen, either in this form or another. It has helped to make me more aware of my inner motives and resistances. It has helped to clear clutter from my inner space. My prayer is that similar and greater things will happen to you.

**Note:** *Ironically, you can find a helpful app for the Examen on your smart phone. Try searching for “Examen” and enjoy using modern technology to help you reflect, create more balance in your life, and develop even more self-awareness!*



# Developing Others

## Lights... Camera... Dance

by Jay Bransford



Developing people is more of an art than a science. And it's more of a dance between God and the person – with a little help and encouragement from others along with way. If we use the metaphor of dancing to describe developing people, what role does the leader play in this dance between God and each staff member? Let's look at some of the ways in which you, as a leader, can set up the dance floor in such a way that enables people to learn, develop and grow as they dance with God.

### **CAN ALL PEOPLE DANCE?**

We were created to dance with God. In our metaphor, if dancing refers to personal growth and development, then what we're really asking is, "Can all people really learn, grow and change?" The good news is, "Yes, they absolutely can!!"



## **Believe in People**

Here's a little secret about developing people... Before you march forward into developing your staff, ask yourself this simple question, "Do I believe that my staff can learn to dance? Or in other words, do I believe in the God-given value and potential of each of my staff?" If you're not sure, then stop right there. You're not likely to be successful. The first prerequisite to developing people is "believing in their potential". If you don't believe in them, then you need to decide if you're going to change your attitude or release your staff to go elsewhere.

Developing others requires first and foremost that we believe in people and value who God uniquely created them to be. Jesus told us that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love others as ourselves. If you love your staff, then you must love who God created them to be. And you must desire for your staff to grow and develop in their relationship with God and into their full potential in Christ. Make sure that's always your primary motivator for developing your staff. Developing others is not primarily about you, your ministry, or your personal vision. It is about helping others learn and grow into their unique fullness in Christ, and thus fulfilling God's purpose for their lives. It is about allowing and encouraging your staff to dance with God.

## Setting the Dance Stage

What helps people get in the mood to dance? Some nice lighting, a pleasant atmosphere, and some inspiring music, perhaps? So if you want to encourage someone to learn and grow as they dance with God, what can you do to set the stage? Here are five suggestions:

1. **Get on the Dance Floor:** Define learning as a key value of your ministry, not something to be embarrassed about. This means you have to lead the way by showing how YOU are learning, growing and ‘dancing’ every day.
2. **Pick a Great Song:** Some people need an extra push to get out on the dance floor. Likewise, we all need an inspiring vision or purpose to motivate us to learn and grow. What vision do you continue to share with your staff that motivates them to strive for greatness, give their best, and dance their hearts out? Challenge your staff to find their own personal vision and purpose from God, as well.
3. **Hold Dance Parties:** Hold regular times with your team to get together and learn from one another. No, not to literally dance together, although that’s great, too! But to reflect on the team relationships and effectiveness, personal goals, or on recent team events – and to discuss how to improve.
4. **Cross-Train:** Everyone brings a different dancing style and expertise to the dance floor. Encourage cross-

training, mentoring and coaching – both within your team and with resources outside of your team.

5. **Create a Dance Budget:** Include ‘dance lessons’ in your ministry’s yearly budget. Plan a yearly team retreat to focus on team development, reflection and goal setting. Invest in some needed training for your team.

### **Reflection:**

- How is your personal dance with God going?
- Are you learning and growing?
- What kind of a dance floor have you established with your team? Does it encourage learning and growth?
- What can you do to encourage your staff to continuously be learning as they dance with God?

## 4 Keys to Influencing Performance

by Jay Bransford



Let's face it... we've all experienced disappointments with people. We expect certain things from them, and it just doesn't happen. Whether these disappointments happen at home, at school, at work, or in a ministry setting, we often refer to these kinds of situations as "performance problems".

***"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." - Matthew 7:12***

Can leaders control the performance of their staff? Absolutely not! But good leaders certainly can influence their staff in ways that encourage long-term high performance, effectiveness and holistic health. Let's look at a few possible ways here...

When you see a performance problem with someone, whether it's your child, co-worker, or staff, what's generally

the first thing that pops into your mind about the cause of the problem? Or in other words, where do you normally place the blame for the problem? If you're like me, you're likely to assume that the cause of the problem is the person who is not performing. Maybe you assume he has an attitude problem, or that he's lazy, or that he's not competent. Have you ever drawn those conclusions about people? I have. And unfortunately, I'm often NOT right! In fact, 80% of the time undesired performance is due to factors outside of the person.

What are the factors that influence performance? This article focuses on 4 key factors affecting performance: (1) The Performer, (2) The Situation, (3) Feedback, and (4) Consequences. But before we consider those factors for any given performance problem, we must first define the performance we are talking about. To do so, we ask two simple questions:

1. What is the observed performance in the person or group?
2. How does that performance compare with our expectations?

The answers to those two questions should give us helpful insight into evaluating each of the 4 key factors affecting performance.

Our goal now is to determine which of the 4 key factors are affecting performance, and thus how we can make adjustments in those areas. Like any good coach, we need to ask good questions to analyze the 4 factors influencing human performance. We not only need to answer those questions ourselves, but often get the perspectives of the person (or group) who has the performance problem. Here are some questions to consider:

### **The Performer:**

- How capable is the person to meet our expectations? Does he or she have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform? (Note: if you have ever seen the person perform this task well, then it is NOT likely to be a knowledge and skill problem.)
- Does the person understand WHY the performance is important or necessary? If not, s/he may not make it a priority.
- Is the person well suited for the job/task? Does it match their gifting and passion?

### **The Situation:**

- Have you defined and communicated performance expectations with the person that are clear and measurable?
- Does the person agree that your expectations are reasonable?

- Is it clear to the person WHEN s/he is supposed to perform this activity?
- Does the person receive all the necessary information, time, money, tools and other resources necessary to successfully perform?
- Does the person face any competing priorities for his/her time?
- Does the workspace around the person support effective performance? (Think spiritual climate, temperature, lighting, noise, interruptions, & comfort.)

**Feedback:**

- Does the person receive timely, specific and relevant feedback about his/her performance?
- Does the person receive feedback often enough to maintain or enhance performance?
- Is feedback communicated in a positive, non-threatening way?

**Consequences:**

- Are appropriate consequences provided timely and consistently?
- Are the consequences significant enough to the person to influence his/her behavior?
- Do sufficient positive consequences exist which encourage the desired behavior?

**APPLICATION:**

1. Consider an actual performance problem you face with someone, even your own failed performance!
2. Answer all of the questions above honestly and to the best of your ability, and make sure to ask the person who has the performance problem for their input, as well.
3. Identify which areas of this performance model are in need of improving.
4. Determine what actions you will take to influence the performance situation.

**Congratulations! You are now empowered to be even more effective in influencing others.**



# Courageous Conversations

by Jay Bransford



There's no doubt about it.... leadership requires a lot of courage. Courage to listen to God instead of depending on yourself. Courage to obey whatever God tells you. And courage to deal with the messiness of leading and developing others.

***“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”  
Proverbs 27:17***

One of the best ways to develop others is to engage them in conversations. By definition, having a ‘conversation’ implies that both parties take turns speaking and listening. And one of the most powerful ways to encourage healthy conversations is to ask good questions.

Below are 6 powerful questions you can use periodically to engage in courageous conversations with the people you lead. Each question encourages open and honest communication about your ministry, your staff member, and yourself as a leader. And the end goal of these questions is to help you develop your ministry, your staff member, and yourself!

Beware.... These questions truly require courage to ask. Are you open minded and secure enough to consider your staff's answers? If so, you are well positioned to see real breakthroughs in your ministry, your staff, and your own leadership effectiveness!

## **6 COURAGEOUS QUESTIONS:**

### **Where are we going?**

This question refers to what direction the staff member sees the ministry going. Is it a positive or negative direction? Does he even know what the ministry is trying to achieve? What do you need to clarify with this person about the direction of the ministry? What can you learn from this person's perspective?

### **Where are you going?**

This question encourages your staff member to seek God about his/her own personal vision and direction.

This question also helps you to understand if this person's vision and goals are in alignment with your ministry's purpose, as well as if the person's role on the team is still a good fit. How can you adjust this person's role to best match his/her personal vision and purpose with a felt need on your team? How can you help coach, mentor and direct this person to move toward God's calling on his/her life (even if it means that s/he should consider leaving your team)?

### **What are you doing well?**

This is a reflective question that gives you insight about how aware the person is about her own performance. What do you agree with? What would you add? What can you thank and encourage her about?

### **How could you improve?**

This is another reflective question that gives you additional insight about how aware the person is about deficiencies with his performance. What do you agree with? What would you add?

### **How can I help?**

This is a simple way to offer your help and assistance to the person. It gives the person reassurance that you are on her side and want her to succeed. Make

sure to consider what she says and decide what you will actually do to help.

### **How can I be a better leader?**

This is your opportunity to learn and grow from your staff. It is a perfect chance to demonstrate and role model a commitment to lifelong learning. Humbling yourself to ask this question will undoubtedly make an impactful positive impression on nearly any staff member. Make sure to thank the person for his input, pray about his input at a later time, and then decide what action you will take.

### **YOUR TEST OF COURAGE:**

Make a personal appointment with each of your staff this week to speak with them 1-on-1 and talk through the 6 questions above. Pray into those conversations in advance and afterwards, and decide what actions you will personally take to better lead your team.

**Now, repeat those courageous conversations with each of your staff every 3-6 months and watch your staff and ministry blossom!**

*Note:* Credit for these 6 powerful questions goes to Marshall Goldsmith.

# When NOT to Coach

by Jay Bransford



In the past 15+ years the art of coaching has become immensely popular and successful around the world. I'm not talking about coaching a sports team. I'm talking about the kind of coaching that focuses on asking a person good questions in order to inspire and motivate him to set goals, identify action steps, and ultimately transform him in ways that help maximize his Godly potential.

This kind of coaching can be extremely encouraging, empowering and truly transformational in a person's life. But is there ever a time when coaching just doesn't work or isn't the right approach?

***“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are***

***evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” - Ephesians 5:15-17***

While in general, I highly encourage all leaders to develop and practice basic coaching skills, it's also good to know when coaching someone may not be the best use of your time. Although there are some extremely talented coaches out there that can help people work through almost any type of issue, I recommend that before you start coaching someone (either formally or informally), check to make sure that none of the four following conditions already exist:

### **Lack Motivation to Change**

Does the person have interest in their own learning, growth, or personal change? Do they have a learning attitude or are they a know-it-all? On a scale from 1-10, how motivated are they to grow and develop in the area you're coaching them in? If their motivation level to learn and change isn't at least a 6 or 7, they likely do not have enough internal motivation to change. Unless and until their motivation to change increases, it's probably not a good use of your coaching time. If you don't want to give up on them, focus your energies first on how to increase their internal motivation to change.

## **Written Off by Leader or Colleagues**

If you are the person's leader, do you personally believe in this person, her potential, and her ability to learn, change and improve? If someone else is this person's leader, does that leader believe in the person, or has the leader written her off? When a person has been written off by her leader and/or colleagues, it means that she has very little encouragement and support to successfully improve. And often it means that despite the person's best intentions and efforts, no one will accept her, or give her opportunities to succeed. When a situation like this exists, it is generally better for the person to find a new leader and/or colleagues to work with – people who believe in her and are willing to give her a chance. So your first coaching assignment for this person might be to ask questions that help the person to consider how healthy her current work situation is and if she needs to make a change. Otherwise, coaching someone who is in a no-win situation like this is simply a painful process for both the coach and coachee.

## **Not Behavior Focused**

It is easy to get sucked into the allure of gaining more and more knowledge. Gaining knowledge, however, is not the goal of the Christian life – but ongoing transformation into the likeness of Jesus is. When coaching people, we need to make sure that people

are focused on transformational change, which is evidenced by a change in thinking, feeling and ultimately behaving. If the people you're working with are only interested in gaining knowledge, but not on the behavioral change that should accompany new knowledge, then the value of that knowledge is close to zero.

## **Character Problems**

Integrity can not be taught. It's not something that you gain by reading a book or attending a seminar. We can, however, point people to God and let Him change their heart, mind, and character. This doesn't mean that you should give up on people with serious character issues, but it does mean that you should be careful to NOT waste your time on someone's skill development when their core issue is a heart/character issue. Make sure you know the difference.

## **Next Steps:**

So what is your next step in developing your staff? Make a list of your staff and write down next to each person's name what their biggest developmental need is and how you can help them with it.



- Are there any difficult conversations you need to have about a person's performance, motivation, attitude, or character?
- Who seems like a good candidate for some coaching?
- Who needs some mentoring?

# Financial Management

# Financial Integrity – the Heart of Character

by Alan Lim



Jack (not his real name) is a businessman and a close friend of YWAM. YWAM Singapore's administration team took up one floor of Jack's office building, which he allowed us to use rent free. The years 1998-2000 were difficult years for many businesses in Asia. Jack's business was one of those severely hit by the economic downturn. I was unaware of what was happening to Jack and his company.

YWAM Singapore had purchased a property for our YWAM base and had just finished our first public fundraising event. We had raised 350,000 Singapore dollars. Shortly after, Jack asked me if he could borrow 100,000 dollars for a couple of weeks to make a payroll deadline. He would repay it in two weeks. I immediately issued a check for the amount to Jack's company. I did not ask any of my leaders. I did not think anyone would have a problem. We had a dual signature system for issuing checks. However, because so many of us

travel and are out of town, I had one of the leaders sign a whole book of checks at a time. That way all we needed was just one more signature - mine.

A month passed. I had forgotten about the loan. I assumed Jack had returned the money directly to YWAM's accounts office. One day I enquired with YWAM and was told that no money had been returned. I talked with Jack and found out that his company was closing like many other Singapore businesses because of the economic crises. He was in debt into the millions. He was in no position to repay the money. I was in shock. I realized I had just lost 100,000 dollars of YWAM's money.

I called a meeting with our YWAM leaders and explained to them what had taken place. I apologized to them for not informing them about it. I rationalized that it was a quick decision and that I did not think that any of them would have objected. I reasoned with them that over the last few years this man and his company had given to YWAM many times more the amount that he had borrowed. Without pausing to hear their thoughts or comments, I proceeded to propose how we could write off this loss. I was problem solving. When I was done, no one said a word. I asked for their thoughts and their opinions and all I got was silence. I got irritated and angry. I emphasized that I had not taken a penny. Jack was our friend. This was an honest mistake on my part and a problem he did not anticipate. I further

reasoned that if I had asked the leadership for permission to loan Jack the money, they would have approved it anyway. So I surmised that my real mistake was not consulting them first. They just kept quiet. I responded to their silence.

“Do you want me to pay this money back? I didn’t take it. It was not my fault. What do you want me to do? This meeting is over. We will meet again tomorrow’. With that I dismissed the meeting.

I was very upset when I got home that evening. After dinner, I shared with Susie what had transpired in the meeting. She asked me many questions and drew very specific answers from me. As Susie began to question me, I began to see what she was trying to get at. Slowly, I began to realize the terrible error I had committed and the predicament I had put our family in. Susie’s questions shifted from inquiry, to disbelief, to disappointment, to anger and finally to deep hurt. I saw it all over her countenance.

Finally, Susie said, “Alan, who do you think you are? Who and what gave you the right to lend 100,000 dollars that is not yours? If only you would have had the sense to talk to your other leaders first and they agreed, then it would be all of your responsibility. But because you did not and did it totally on your own, you bear full and total responsibility. You lost 100,000 dollars of YWAM’s money and now you are responsible to return it. We do not have that kind of money.

If we sold our home, we will make about that much profit after paying the remaining mortgage. And that is what we will have to do to settle this matter. And I am not about to live my life in this community with this issue hanging over our heads. We are going to settle it and settle it quickly. You go and tell our children what you have done and that you have just lost our home. We will rent some place and we will work out our problems.”

God was speaking to me loud and clear. I was in shock as to what I had done and its implications on my family. I also began to realize how my other YWAM leaders were feeling. I realized I had not given them any place or space to speak to me but instead was simply reporting a tragic mistake and offering solutions and wanting their approval.

That evening I spoke to my children, Chelsea and Kyle, and told them what I had done. I apologized and asked them for forgiveness. I explained that we would have to sell our home to repay the debt and find another home. They cried, forgave me and gave me permission to sell the home. That night Susie and I talked even more. We talked about our personal lives. We talked about our struggles and my failures. We talked about our friends who believed in and trusted us. We talked about failing them and how they felt. I realized I was in deep trouble and had dragged family and friends and YWAM into it.

The next day, Susie and I met with our leadership together with our regional director, David Cole. We had explained to David what had happened. I shared with them what the Lord was showing me and speaking to me through Susie. I explained to them that through my time and my conversation with Susie I saw how I had both disappointed and hurt them. I had presumed on our friendship and taken leadership liberties for granted. I had done wrong to God, to my family, to them, to YWAM Singapore and our friends. I told them that I would take full responsibility to ensure that the money is returned. I would also work with them and our advisors to ensure that the process is above board. They agreed, they forgave me and began to pray for Susie and me.

I put our house up for sale. We gave all our savings to YWAM as our first response. Our YWAM leadership took an offering among themselves and gave to us towards this need. These were their words. “We do not want you both to walk through this alone. We want to walk with you in this. This is our gift to you.” We were deeply comforted, grateful and felt loved and cared for and forgiven. A personal friend heard about our situation and gave us half of the amount lost and asked us to take our house off the market. Jack too gave to us from their personal savings. We were still short of twenty thousand dollars. We met with the accountants and auditors. Their advice was that eighty thousand dollars was sufficient to cover the immediate ‘loan’. The remaining twenty thousand can be returned over a period of a year.

We trusted God, saved and returned the rest of the money within one year. In that year, we also reworked YWAM's financial system so that it was open, transparent and accountable both within our leadership and to an 'outside' board. I also worked on our personal financial management.

## **What Did I Learn?**

During this time, the lord spoke to me about three issues in my life.

1. I was lazy.
2. I was not accountable.
3. I had no integrity.

I was lazy because he had spoken to me about the need for proper personal and ministry financial accountability and systems. I began but did not fully implement it. I excused myself with the fact that it was not my area of strength. I was also too busy to look into the details.

I was not accountable because I had circumvented the systems of check and balance to facilitate convenience. They were put in place for a reason. To avoid the very kinds of mistakes I had just made. I did not value accountability. I preferred convenience and control above accountability and transparency.

I was lacking integrity because when I did wrong, I was quick to find solutions without being first willing to look into my



own heart and motives. I quickly brushed aside the wrong and looked for solutions. I was being deceptive, wicked and dishonest. I compromised on integrity and it blinded me and led me into deception and dishonesty.

The Lord spoke to me through two stories in scripture. The first was about Moses in the area of his anger. On three occasions, the Lord dealt with Moses in this area. When he killed the Egyptian, when he struck the rock, and finally when he broke the tablets of stone. On the third occasion, God had him chisel out another two tablets of stone to replace the ones that he broke. It must have taken Moses awhile to do that. It probably took him all day and maybe all night. It gave Moses a lot of time to think and reflect on what he had done. There was the opportunity for processing and a realignment of his heart before he went before the Lord again. I felt that the Lord had been dealing with me in this area of financial responsibility for many years and over many occasions. This time, this matter and this lesson was not going to go away just through repentance and a commitment to change, as important as that was. I was going to walk through an extended period of time to allow my heart to change and be realigned. I was to learn to apply what God was showing me so that I would learn personal and corporate financial responsibility and would value it. A lesson for life!

## **What Would I Do Different?**

1. Attend to my personal financial management diligently. Get the necessary help and accountability.
2. Work with my leadership so that they carry equally the financial responsibility to keep us right and proper in our management of finances. I took on the responsibility because none of them wanted the responsibility and I failed because of a lack of knowledge, laziness and not having my leaders provide the check and balance.
3. Not lend money or give money that I have no authority over. It is not mine to lend or give.

## **How is Your Financial Integrity?**

- Who are you accountable to with your finances?
- Who knows how you spend your money? And your ministry funds?
- Are your personal and ministry funds separate? If not, why not?
- Who do you allow to give you input and feedback about your budgeting and spending?
- What steps can you take today to be fully transparent and accountable with both personal and ministry finances?

# Understanding Support Raising: 10 Basics That Will Lead to Support Raising Success

by Aaron Gonyou (Unmuzzled Ox)



Support raising is considered a ‘necessary evil’ by most missionaries. They typically dislike raising support but ‘swallow the pill’ because they want to perform outreach ministry to the people-group they are called to. Flawed thinking like this creates an attitude that will, at least, hamper their ministry or, at most, lead to its demise.

In my coaching experience with missionaries, even a small adjustment in attitude and perspective can result in significant changes to the amount of support coming in. I have found over and over that adherence to the following ten basic understandings for support raising will lead to support-raising success:

1. If God calls you, he will provide. He just will. There are no two ways about it. When God asks you to do

something, he will resource it. He doesn't call you to another country somewhere around the world and wonder how you'll be fed, clothed and sheltered. That's not our God. There are reasons why full support may not be coming in, but we will deal with that in another post.

2. You are an Advocate. Not a support raiser, not a fundraiser, and not a partner developer. Instead, you speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8-9). This shift in thinking will improve the way you approach potential donors. It will also change the level of joy that you have in raising support. A side benefit of doing skillful advocacy is full support. I will expand on the concept of advocacy in a future post as well.
3. You go to God for support, not people. No man determines your destiny. Only God. When you send letters and have appointments with people, you are inviting them into what God is doing. You don't need to feel the pressure to make a slick sales pitch. If they choose not to support, that is between them and God.
4. You never ask on behalf of yourself. Whenever anyone says that they hate asking for money for themselves, I know right then that they are not approaching their support raising from the proper theological perspective. First, you are asking on behalf of God, as

his representative. Second, you are asking on behalf of those you minister to. Never on behalf of yourself.

5. You never rob someone of the opportunity to give. Don't make decisions for people before you even ask them for support. You might not make the ask because you are saying the following statements to yourself:
  - They are struggling with money right now
  - They are not well right now
  - They do not know me well enough
  - They wouldn't want to
  - etc...(insert excuse here)

In my experience, every missionary is surprised by who gives to their ministry and who does not. Read about the widow and the mite in Mark 12:41-44. The Bible teaches that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).' Do we really believe this?

6. You have a responsibility to raise your support first before ministering to others. Think about the in-flight safety demonstration before the plane takes off. They tell you to put your own oxygen mask on first before your child's. We all know why. The same goes for support-raising. Getting yourself in a secure place will ensure that you can stay in ministry and impact many people.

7. 'Relationship' is the most valuable thing you can give to a donor. They want to feel connected to you and what you are doing. After all, 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mat. 6:21).' If donors are supporting you with their treasure, they will want an update on how that eternal investment is performing. Make sure you are regularly communicating with your support team.
8. Understanding that if you preach the gospel, you should make your living from the gospel. Getting paid for ministry is a right thing, and it's a good thing. It is also a God-ordained thing. In 1 Corinthians 9:14 it says, 'In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel (NIV).' If you are not preaching the gospel, this may be why you are not at full support. Food for thought.
9. Support raising keeps you from working in a silo. Working in a silo means you are working sheltered, alone, or cut-off from others and the larger vision. Many Christian workers I know would be quite happy only to do the outreach component of their ministry. Advocacy keeps you looking outward by inviting others into what God is doing.
10. Support raising is a movement maker. Think of it. If you had dozens of supporters praying, volunteering, and giving, how

much more effective would that be for accomplishing your ministry goals? Imagine if all the staff in your organization were doing advocacy properly. Think about how many people in your community would be making a difference. Think about how that would attract more workers for the harvest, who would then impact even more people. Pretty soon, you'll have a ministry greenhouse in your region and a potential revival!

# **“You mean I have to raise my own money?”**

## **Support Raising**

by Alan Lim



### **Some tips about money and support raising...**

#### **5 things to know about money**

1. Money is a commodity... Relationship to money is an attitude
2. Money is amoral... Love of money is idolatry
3. Money is to serve... Dependency on money is bondage
4. Money is a gift from God... Accumulation of money is slavery
5. Money is opportunity for generosity... Using money to control is wickedness



### **Attitude towards money:**

1. Don't worry about money – Mat 6:25-34
2. Set priorities right – Mat 6:33
3. Be diligent and responsible – Prov 12:24; 1 Thess 4:11-12
4. Invest money and see it grow - Mat 25:14-30
5. Be generous – Mal 3:10; 2Cor 8:1-5

### **Things/topics to think and reflect about with respect to finances and support:**

1. Faith and Finances: About journey in hearing, obeying and trusting God.
2. Have you ever seen a worried bird: About God who cares about us and for us.
3. Friend Raising or Fund Raising: About investing in people into mission through our own mission's journey.

### **FAITH *comes from*:**

1. Knowing what God wants you to do (hearing)
2. Obeying whatever He shows you to do (obeying)

3. Trusting Him to do what you cannot do, in His way and in His time (trusting)

### **Fund Raising - *Attitude towards fund raising***

1. People as friends, not sources of money
2. Respecting people whether they give or not
3. Accountability to relationships
4. Integrity of communication and information
5. Trusting God because He is the Source

### **What to do in fund raising?**

1. Clear goals and purpose that is worth supporting
2. Clear presentation and a way to give
3. Identify people who have shown confidence in what you do, and who love you and believe in you
4. Clear budget or financial plan for openness and transparency
5. Ask God what you are to ask them for and how you are to ask
6. A clear and simple ***PLEASE*** and ***THANK YOU***

## What NOT to do in fund-raising?

### DO NOT USE:

1. Guilt: “If you do not support us, the work of God will die.”
2. Pity: “As you can see from the pictures, this is all we have. But we are rejoicing even though we have nothing. “

### DO NOT APPEAL TO:

1. Donor Greed: “This investment of your gift will increase in value ten times in three years. I promise you that.”
2. Donor Fear: “The bible says, “Give and it shall be given to you..” But if you do not give, all you have will be taken away from you. I am praying for you.”
3. Donor Pride: “ Just for the sake of openness and transparency, we would like to put your name on ALL the buildings because we appreciate your gift to build our YWAM center. “

## **How much support is enough?**

1. Character - Not how much I can trust God to give me,  
but rather how much He can trust me with
2. Calling - A worker is worthy of his hire. According to  
our responsibility and ministry needs
3. Culture – Living in a culturally appropriate manner.  
Not overly extravagant

# Communication Planning

# Elements of a Communication Plan

by Jay Bransford



*“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.” Proverbs 21:5*

Failing to plan is actually a plan to fail. This is true with almost everything in life - from project planning to vacation planning. One of the biggest causes of failure in marriages, relationships, organizations, and ministry teams is poor communication. Communicating well generally requires some preparation and forethought. That’s another way of saying “planning”! So how does a person plan out their communications? Well, let’s take a look at four basic steps you can take to be proactive in communicating well.

## **1. Define Your Objectives**

What are you trying to achieve? Why is this important? It's always important that both you and the people you're communicating with understand the big picture of what you're doing and why. This is called "starting with the end in mind". Identify the fundamental end outcomes or objectives that will then help you focus on the details of WHAT needs to get done, by WHOM, WHEN, and WHY. Those are the things that need to get continuously communicated!

## **2. Understand Your Audience**

What individuals and groups of people need to get involved in order for your ministry work to be successful? Why are each of those groups of people important to the success of your work? What critical part do they play? What kind of understanding, commitment, and action do you need from them and what level are they already at? What kind of communication do they need from you and how often? What are the best ways of communicating with them? These are some of the components of an Audience Analysis.

## **3. Plan Messages and Channels**

What types of messages or information do you need to communicate to each of your audience groups? What does each of your key audience groups need to know

NOW? Note: the informational needs of your audiences change constantly. Thus, you must constantly re-assess your communication plan to include the most relevant communication messages necessary at any given time. How often do you need to communicate each message? Generally, communicating a message only once will not be enough. Consider what communications methods/channels are most appropriate for each message, audience, and situation. For example, which messages are urgent or important enough to warrant calling people, and for which messages would a meeting, email, text message or newsletter be more appropriate?

#### **4. Evaluate and Monitor**

How will you follow-up to find out what your audience groups understood, what questions they have, what concerns they have, and what suggestions they have? How will you get feedback about the quality, clarity, frequency, and appropriateness of your communications? Depending on the audience group, you may be able to ask them in person, ask during a group meeting, ask in an email, or ask in a survey. Get creative in evaluating your communications, and never stop asking for input. It's better to err on the side of communicating and evaluating too much compared to too little. What's most important, though, is how you utilize people's feedback in order to improve your future communications.



Here's a visual of a template you could consider using as you put your communication plan together:

Overall Objective or End Outcome:				
Audience	Communication Objective	Message	Channel	Timing/Frequency
Feedback / Lessons Learned:				

### CHALLENGE:

- Where are you in the communication planning process?
- What is your next step?
- How and when will you evaluate and monitor your ongoing communication needs?

## Knowing Your Audience

by Jay Bransford



*"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."*

*1 Cor 9:22b*

Good communication requires knowing who your audience is, what their communications needs are, and what methods will work best to communicate with them. Gaining this kind of understanding is what an audience analysis is all about. How many different types of people (or audience groups) to you need to interact with for your ministry? It's very likely that you communicate regularly with financial supporters, prayer supporters, ministry staff, and mission leaders, not to mention your actual ministry target audience.

If you're like most of us, you have quite a few groups of people you need to communicate with, and they each have unique communication needs and expectations. It's not

advisable nor realistic to communicate the same thing, the same way, at the same time, to every one of those audience groups. So how do you determine what needs to get communicated to whom, how, and when? That’s where an audience analysis can be very helpful. Let’s start by looking at some of the basic elements to understand about the audience groups you need to be communicating with. If we use the word “AUDIENCE” as an acronym, it can help us to remember how to conduct an audience analysis. Look at the table below...

	Key Word	Questions to Ask
<b>A</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	Who are each of your audience groups?
<b>U</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	What is the audience's current knowledge of your subject matter?
<b>D</b>	<b>Demographics</b>	What is their age, education, culture, etc?
<b>I</b>	<b>Interest</b>	What is their interest in your ministry?
<b>E</b>	<b>Environment</b>	What communication opportunities and barriers exist? (Think language, culture, location, preferred method of communication, etc.)
<b>N</b>	<b>Needs</b>	What are the communication needs of the audience? And what do YOU need from them?
<b>C</b>	<b>Customization</b>	How should you customize your communications to meet the unique demographics, interests, needs, & environment of the audience?
<b>E</b>	<b>Expectations</b>	What communication does your audience expect from you? And what kind of engagement do you need from the audience?

1. Take a minute to write down each of the audience groups that you need to communicate with, related to your ministry. The examples provided in the first paragraph above might help you get started. Congratulations! That's the first step in conducting your audience analysis.
2. Now, make a simple table similar to the table in the visual below and try your best to answer the rest of the questions above from the acronym AUDIENCE. This may require you getting input from your other team members, doing a little research, and possibly even asking a few questions directly to representatives of your audience groups. Remember that your answers will likely be different for each audience group.

Audience	Under- standing	Demo- graphics	Interest	Environ- ment	Needs	Custom- ization	Expect- ations
Financial Supporters							
Prayer Team							
Ministry Staff							
My Target Audience							
My Org							
My Leader							
Collaborators							
Volunteers							
Outreach Teams							

3. Now use the information you collected to plan and target your communications to each of your audience groups. Your audience analysis should equip you with a clear idea of WHAT you need to communicate uniquely to each group, WHEN to communicate it, and HOW to communicate the message (i.e. in person or via email).
4. Re-assess the communication needs of your audience frequently. Their need for communication and your need to communicate new and different things can change at any time. Make sure to adjust your communication plans accordingly.

**That's it! You can do it! You'll be amazed at how much better your communication will be with a little time spent on analyzing your audience from time to time.**

# Principles of Effective Communication

by Jay Bransford



*“The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.”*

*Proverbs 16:23*

Life is a journey requiring nearly non-stop communication. Think about who you communicate with on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Your list might include family, friends, neighbors, people in the community, teammates, supporters, leaders, your customers or ministry target audience, yourself, and God. Sometimes we communicate well, and sometimes we flop. And the results can range from experiencing strong, healthy relationships and effective teamwork to broken relationships and failed ministries. So what are some of the key factors (or principles) that lead to effective communication?

Keep in mind that communication is more complex than simply having a message you want to convey. The purpose

of communication is for the receiver of the message to actually understand the message, and even to encourage a two-way exchange of information. Consider how well you apply the following 9 principles of effective communication...

## **Know Your Audience**

What do you know about the knowledge, experience, interests, and needs of the people you are trying to communicate to? Put yourself in the shoes of your audience. Is what you're telling them new to them? Does it interest them? Does it relate to them? Does it help meet a felt need of theirs in any particular way? The more 'Yes' answers you can give to those questions, the more likely your audience will be interested and engaged with your message. Each of your communication messages needs to be uniquely tailored to the person or audience you are communicating with, according to their knowledge, interests, level of influence, and needs.

## **Know your Purpose.**

Why do you want to communicate with this person or group? Obviously you must have a message that you want to convey to them. But why? What are you hoping to accomplish by communicating with them? Make sure that purpose is clear both to you and to the people you are communicating with. Otherwise, people may not see the value in paying attention to your message.

## **Be Concise and Complete.**

People are busy. And in today's world, people tend to have very short attention spans. Before you open your mouth to speak, or start typing that next email or text message, make sure you take time to think about how you can communicate your message clearly and concisely. Sometimes people only give you one shot at communicating your message to them, so make it count by making it short and clear!

## **Anticipate Questions and Objections.**

What questions might people have as they hear or read your communication? What might they not understand? What concerns might they have? Do your best to anticipate these questions and concerns and answer them within your message to them. When people have unanswered questions and concerns, they are likely to withhold their attention, time or support.

## **Communicate a Little at a Time.**

Don't overwhelm people with too much information. Try to give them the information that they need NOW, in bite size chunks that they can realistically listen to (or read) and remember. While it is definitely helpful to give people the big picture vision of your overall message, try to give them only the necessary details that they need at the time. Too many details can cause people to get frustrated and mentally check out.



## **Allow for Multiple Learning Styles.**

People learn in different ways. Some people need to SEE things to remember them, some people need to HEAR a message, and some people need to actually DO what you're talking about in order to fully understand it. This can be referred to as Visual, Auditory or Kinesthetic learning styles. It is extremely helpful to try to incorporate all three of these learning styles into your communication messages, whenever possible. Let people see the message (in words and in pictures), let them listen to the message, and try to give them an opportunity to actually do what you're talking about. Research shows that people remember things much better if they have had a chance to see, hear and do it.

## **Use Multiple Communication Channels.**

What's your preferred way of communicating? 1-on1 talking? Phone calls? In meetings? Email? Texting? Facebook? Those are examples of different communication channels. Guess what? Your preferred way of communicating is much less important than what your audience's preferred way of communicating is! Chances are, you need to communicate many of your messages using multiple communication channels. Yes, it takes more time. But you're also much more likely to successfully get your message across.

## **Repeat Yourself.**

Never assume that you only have to communicate a message once. In reality, people tend to need to hear a message multiple times before they truly hear and remember it. Don't let that frustrate you. Just plan to communicate important messages multiple times in different ways.

## **Get Feedback.**

Ask questions and encourage feedback from people. What did they understand? What questions, concerns or suggestions do they have? The more you know about how well your communication was received, the better chance you have to improve your communication in the future – and the better you can tailor your communications to the needs of your audience.

## **PERSONAL CHALLENGE:**

Which of these communication principles are your strengths? Which are your weaknesses? Pick ONE of these principles to improve on today. What specifically will you do differently?

# Motivating and Mobilizing

# Motivated for Leadership, Discipleship and The Great Commission

by Bevin Ginder



## God's Vision

God has unfulfilled dreams for planet earth, an overarching vision to restore everything that was lost and broken at the beginning of the story. Therefore, our visions as leaders who love God must be rooted in His vision. Our leadership end goals must be informed by God's end goal of "every nation, tribe, people and language" worshipping before the Lamb (Rev 7:9). Regardless of what sphere of society we work in the context is God's mission to win back His world. This is the larger story of our leadership journeys.

## **Motivation for Discipleship and God's End Goal**

If God's end game is revealed in Revelation 7:9, what are the means of getting to that point in the story? God make the means very clear. Matthew 28:18,19 names two means (or tactics) for accomplishing God's end goal of reaching every nation. We are to baptize disciples and then teach those disciples to obey everything that Jesus commanded. The means for partnering with God in His mission is discipleship.

Today there a dizzying amount of different types of work and ministries that leaders can choose to engage with. Many might think that the activities of baptizing and teaching disciples are just two options among many equally valid options. But actually baptizing and teaching disciples can and should be integrated into every other type of ministry and vocation. Discipleship can happen anywhere. There are many good and important things leaders can and should be doing but they must never be disconnected from the mandate to disciple. Discipleship is the main means God has designated to move the story forward toward His end goal (Rev 7:9).

## **What is Your Primary Motivation - Being a Disciple or a Leader?**

There is an overwhelming amount of content being produced on the topic of leadership from a Christian perspective. But perhaps we could agree on the bottom line that a Christian leader should first himself be a disciple of Jesus who says to his followers "Imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV)

As we develop the leaders around us we must remember that it is a believer's growth as a disciple of Christ that will be the main factor that enables them to develop as leaders. It is only the Holy Spirit that can transform the human heart so if we disconnect leadership from discipleship we will most likely resort to developing leaders by equipping them with more skills. But skills alone can never take the place of a transformed heart.

## **What are the Marks of a Disciple?**

Ok, perhaps discipleship is inseparable from Christian leadership but who is a disciple or what are the marks of a disciple? How do we evaluate whether or not we are producing disciples or just consumers of our ministry efforts? Well this question is not too tricky at all. Jesus was abundantly clear on the marks of a true disciple... very

simply a disciple is one who obeys the commands of Christ. Jesus made it very clear that loving Him and obeying Him are inseparable.

*If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15 NIV)*

*Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. (John 14:21NIV)*

*He who does not love me will not obey my teaching (John 14:24 NIV)*

*(See also John 2:3-5)*

### **A Disciple is Motivated to Obey the Commands of Christ.**

The commands of Christ include things like: repent and believe (Mark 1:15), be baptized (Matt 28:18-20), love God and your neighbor (Matt 22:37-40), pray (Matt 6:5-15), give (Matt 6:19-21 & Luke 6:38), and go (Matt 28:18-20) which is known as the Great Commission - but in the original language these words are a command.

May I highlight that Matthew 28:18-20 is not about discipleship as an end in itself but discipleship as the means

to realize God's end goal of every nation redeemed. The goal of reaching all nations is a clear theme in Jesus' teaching (Mark 16:15) (Act 1:8) (Luke 24:45-47). It seems clear that being a disciple and doing discipleship are inextricably wrapped up together with God's mission to reach every nation tongue and tribe. We must never separate discipleship from impacting nations.

### **So a Motivated Disciple Should "Go," Right?**

So does this mean that every disciple must go long-term to the least-reached? No, actually going is only one of at least six ways to partner with God on behalf on the unreached. Praying, Sending, Going, Welcoming, Learning, and Mobilizing are equally valuable roles that enable every believer/disciple to intentionally and effectively participate in completing the Great Commission.

If we are helping people in our sphere of influence not only grow as a follower of Jesus but also intentionally walk out obedience to Jesus' command to reach all nations, then we are hitting the mark.

### **I Have a Dream..**

Dream with me; what would it be like if every Christian leader was a disciple of Christ who was personally motivated



and engaged in one or more of those six roles as an expression of obedience and love for Jesus? What if each of those leaders were then discipling a few people to not only become happy and healthy in Jesus but challenging them to find their role in completing the Great Commission/commandment? Picture what it would look like if leaders did not measure success by how much of our teaching our followers understand but rather how much of Jesus' commands they are living/obeying?

**So.... what is your primary motivation as a leader? And how are you living that out?**

*"If the people who follow you just imitated you, would they accomplish the mission?"*

*- Dave Ferguson*

## Motivating without Money

by Jay Bransford



**Money can be a powerful motivator.** The pursuit of money and power can influence people to do all kinds of things – both good and bad. The good news is that as Christians we hopefully come to realize that our monthly paychecks really come from God. Whether we work a traditional job, volunteer, are retired, or serve in full-time missions, it is God who makes a way to provide for all of our needs. The other good news is that for most people money is actually not as strong of a motivator as you might think.

*“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.”*

*- Hebrews 10:24*

There are many things in life that act as motivators for people. As leaders, it is important that we understand what influences and motivates our staff. We can't simply bark out

orders and expect people to follow them. Motivating others is a skill we can develop. Sometimes it is good to start with yourself, in order to get a better idea of what motivates you. Although everyone is unique, we often have a lot in common when it comes to the general kinds of things that motivate us. As I reflect on my work life, I can definitely see some common factors that have influenced me to do my best. But let me start with just one simple example – my first ever real job. For three years in high school I worked as a pizza cook on the weekends. You may be asking yourself, “Can you really learn about what motivates you by looking at such a simple example?” Read on and see! You can learn a lot about what motivates your staff just by asking them a few easy questions. For simplicity sake, let’s just ask one question here...

**As you consider a job that you enjoyed and performed well at, tell me what you most enjoyed about the job?**

As a pizza cook at an Italian restaurant, below are some of the things that I enjoyed most. Note: I have bolded a common principle of motivating others before each point.

- **Challenge People and Give Them Responsibility:** The better I performed at the restaurant, the more responsibility I was given. I started as a dishwasher and quickly moved up to being able to work in every role in the restaurant.

- **Ensure a Good Role Fit:** I was allowed to work in the area of the restaurant that I most enjoyed and excelled at, which was making pizzas.
- **Use Rewards and Recognition:** I was often given positive feedback and recognized as the “Employee of the Month” for my hard work and dependability.
- **Trust People:** I was trusted to both open the restaurant and close it down at the end of the night.
- **Provide a Fun Environment:** We had a lot of fun goofing off, eating ‘mistake’ pizzas, and listening to music when the restaurant was quiet.
- **Ask for People’s Ideas and Input – and Listen:** I was allowed to find ways to prepare the food faster and with higher quality.

In addition, one of the greatest motivators for most people is the opportunity they are given to **dedicate their time and effort to an important cause**. This means that the more time you spend communicating and reminding people about the overall vision and purpose of your ministry, as well as each person’s ongoing impact towards that purpose, the more motivated your staff will feel. As a teenager, I must have felt that delivering delicious pizza to people was a very important cause, because I took that job very seriously! Just think how much more motivated a person would be if the ‘important cause’ they were a part of was Kingdom focused!

**What do you think motivates your staff? If you're not sure, try asking them!**

- Ask them about their past work experiences.
- What did they enjoy about each job and why?
- What did they NOT enjoy and why?
- What made them excited to come to work each day and do their best?
- What de-motivated them to do their best?

You might be surprised at what you learn about people when you ask these simple questions. You'll probably find that you don't need money to motivate them. Instead, you'll likely discover some simple, and yet powerful things you can do to maximize the joy, excitement, and effectiveness of everyone on your team. Be motivated to motivate!

# What is Godly Motivation?

by Jay Bransford



## Jesus had one motivation in life....

*“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (John 4:34)*

If this is Jesus’ motivation, then certainly it should be our primary motivation, too, right? So what does Jesus mean and how does it apply to us?

When Jesus uses the word “food” in this verse, He is referring to the things that give Him energy, strength, and motivation. Thus, there are evidently things in life that can provide us with the motivation, energy and strength we need every day. What are those things?

In John 4:34 Jesus tells us that there are two things that serve as food or motivation for Him. The first is “doing God’s will” and the second is “finishing God’s work”. Jesus gets energy and motivation when He is actually DOING God’s will.

And Jesus is evidently energized by the goal to actually FINISH that work.

### **So how does this apply to you?**

Your motivation level should be directly connected to your doing of God's will. But in order for you to "do God's will", you must first know what God's will for your life is. We all have a general calling and purpose to love God and to love others. Loving God involves things such as spending time with God, reading his Word, praying and being His disciple. Loving others involves things such as spending quality time with people, getting to know their stories, and sharing what you have with them. This might include giving others your time, talents, truth, care, prayers, and/or resources. So when we are taking time to nurture our relationship with God and when are being loving to others, we are "doing God's will". And that should result in us having greater levels of motivation and energy.

To go a level deeper, you can ask yourself, "What is God's unique will, purpose and calling for me?" What is God specifically asking YOU to do with your life? This is a critical question to wrestle with. Remember that your level of motivation comes directly from you DOING God's will for your life. So if you're feeling unmotivated, there's a chance that you might not be focused on doing the things that God uniquely created you to do. Take some time to reflect on what you know about how God creatively designed you –

your gifts, your passions, your strengths, your experiences, and what God may have specifically asked you to do. Don't let yourself float around in life or get off track. Be living in God's will for your life!

As a leader it is also your responsibility to help your staff discover and live out God's calling on each of their lives. If you truly want your staff to be motivated to their fullest potential, then make sure you are giving them the opportunity to discover their purpose and calling, and to live it out – even if that means that they need to move on to a new place or ministry. We all need food from God – which can be found by doing His will.



# Defining Vision & Purpose

# Discovering Your Purpose

by Jay Bransford



**In the beginning, God had a vision and a purpose.** It involved the redemption of man through Jesus Christ.

*“Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” - John 1:29*

*“My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.” - John 10:10, 11*

*“For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.” - Luke 19:10*

God also has a vision and purpose for each one of us. Our job is to discover what it is. Contrary to what some people may think, God is not keeping his vision and purpose for you

a secret. He wants you to know, but it is often done so through a process of learning and discovery. This takes intentionality and effort on our part.

## **What are some ways in which we can discover God's vision and purpose for our lives?**

### **Seeds of Destiny:**

God has planted many, many seeds in your life that eventually grow and give you sense of purpose and direction. Those seeds may have been planted by childhood experiences, important or influential people, or significant events. Take some time to reflect upon each phase of your life (i.e. early childhood, schooling and teenage years, jobs and volunteer opportunities). During each of those phases, what significant experiences or events did you encounter? And who were the most influential people in your life? (Think of family, friends, teachers, co-workers, and other acquaintances.) How did each of those people or experiences affect the way you think and believe about yourself, God and the world?

### **Biblical Revelation:**

Thankfully, our God is a god who speaks! And studying and meditating on the Word of God is one of the best ways to hear from Him. What has God spoken to you through His Word? Get out your journal (if you have one!) and read

through it. As you consider all of the things that God has ever spoken to you through the Bible, what picture does it start to paint about his purposes and dreams for your life?

### **Prophetic Words:**

God also loves to speak to us through others. Have you ever received a prophetic word from someone? What did God say? In what way might those prophetic words relate to God's overall vision and purpose for your life?

### **Passions/Skills/Needs:**

When God knit us together in our mother's womb, He gave us unique passions, interests and skills that further develop throughout our lives. What are you passionate about? What giftings and skills has God given you? Now take a moment to consider what some of the greatest needs of the world are right now – in your family, in your local community, in your city, in your nation, and beyond. Often times you will find that the most fulfilling and impactful times in your life are when the work you are doing is something that you are passionate about, that you are skilled to do, and that meets an important need around you. This perfect alignment of your passions, skills and the world's greatest needs is what many people refer to as your calling or vocation. That's likely to be where God wants you to be!

### **Now, put it all together...**

## Seeds of Destiny

Phase of Life	People/Events that impacted you	What did you learn about yourself, God and others?
Early Childhood		
School/Teenage Years		
Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities		
Marriage and Parenting (if applicable)		

## Biblical Revelation

What has God spoken to you from the Bible?	How might that relate to your Vision and Purpose?

## Prophetic Words:

What prophetic words have you received?	How might that relate to your Vision and Purpose?

## Passion, Skills and the World's Needs:

Passions	Skills	World's Needs	What Overlaps?

In Luke 4:18 the bible says, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to...” How does God end that sentence for you? He wants you to know! Take time this week (and possibly once a year) to reflect on your Seeds of Destiny, Biblical Revelations you’ve received, Prophetic Words that have been spoken over you, and your increasing understanding of your Passion, Skills and the Needs around you. What is God speaking to you through all of it? You can be assured that.... You have a God-given destiny and purpose, and it is GOOD!

# Who's Leading – You or God?

by Linda Hermann



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

When you want to quit...

**what does God say?**

When you want to expand your ministry...

**what does God say?**

When you want to hit back at accusation...

**what does God say?**

You began your ministry because God told you to. You asked Him first. And that was right, and good. Don't go into battle without the general telling you. Don't expect kingdom results when the King hasn't asked you to do what you are doing. It's strange though, in my life, in the life of Christian leaders I know, though we begin with Christ, He can somehow get shoved into second position, or even third as we go along. When our ministry is failing, do we go back to God and ask Him if we are doing something out of line with His will? If our ministry is succeeding, do we ask Him before we make the next major move? Do we continue a ministry

just because it's been around awhile? Do we stop a ministry because of lack of finances, major health issues, difficult family situations?

## **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

What does God say? One of the hardest things I ever had to do was to lift up the ministry God had given me, and ask if He wanted me to continue it. It wasn't failing, didn't have any major problems. But I had learned in a hard yet beautiful way that the ministry wasn't 'mine'. It was His, and He was Lord of it even as He is Lord of me. (by the way, that takes a lot of pressure off!). So I asked Him. At that time, I believe He told me (and confirmed later) to continue for 3 more years. Oh the peace and faith I gained from simply stopping and letting Him be God and Lord! It was a leader in YWAM International who taught me the importance of keeping first things first. Of holding carefully but lightly what God has given me. When YWAM reached their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organization, they had a big celebration. In the middle of it, this leader stood up and said "YWAM is in a dangerous place right now. We are so big we could keep going for another ten years on momentum alone, kind of like a huge ship that stops yet keeps going for many miles, just because it is so big. I think we need to stop and ask God if we are to continue." So they did.



## **SO FIRST THINGS FIRST...**

How is God leading YOU right now?

(For further study and meditation, read John 5:19, 20, 14:20, 15:4, 16:13-15)

# Real Stories from the Field – Defining Vision and Purpose

by Various YWAM Elders



The ALLC recently interviewed a number of people who are leading a variety of YWAM ministries and schools in Asia. We specifically asked them about their personal journey related to identifying and defining their vision and purpose. Our hope is that in sharing their stories with the ALLC, we can all benefit from their collective wisdom and experience on our own journeys to discovering God’s unique vision and purpose for our lives and ministries. Enjoy!

## **What is the vision and purpose of your ministry?**

“Sexually exploited individuals, families and communities, fulfilling God’s purpose for their lives – aware, restored, empowered and free.” – an anti-trafficking and awareness ministry in Southeast Asia

“A Bible for every home, a Bible for every student and a set of 4 Bibles for every temple.” – Share Bibles ([www.sharebibles.com](http://www.sharebibles.com))

“One Nation One Generation: Equipping and Empowering to bring the Kingdom of God to Communities in Cambodia, Southeast and to the Ends of the Earth. We are called to be a training hub for the region to raise up missionaries to be sent out to pioneer new ministries in the unreached.” – UofN/YWAM Battambang, Cambodia

“To share the gospel to the Shan People of South East Asia. We want to see a Shan living fellowship among them. Shan believers grow in faith and in their walk with God and able to live and share the gospel to their own people and to other unreached people groups. We want to see a local Shan leaders raised up and live out their destiny in the kingdom.” - Shan Outreach Center Asia

### **How did you know you were called to this ministry?**

“My story for His glory. God chose to use my past story of slavery and freedom to help others who are needing to be set free in body, soul and spirit. Months of prayer, research and education led to open doors that we walked through.” – Jennifer G

“God deposited it into my heart. It aligns with my passions and giftings.” – ShareBibles.com

“Being called to this ministry required first Jesus getting me to the point of being fully surrendered. At that point in 2003 God brought me to Cambodia and started to speak to me through Genesis 50:20 that God wanted to redeem what the enemy had meant for evil through the Khmer Rouge and that God wants to turn it to good. At that time I led four short-term outreach teams to Cambodia over 2 years and God continued to speak to me about His heart for this nation. Then I felt God challenge me through Isaiah 52:7 to be some of the feet to come and serve in Cambodia and see the younger generation (75% under 30 and 42% under 15 years old) be transformed by the Gospel and then bring transformation to their nation and the nations. In 2005 God spoke to bring a DTS team for 6 months to pioneer a YWAM location here in Battambang, Cambodia and since then, the ministry has grown to 90 full-time staff with many training schools, mercy ministries and evangelism ministries.”  
– Garth Gustafson

“After hearing some challenging message on God's heart for the unreached people, my wife and I met a couple and shared to us about the Shan. They told us

the Shan are one of the unreached people in South East Asia, then we knew that God's heart cries out to them and that is where we should go.” – Mario Lao

### **How did you go about defining your ministry’s vision and purpose?**

“We had an external coach/consultant walk us through the process of defining our vision, purpose and strategy. It was a long and tedious process, and something that would have been difficult to do on our own. Having a coach outside of our team who could ask us good questions and encourage our creative thinking was invaluable!” – Jennifer G

“I used the vision of similar ministries around the world as examples and then contextualized them to my location based on the needs I saw.” –  
ShareBibles.com

“Over the years we have really sought the Lord and God continued to clarify the vision and purpose. After the DTS team finished in 2006 we started with a core staff team of 5 and during that time in April 2006 we spent a number of days seeking God's heart for YWAM Battambang. During those days God spoke to us many foundational words for the ministry and He has

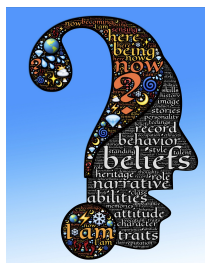
continued to clarify those over the years.” – Garth Gustafson

“The vision and purpose of the SOC ministry came about by constant prayer, research, gathering fact and info, listening from other missionaries who worked among the Shan, identifying the felt needs of the Shan, and aligning them into God's heart for the Shan people.” – Mario Lao

# Understanding Yourself

# Are you Self Aware?

by Stephe Mayers



## 1. Strengths – we all have them:

I was at a leadership meeting the other day where the team needed advice on how to move forward. We prayed, discussed and I challenged them in several ways, with the result that we ended our time with some clear action points. Afterwards one of the leaders encouraged me and said, “Stephe, that was so good, it pulled us together, clarified issues and helped us to know the next steps.” I was working in one of my strengths. There’s all kinds of things I do because they are part of my job but I wouldn’t call them all strengths. For instance one area that actually takes energy from me and requires extra grace is dealing with conflicts. I consider it a necessary and important but don’t get excited about it! Then there is providing financial accountability, giving pastoral care and problem solving. I do all these and every leader has to be involved



to a certain extent in these areas but they take energy away rather than pour energy in.

There are a number of tests and indicators that can be used to identify strengths. A popular one is *strengthfinder*, which is put out by the 'gallop organisation.' You can fill out the questionnaire on line and it identifies your five major strengths in how you function and interact with the world as an individual. Mine would include words like *Maximiser*: I like to take a vision, work on it, develop it and tweak it so that it becomes the best it can be. *Achiever*: For me this means that every day, even on days off, I have a need to accomplish something. *Arranger*: I love to arrange things – give me a whole host of items to put in a suitcase, topics and issues for a conference, possibilities for a project and I will organise and arrange them so that it all works together. It is taking the complex and chaos and bringing order. *Learner*: I love learning – give me input! Without it I dry up. *Focus*: I have the ability to focus and see what's important, gear my energies and attention to see something come about that requires concentration. Its helpful to know what you can do and the strengths you bring to the team. Do the test yourself and discover more about yourself:

<http://www.strengthsfinder.com/home.aspx>

When I was a national leader in Scotland back in the 80's, I was part of the UK leadership team. Lynn Green was chairing the team at the time and I received so much

encouragement from being there. In 1990 he invited me to take on this UK role. In response my question was, “What strengths are you looking for?” As I compared myself to Lynn I realised I was very different in makeup and gifting. I continued to say, “I’m not a charismatic leader, I’m not a good orator, I’m not a wild visionary leader but I can build team and facilitate visionary development.” To cut a long story short I got the job. We need to know what we can do and what we can’t do.

### **Staffing by strength:**

One day Jesus stepped into Peter’s boat and rocked his world. Peter was a fisherman, who knew his trade well. Peter had experienced a fruitless night of fishing and Jesus asked him to launch out into the deep water once again. Having swallowed his pride, Peter set out and experienced an amazing catch of fish. Jesus turned to Peter and said, “I will make you a fisher of men.” Jesus saw Peter’s strength of gathering people and his gift of verbal communication and prophetically called him forth into his ministry of being a leader and evangelist. He had all kinds of weaknesses and needed discipleship but Jesus looked at his strengths first.

Barnabas needed a co-worker and thought of Saul, who was known as a murderer, a trouble- maker and one who’d stirred up the crowds even as a new believer and had to be smuggled out of the city. Saul was outspoken and some found him very difficult to handle. This was the

guy that came to Barnabas's mind but he chose to think of his strengths: single-minded, courageous, visionary, verbally articulate and very passionate for the growth of the church. So he recruited him and worked on his weaknesses as they went.

How do we see ourselves? How do we see others? Do we see the potential and strengths? Or do others weaknesses disqualify them in our eyes?

To identify my strengths, it may help to answer the following questions: How have others encouraged me in my leadership? What comes easily to me in my leadership roles? What aspect of leadership do I enjoy? What do I gravitate to in my leadership? Where do I experience an anointing in my leadership?

## **2. Weaknesses – we all have them:**

We don't usually look for tests to discover our weaknesses but tests we take to reveal strengths, personality, and gifting also show by implication what you are not so good at. Here is a challenge for you: Take a few minutes and write down 5 strengths and 5 weaknesses that you are very aware of right now.

Don't read on until you have thought of some strengths and weaknesses! So stop and think.

Which came easier? Hmmm. Does that tell you anything?

It's important that we are aware of weaknesses and we do need to work on them but not to the extent that our strengths aren't progressing. There is a need to bring damage control to our lives so that our weaknesses aren't hurting anyone, ourselves included. However it is important to note that our strengths pushed to an extreme become weaknesses.

- Decisiveness becomes impatient or unilateral decision making
- Getting things done becomes insensitive to others
- Caution becomes road blocking
- Enthusiasm becomes manipulation
- Loyalty and support become conformity
- Orderliness becomes perfectionism

So it's good to remember that our strengths need to be linked with the strengths of others, so our strength doesn't move into weakness.

**Staffing our weakness:** Let's observe those who have strengths in the area of our own weaknesses and then invite them to join us. When I took on the leadership of YWAM Scotland, the first person I looked for was someone who was more pastoral than I was. The leader who I recruited and worked with me in this role was such a complement to me. It was like he had a sign on his forehead, "Come and pour out your heart to me" because that's what people did. I also needed others who were more detailed than I was and who could plan projects,

organise finances, generally administrate the work and establish management structures.

There are different kinds of weakness in personality. For instance in Myers Briggs, the way we perceive or experience the world is called either “sensing” or “intuition”. The way we decide is called, ‘thinking’ or ‘feeling’. In Myers Briggs theory these four traits are put into an order of strength in each personality known as dominant, auxiliary, tertiary and inferior. If your dominant is ‘thinking’, your inferior will be ‘feeling’. These inferior areas or weaknesses are seen as areas that need growth. Maturity means therefore that we can respond in all four functions in the appropriate way, depending on what is required.

### **3. Limitations – we all have them:**

We might aspire to be a superman or superwoman but unfortunately we are limited to be mere mortals. Even in our areas of strength, we have certain capacities and if we’re not sure where that boundary line is, we can be in danger. In a leadership team meeting some years ago, the question was asked, ‘How are you doing generally in life and relationships?’ The response given was ‘I’m fine’. Everyone was fine, including me. A few weeks later one of the leaders had to take 6 months out of ministry, due to burn out. So what was going on when that question was

being asked? Was the leader lying? No, he was just not aware of his limitations.

The other day I was talking to a friend and I mentioned that I hadn't been sleeping well. He asked further questions, which drew out the fact that I was in an extremely busy season, with a number of the hats I wear converging at the same time. This meant it was a more stressful season for me than normal. The difficulty is that stress isn't always felt initially. It creeps up on us. Only when we list down the issues that we are carrying do we begin to understand and have an awareness of what is going on and then perhaps feel the stress a little more. So in response to this revelation of the amount of stress I was under, I wrote a prayer of release to pray daily. I recognised that I actively need to let go of trying to control everything and find solutions. I had reached my limit - the danger point. I needed to know my capacity.

These are some questions I can ask myself: How many balls can I juggle in the air at any one time? How many relationships can I maintain? How much time away is manageable and is there grace for? How many hats or roles can I wear in any season? How much time can I serve in my 'minor' area of ministry without being released into my 'major' area? When we know our limitations, it's up to us to create the boundary lines and keep to them.

#### **4. Blind spots – we all have them:**

I was driving along the main road in town last week when a driver pulled out right in front of me. We both slammed on the brakes and he apologised profusely. Somehow I was in his blind spot and he hadn't seen me coming. Blind spots are dangerous and life threatening. When you are driving, looking in the side mirror to see if anything is coming just isn't good enough. We need to turn our heads and look clearly over our shoulder to see the full view of the road. Often when backing out I need someone in the back seat to let me know if it's clear to go. In order to overcome our blind spots, we need others help and feedback. Fortunately others can often see where we are blind! The problem is that our cultures often don't encourage feedback and so without asking and pressing for input we don't receive it.

I was recently watching 'American idol' on TV. It is a programme where a team of experts in singing and performance, audition acts to appear on the show. It was so embarrassing. The poor guy auditioning was tone deaf and couldn't sing in tune but he was so pumped up and believed he was the best thing going. His family was also there watching and cheering him on. I guess you'd have to call this a deaf spot!

Here's a challenge for you. What blind spots have been pointed out or have you discovered over this last year? Here are a few that I have become aware of (of course

there are others that I am still blind to – that's why I need people close to me to point them out in a loving way):

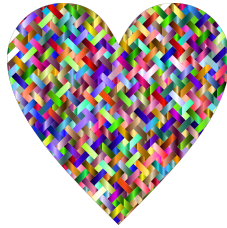
- As an introvert, everything is sorted in my head and I think I have communicated clearly but feedback tells me that I haven't!
- I have a limited vocabulary of emotional intelligence. I feel good, bad or ugly – which means I have blind spots in terms of labelling my personal expression of emotion and understanding the emotions of others.
- I am generally over optimistic in terms of what I believe I can squeeze into a week sometimes with negative results.
- Sometimes I am not aware of how stressed I am and it often takes someone else to point out that I need to take a break or slow down. (something that I don't really like doing!)

So here are four dimensions that make up who we are – strengths, weaknesses, limitations and blind spots. The more we grow in understanding of these dimensions, the greater will be our ability to work effectively in team. The more aware we are of these four areas, the more we can maximise strengths, choose jobs that are fulfilling, staff our weaknesses, live with less stress, and generally be a better leader.



## Uniquely Woven

by Jay Bransford



*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made."*

*Psalm 139:13-14a*

In the first verse of Psalm 139 David declares an important truth to God, "You know me." He goes on in the chapter to explain how God knows every single thing there is to know about David. Amongst other things, God knows every strength and every weakness of David. And He knows those same details about you and me. God knows exactly who we are and what He put us on this earth for. We were each uniquely woven together by God to perfectly fulfill His purposes for us. And His purposes are GOOD!!

So how do we better understand how God uniquely created us? Figuratively speaking, what kinds of materials did God make us out of? What colors did he use? What pattern

does our fabric have? What imperfections does it have? What does it smell and feel like? And perhaps most importantly, what is our fabric intended to be used for?

You are like an amazingly beautiful and priceless fabric in the eyes of God. So the ideal place to start in understanding yourself is to ask God to describe you from His point of view. He knows best! And He is happy to talk to you about it.

Consider the following:

- What are some core biblical truths you have learned that help define how God thinks of you and your value?
- What specific words or bible verses has God spoken to you over the years that you know are especially for you? How do those verses help describe you?
- What prophecies have been spoken over you? What do they tell you about yourself?

That's a great start! But how can you go even deeper in understanding yourself? The good news is that God has provided many ways for us to learn about ourselves. We are complex creatures and there's much to learn. Although this is by no means an exhaustive list, below are some additional ways to gain a greater level of understanding of who you are. Note that some of the items below provide a website link to help you answer the question. But first, get out a piece of paper and a pen, or open up a new blank document on your computer, and enjoy discovering more about yourself!

- What are your likes and dislikes?
- What are your strengths? What have people complemented you for?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What are you passionate about and energizes you just to think about?
- What kinds of things quickly zap your energy and motivation?
- How do you like to be loved and appreciated? (i.e. Love Languages: quality time, words of encouragement, physical touch, receiving gifts, acts of service)
- What kind of personality do you have? (i.e. Myers-Briggs/Jung or DISC)
- What are your spiritual gifts?
- Think of your last 3 jobs/roles in life and write down what you most liked about them.
- Think of your 3 favorite classes in school and write down what you most liked about them.
- Think of the hardest time in your life and write down what you learned about yourself through it.
- Think of the happiest time in your life and write down what made you so happy.
- Think of the proudest you have ever felt in your life and write down what made you feel so proud.

If you quickly read through all of those questions and moved on without answering them, now is the time to stop and think through your answers. Discovering yourself is an ongoing, never-ending process that requires your time and thought. Self-reflection is one of the keys to understanding yourself. So if you really want to better understand yourself, you need to be willing to commit to some serious time to pray, think and reflect.

### **Once you've finished reflecting, it is time to dream...**

- What is God speaking to you through all of this?
- How does this begin to tell a story about you, your value, who you are, and what you were uniquely designed for?
- What are the 3 biggest dreams on your heart right now?
- Assuming there were no obstacles in your way, what would you most like to be doing with your life?
- How can you start moving in that direction?

Remember that understanding yourself is a life-long process. Periodically set aside time to reflect on what God has been speaking to you, on your life circumstances, and on questions like those listed above. As you do so, I guarantee you will gain a clearer understanding of yourself, how God sees you, and ultimately God's purposes for your life. You are truly an amazing work of art in progress, personally and perfectly woven together by God.

## Understanding Yourself – Real Stories from the Field by Various YWAM Elders



Often hearing examples and stories from other people's lives can help us gain clarity in our own lives and even give us ideas of how we can move forward in areas where we may feel stuck. To that end, we recently interviewed several of our ALLC Elders and asked them two main questions:

- How would you describe yourself?
- How have you come to that understanding of yourself?

Enjoy reading below the stories and explanations from these Elders as they give us some examples of how they gained a clearer understanding of themselves. We hope and pray that this both encourages you and gives you some helpful insights about how to go about continuing to better understand yourself, as well.

### **Garth Gustafson**

**Role:** Leader of YWAM Battambang, Cambodia - UofN Campus, ALLC Elder

### **How would you describe yourself?**

- I describe myself as someone who was simply willing to say 'yes' to the call of Jesus and his heart for a nation and a people. I understand that God has a unique call on my life and the key is simply to listen and obey. When we do that God will lead us into purposes that are bigger than us because they are God's purposes coming from His heart.

### **How have you come to that understanding of yourself?**

- One of the most important understandings that has helped me understand my purpose is that I have a clear understanding that my life is not my own, that I was bought for a price by Christ and so I no longer live for me and my purposes but rather for the purpose of Christ and for the sake of the Gospel. In this place of surrender I have found that God releases us to use our gifts to build His kingdom.

### **Phil Porter**

**Role:** National Leader/Convenor of YWAM Thailand and ALLC Elder

### **How would you describe yourself?**

- A leader who is called to facilitate others to reach their destiny in Christ; to see the big picture and God's

strategies for involving people and ministries in His bigger plan; and to be a worshipper in the battles.

### **How have you come to that understanding of yourself?**

- Growing in self-awareness - through personality and gifts assessments and leadership training
- Reading - about leadership; about God's purposes, etc.
- Receiving coaching
- Spending time around other leaders - for observation, affirmation, expansion of my perspective
- Affirmation through others of my calling and giftings

## **Harold Viana**

**Role:** Leader of YWAM Hong Kong Base and ALLC Elder

### **How would you describe yourself?**

- I describe myself, first and foremost, as a son of God. This has to underline everything else that I am and do. I am a prophet to the nations. I give people an accurate picture of who God really is by how I teach and by how I live my life. I am a leader. Not a Master Yoda type of leader who knows everything, but rather a leader who walks alongside.

### **How have you come to that understanding of yourself?**

- When I was 21 years old God gave me my life Scripture in Isaiah 42. That day I understood some key

elements of who God had created me to be. As I continue to mature and to walk in obedience to God's guidance I see how the way I am wired fits completely with what I am supposed to do. First "be" then "do."

- I have been greatly influenced to become who I am by my:
  - Environments and upbringing (lived in several distinct cultures for more than half of my life, grew up in a Christian home, parents were never divorced, disciplined in a "traditional" Presbyterian church, started working at the age of 12, always loved to travel)
  - Understanding of God
  - Understanding of my giftings
  - Understanding of my successes
  - Understanding of my failures
  - Input about who I am, both the type and how consist I receive that input
  - I am now in my mid-forties and that means that I have already gone through 2 major phases of my life, which are, my forming years (0 to 18 yrs old) and my early years in ministry (19 to 40 yrs old). Maturity takes time!

**Mel Tay:**

**Role:** ALLC Elder, ALLC Core Team Member, SOFM Leader



**How would you describe yourself?**

- A child of God who wants to love Him more and more each day and do whatever that is in His heart, to bring a smile to His face.

**How have you come to that understanding of yourself?**

- Observing Creation: Seeing and understanding His purpose of creation - to share His life, fellowship in the Trinity with us.
- Bible Study: Seeing His working throughout the whole Bible and history - to seek out His children/creation and bring them home to the purpose of His creation.
- Learning from Jesus' Example: The life and work of Jesus during His time on earth – focuses on being one with the Father, doing His will and bringing glory to Him.

**Paul Wilcox:**

**Role:** ALLC Elder, Leadership Teacher, and Previous Regional Leader in Thailand

**How would you describe yourself?**

God has called me to be a man of God who lives out of his spirit in the power of the Holy Spirit and empower others to do the same.

**How have you come to that understanding of yourself?**

- The prophetic words of people who either didn't know me or knew me very little that consistently supported what the others were saying.
- Discovering the life changing process of knowing how God has created me and his handprint on my life through Refocusing Leaders (a training course).
- Understanding the unique giftings He has given me & how he constantly uses them through my life.
- Loving & accepting myself in how God has created me to be & how He wants me to live and stop trying to be someone I'm not.

## **Tom Hallas:**

**Role:** Convenor for YWAM Asia and the Pacific, ALLC Elder

### **How would you describe yourself and how have you come to that understanding?**

1. I have observed and felt motivated to know and speak the truth from my childhood;
2. Others have seen and declared these to be true;
3. The Scriptures have been applied to my heart by the Spirit;
4. And, I feel very comfortable in my skin when the Spirit of God is informing, empowering and leading me to give insight, discover the nature of foundations, and bring life, love and liberty in to lives, relationships, situations and circumstances.

Here is some background behind those 4 points:

I think one becomes gradually aware of what they may intuit from an early age but may not have the vocabulary to either analyse or articulate for self or interested others.

I remember at around age 6 years, having some abstract thought come to mind while looking at the stars:

1. What is beyond beyond beyond?
2. What was before before before?
3. What will be after after after?

These are the life questions in a six-year-old's brain while looking at the stars .... Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? And, where am I going?

An observation and comment by a next door neighbour, also lodged within my spirit and has continued to inform me in relation to questions about myself... when walking into his yard, my very old neighbour greeted me with, "Here come the little philosopher!" That was not a description of self-awareness at the time as I could not have been more than 8 years' old.

Stepping forward some years' on from the teaching on motivational gifts, I identified an internal response to the

description of the prophetic type of a person. During a conference in 1979, where Loren Cunningham was the YWAM speaker and I was about to be launched into what Robert C. Clinton calls, 'the 3rd stage of developing a leader (ministry maturing),' Loren declared to a crowd of 15,000 people in Sydney, Australia, that "there is a young prophet among you – his name is Tom Hallas." I had just written an article on 'The Wounded Spirit of Australia,' which was published in a national magazine and became the theme of the annual Charismatic Conference where Loren was a speaker. On looking back with a self-analysis lens, I did have an internal resonance to that declaration. I already had listed in the front of my Bible a list of words that I was convinced were a one-word introduction to prophetic words to speak into the heart needs of Australia and had thus structured the DTS curriculum (in Australia) to be a vehicle of service to those needs.

As I began to travel to different countries, I became aware when entering a city or town, of asking the question, "What brought this place into existence?" and wondering what were the relational and moral foundations of its beginning. This was, and still is, a process that continues as I travel to any Continent, Nation, city, town or village. Jeremiah 1:5 certainly came to my attention early in my journey, but the experience of having another declare what they saw about me certainly brought an accepting effect into my way of thinking about myself. Particularly, if I

had a personal witness to the statement.

More recently, during an annual conference with the major leaders in YWAM, the convenor of a Discover Yourself session using Strength Finders as a tool, identified a number of strengths that she had observed in me during a time of questioning: contact – connections – belief – input – responsible – relater, then she said that this is consistent with people who have prophetic motivations.

A guiding word for me as to how to operate and give governance to a motivational strength or ministry gift has come from 1 Cor 14:3, particularly when asked what do I think? Or, what is God saying? about a particular situation or circumstance.

A life, a word, a comment, or insight, an appeal or correction, should be bathed in these three prophetic intentions: to exhort, to edify and to comfort.

# Decision Making

# Should I Stay or Should I Go? - Making Yes or No Decisions -

by Jay Bransford



If you're from my generation and culture, you may have read the title of this article and suddenly found yourself singing an old tune. For the rest of you, you may have immediately found yourself thinking about a difficult 'yes' or 'no' life decision you've had to make or that you are currently facing. My apologies to all you fans of "The Clash", but this article focuses on the latter. 😊

- Should I move to Nepal?
- Should I take a School of Biblical Studies?
- Should I say 'yes' to an offer to join an exciting new ministry?
- Should I staff the next DTS?
- Should I start a BAM business to be self-supporting?

What do all of these questions have in common? Yes, they all have the word “Should” in them. In addition, they are all closed ended questions with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.

If you’re like 99% of the rest of us, you’ve probably asked yourself questions very similar to these in the past. They often represent BIG decisions that can change the course of our lives. It’s these kinds of big decisions that we want to make sure we get right. Do you agree?

So how do you go about making a decision about an important ‘yes or no’ question like these? Here are 3 suggestions...

### **Question the Urgency**

Start by asking yourself how urgent it really is to make a final decision. Often times an external deadline or self-imposed deadline is staring us in the eyes, and seems to be screaming for a quick answer. For example:

- The DTS in Bangkok starts in 2 months and I have to tell the leader if I will staff the school by next Friday.
- The application for the School of Biblical Studies I’m considering attending is due in 1 week. I have to decide today if I’m going to attend it or not.
- There is a ministry opportunity I’ve been offered to join in Nepal and I want to decide if I will join it by the end of this month.



- By the end of this year I need to tell my supporters if I'm going to become self-supported through a BAM ministry or not.

You may have noticed that some of those situations involved a self-imposed deadline, while others related to a deadline given from someone else. But whether the deadline comes from you or from another person, it is helpful to remember that you don't have to make a life-changing decision just because there is a deadline involved. It is OK to pass on an opportunity because you're not ready to make a final decision. Making a decision out of haste or due to the pressure of a deadline may not give you the time you need to make a good, well-reasoned, and well-prayed-out decision. If at any time you face a decision where you don't feel you have sufficient time allowed to be at peace with the process you used to make your decision, then give yourself permission to wait, to ask for more time, or to totally pass on the opportunity. Don't let time urgency be your decision maker. Your decision should be between you and God – not between you and a time clock. The same goes for those of you who can't make a final decision UNTIL someone gives you a deadline.

## **Widen the Net**

Whenever possible, try to avoid 'yes or no' decisions altogether. What do I mean by that? A 'yes or no' decision generally means that we are only considering one possible

option. We're trying to decide if we should choose that option or not. So what's the problem with only considering one option? Answer: it gives you virtually nothing to compare to. You're not giving yourself any other options to evaluate against. Often times when we only give ourselves one option, we back ourselves into a corner with the decision. We will often choose that option, even if we shouldn't, because there's no better option to choose. For example, remember that decision about whether to staff a DTS in Bangkok? Well, why don't I consider staffing any other DTSS? In any given month, there are many, many DTSSs starting all over the world – even possibly in other parts of Thailand. What if one of those DTSSs could serve my needs and goals better? If I only consider one option, my choices are so limited that if I really feel strongly about staffing a DTS, I'm likely to say 'yes' to the one and only choice I give myself.

What is the solution? Widen the net. That means you need to identify more options to select from.

- How many other DTSSs could you consider?
- What other SBSs could you consider?
- What other countries could you consider moving to?
- What other methods of supporting yourself in missions could you consider?

As you widen the net of options, you will find it will be easier to see which of those options best fulfills your needs and wants. And you won't feel trapped in a corner, feeling that

you only have one possible choice or face doing nothing at all. That's an unfair position to put yourself in. Widen the net of options to consider.

### **Remember the Status Quo**

Hopefully by now you have identified more than one option to choose from and thus you are no longer facing a 'yes or no' decision. Perhaps you have 2, 3, 4 or more alternatives you are considering. Guess what? Choosing none of your options is always one of your possible options! Are you currently working with a ministry? Well, you might be able to keep doing that. Are you in-between ministries and have nothing to do? Well, you can keep doing nothing for a period of time! Are you back in your home country trying to figure out life? Well, you can take more time to figure it out. You don't have to staff any of the DTSs you identified. You don't have to attend any of the SBSs you found on the YWAM.org website. You don't have to move to any of your possible choices of Nepal, China, India, or Mongolia. And you don't have to join any of the ministries you're currently considering. You can choose to keep doing what you're doing now or to even do nothing for a time while you consider more options. One of the biggest pressures we put on ourselves sometimes is that pressure of HAVING to choose amongst our current options. Sometimes God wants us to wait on our decision. If you aren't comfortable with any of your current options, that might be a sign to wait for God's better 'yes' around the corner.

# 6 Common Mistakes When Making Decisions

by Jay Bransford



If you're like me, you've made more than a few mistakes in life. When you think about it, most of the mistakes we make in life are a result of using a poor decision making process. We don't make poor decision intentionally, of course. But there a number of mistakes that we all tend to make and this article focuses on six of the most common.

To make things more fun, let me share with you a poor decision I made about 20 years ago, and compare my mistakes to the 6 most common mistakes of decision making. Here's what happened...

It was a Saturday, and I had just finished working yet another tiring 60+ hour week. I was a 25-year-old single guy working as a management consultant, living out of hotels in various cities, and jumping from plane to plane each week. For some reason on this particular Saturday, I felt like driving a convertible. So on a whim, I called up my best friend and

suggested that he join me in test driving a brand new, beautiful 2-seater convertible at a local dealership. My only goal for the day was to have fun driving a cool car.

The dealership was more than happy to let me test drive their convertible. However, since it was a 2-seater, my friend couldn't join me on the drive. It was just me and the salesman. I had a blast driving that car around! The sun was shining and the wind was blowing through my hair (yes, I used to have some). And then the most unexpected thing happened. I turned the stereo on. The word 'amazing' doesn't do justice in describing the sound that came out of those speakers as I drove down the road. The car had Bose speakers built into the headrests of the seats, right at your ears. As I sped up and slowed down, the volume automatically increased and decreased. (It was impressive new technology back then.) As a young person who loved listening to music (can I hear an 'amen' from the rest of you young YWAMers?), I was mesmerized by the driving and listening experience. By the time I drove that convertible back into the parking lot of the car dealership, I had told the salesperson that I would buy the car. The decision was made!

Now, please humor me for a moment, because I don't want to focus on whether the decision I made was the 'right' decision or not. Instead, I want to focus on the process I used to make the decision and what mistakes I made.

Sometimes in life we use a terrible decision making process but still end up making a good choice. So it is important not to get those two things confused. It is possible to luck out and make a good choice despite the fact that you used a horrible process.

In no particular order, here are 6 common mistakes we are all occasionally guilty of when making decisions, and how those mistakes played out in my story above:

## **1. Moving Too Fast**

It's quite clear in my story that I made a very fast decision. I didn't go to that dealership to buy a car. There wasn't even supposed to be a decision to make. But all of the sudden, the salesperson asked me if I wanted to buy it, and I answered 'yes' right away!

*"The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty." - Proverbs 21:5*

Rushed decisions are often some of the worst decisions we make in life. Sometimes we feel pressured to make a decision, sometimes we just don't have the patience to analyze the decision further, and sometimes we simply don't see the need to think the decision through in more detail. So we jump in and make a quick decision. Here is

something we all need to remind ourselves of... rarely do we really have to make a split-second decision in life. It is almost always better to take more time to think through a decision and its implications before making your final choice. Slow down!!!!

## **2. Proving Your Favorite Choice**

As soon as I experienced the exhilaration of driving that sporty convertible down the road with my favorite tunes blasting in my ears, I was sure that little car was the best and only car for me. In that moment, you could have given me a list of other cars to consider, but I wouldn't have really given any of them a moment of thought. I was already sold. I would have quickly made a list for you of every reason why a different car wasn't perfect for me, and just as quickly I would have listed for you every reason why that convertible was faultless. I wasn't thinking rationally. I just wanted what I wanted and I would make sure that my logical argument proved it.

That is often the mistake we all make when we go into a decision with a pre-conceived idea of what we think the best choice is. Instead of being open to the pros and cons of other options, we spend all of our time and energy defending our choice and proving how it is best. Guess what? When you go into a decision with the mindset to prove your choice is best, you are not really engaging in

the decision making process. Instead, you have already made your choice and you just want others to agree with you. So before you start a decision making process, ask yourself if you may already be biased toward a particular choice. If so, challenge yourself to truly be open to considering any and all options.

### 3. Lack of Input

Whose input did I get before making the decision to buy that convertible? No one besides a slightly biased salesman!! My friend was sitting there in the parking lot and I didn't even ask his opinion. Admittedly, it was my decision to make and not his or anyone else's. So why would I bother getting input from another source? Well, there's a very good chance that I wasn't being totally rational with my decision. I didn't have all the facts needed about the car. And I didn't consider any reviews about the car, just to name a few obvious reasons.

*"Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety." - Proverbs 11:14*

It is easy to make the mistake of being overconfident. We think we know best. We think we have superior understanding of the situation. And we're just sure that there is no additional information or perspectives out



there that are relevant to this decision beyond what we have already considered. The solution? Humble ourselves. Remember that two heads are better than one, which means that getting numerous perspectives is probably even better yet. Ask people for their input, questions, ideas and perspectives. Do some research. And even consider asking people who seem to have little to do with the decision, because sometimes getting input from a person who is totally uninvolved or even uninformed can provide just the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that you need.

#### **4. Disregarding Your Team's Thoughts and Feelings**

In my example, I didn't ask anyone, including my good friend, about their thoughts or feelings about my decision to buy a new car. However, just a few weeks prior to that the senior partner in my consulting firm had actually suggested for me to consider buying a new car. And he specifically challenged me to get a car that I would be proud to drive my clients around in. So you might be thinking, "Who in the world wouldn't love being driven around in a convertible?" I totally concur. But evidently there are actually people out there who hate getting their hair blown around and messy. My apologies if that describes you! 😊 More importantly, though, what I didn't consider was how I would transport more than one

client at a time. Oops! Now that was a real problem that I didn't consider.

Often times the decisions we make in life and ministry have impacts on others. Not only do we need to ask those people for their input (see Mistake #3), but we need to actually consider their thoughts and feelings when making our final decision. Just because you don't care if your hair gets messy in the wind, doesn't mean that people who do care about that are wrong or are idiots. Decisions usually involve trying to accomplish multiple objectives and priorities. Be careful not to disregard other people's objectives nor minimize the priority they put on those objectives. You might not agree with their priorities, but demonstrating understanding and concern for them will go a long way in getting support and commitment for the final decision.

## 5. Ignoring Risks

"What are the risks of owning a convertible?" you might ask. Ah.... It's so much easier to see when we have the privilege of hindsight. At the time I bought my convertible I can honestly say that I didn't consider a single risk or problem that I might encounter. Here are a just a few of the many risks I wish I had considered up front:

- The cost of insurance
- How likely you are to survive an accident
- How dangerous this convertible is to drive in the snow
- How to transport more than a few grocery bags
- How fast it would encourage me to drive (sorry, mom!)

Forgetting to consider the risks of your top choice(s) is a common mistake. In the following bible verse, take a look at what decision Moses made in response to seeing a fellow Israelite being mistreated.

*“He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.” - Acts 7:24-25*

What were the consequences of Moses not first considering all the possible risks of his decision?

Even if your top choice seems to perfectly meet every one of your objectives and criteria, failing to consider the risks could lead to disastrous, unexpected consequences. Always make sure to take a hard look at the potential downsides or risks of the top choices you are considering. Doing so can often make a big shift in your final decision.

## 6. Leaving out God

I wish I could say that I had a quick conversation with God while I was enjoying my test drive of that convertible and that God had said, “Go for it!”. But I’m pretty sure it never even crossed my mind to ask God what He thought. I was sure of myself.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” - Proverbs 3:5-6*

I must admit that leaving out God is probably the mistake that I make the most often. As you might guess, I enjoy analyzing decisions and thinking them through very thoroughly. My patient wife has endured countless long discussions with me about decisions we’ve made as a couple. I enjoy using a good decision making process and it makes me feel confident in the final decision. However, it is essential that we never misplace our trust. While it is important to get input from others, keep from rushing, and follow a thorough and rational decision making process, we must remember that God is our ultimate source of knowledge, wisdom and direction. He must never be left out of the decision making process. And He should never be considered less important than the

process we use. When God speaks, we listen. And when He gives us instruction or direction, we should follow, no matter what our best decision making process or risk analysis tells us. Just make sure that you are seeking God together as a decision making group. He is more than capable of speaking to each person involved.

**Challenge:** Which of these mistakes can you relate to the most? And what can you do to avoid them?

# The Essentials of Decision Making

by Jay Bransford



We all make countless decisions every single day. Most of those decisions require little thought or attention, because we've made similar decisions in the past. But how comfortable are you in making bigger decisions, team decisions, and/or family decisions? Decision making is about how you go about choosing the best option or course of action in a given situation AND about how well you develop buy-in and commitment to that decision along the way. What is your track record of success? Can you explain what approach you take for making decisions?

There are numerous methods and processes out there for making a good decision. Today I want to focus on five key essentials for any strong decision making process. Here they are:

- Defining the Decision
- Identifying Objectives
- Evaluating Alternatives

- Assessing Risk
- Making a Final Decision

First things first... make sure you get people who are effected by this decision involved in the decision making process. You need both their input and their buy-in and commitment. Without their involvement in the process, the likelihood of the final decision achieving the results you envision is much lower.

### **Defining the Decision**

How you define a decision can make a huge difference in identifying what options you consider. Let's start with a simple example. Imagine that I describe my decision as follows:

*"Choose a van to buy for my ministry."*

It is likely that you would immediately start to envision all the possible kinds of vans in the world, including big, small, old and new ones. You would quickly get an idea of what options to consider choosing among. But what if I changed my decision statement to this:

*"Choose a vehicle to buy for my ministry."*

How would this decision statement affect the options you consider? Obviously, you would not only think of vans, but

you might also think of buses or trucks or station wagons, etc. Now what if my decision statement was this:

*“Choose the best way to transport the people involved with our ministry.”*

Now your list of options would be opened up even further, right? You might think about using public transportation, hiring a van and driver, or even using bicycles. The way you define your decision has a big impact on what kinds of options you consider. Sometimes it makes the most sense to define your decision very specifically, like in our first example above. But at other times it is more helpful to broaden your decision statement. Make sure you are conscious of the way you describe your decision statement and that it describes the boundaries you really need and want to set for the decision.

## **Identifying Objectives**

What is it that you really are wanting to achieve by making this decision? Often times people focus in on just one main objective when making a final decision, but in reality there are usually a number of factors that need to be considered. Let’s look at our decision statement above to “Choose a van to buy for our ministry.” Here are some of the possible objectives or outcomes that might be important when making this decision:



- Cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000 USD
- Can carry at least 12 people
- Automatic transmission
- Fuel costs are as low as possible
- Reliable
- Cheap and easy to maintain

It is important to list out all of the objectives of the decision. If you don't, you may find that some of the objectives will get forgotten or overlooked. For example, it is easy to get so excited about a van that only costs \$8,000 that you forget to even consider whether it is reliable and easy to maintain. It can also be helpful to look at the relative importance of each of your objectives. Often there will be one or two objectives that are much more important than the others, and you want to make sure you take that into consideration.

## **Evaluating Alternatives**

One of the most common mistakes people make in decision making is to make their list of choices too narrow. Sometimes people only consider one option and the decision becomes a 'yes or no' choice. See the article called "Should I Stay or Should I Go?". It is important to consider as many valid choices as possible. Don't take the easy road of only considering the first option that comes your way. Keep searching for other options to compare against. As you begin to list more choices, you may even find that you can

begin to combine some of the choices into a new and even better option.

As you create your list of choices, you can begin to evaluate each option against the objectives you identified. And once you've evaluated how well each option achieves your stated objectives, you can then compare the choices to see which one seems to best meet your overall needs. It helps to write all of this down, even in a spreadsheet. That way you can visually see how well each choice lives up to your objectives and how the various choices compare to one another. In case you're thinking, "That sounds like it would take too long," think again. The few minutes it will take you to write this information down is NOTHING in comparison to the long-term value you'll get from making a better decision.

Example of choosing a van:

Objectives/Wants	Relative Importance	Choice A	Choice B	Choice C
Low Cost	8	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000
Carry 12 People	10	10	12	13
Automatic Transmission	6	Yes	No	Yes
Cheap Fuel	3	20mpg	25mpg	30mpg
Reliable	8	15 yrs old	10 yrs old	8 yrs old
Cheap to Maintain	6	Yes	Yes	Yes

## **Assessing Risk**

Do you feel like you're ready to make a decision now? Wait! First make sure that you thought about risks. Start with the option that seems to look like the best choice. What are the dangers, downsides, and/or risks of this option? Be honest. Virtually every option should have its own unique downsides or risks. Then, simply ask yourself if you are willing to accept those negative things and/or if there is something you could do to minimize them. If after considering the risks you still feel comfortable with your first choice, then keep moving forward with it. But if you're not so sure, then look at the risks of your second ranked choice and then see how it compares to the first. Are we done yet? Not quite...

## **Making a Final Decision**

Now before you go ahead and make that final decision, take one more opportunity to pause. Who have you gotten involved with the decision making process? Have all the stakeholders had a chance to give input? Have you considered the input of any experts or outside resources? Is your team (or spouse) in agreement with the final choice you're considering? What is God saying? Above all else, make sure that you and the rest of the decision makers feel a peace about the final decision. Don't let your process make the final decision for you. If you use a ranking system for your objectives, score your choices, and add up a total score for each option, don't feel like the final score is what makes the decision for you. You and your decision making

team are the ones who get to make the final decision, with God's input and direction. Consider your overall analysis, including the input and feelings of your team, the risks, and whatever you feel God may be saying, and then make a final decision.

**APPLICATION CHALLENGE:** If you really want to improve your decision making, apply these principles to the very next decision you make – no matter how big or small it is. Once you use these principles enough times, they will become a habit and the quality of your decision making will most certainly improve.

## **Describing a Learning Community**

by Sim S – ALLC Elder and Co-Founder

To me, the expression ‘learning community’ that the ALLC is using is an expression of our desire to generate intentionality to develop one’s leadership character, ministry skills and capacity, and connectedness among our leaders. The ALLC utilizes both formal and informal approaches to learning.

The formal approaches include specific training times and events (such as what we are doing with the DNA Seminar, the annual Asia Leadership Summit, leadership training schools/courses, and various leadership workshops) that the ALLC coordinates and/or promotes.

We also know that development is more than just training programs – that learning in leadership is more than just top down teaching. It’s also about applying what we learn, learning through doing, and learning from one another in everyday life. Much learning comes through being with and watching our leaders – how they live and how they serve. This is informal learning. Most of us cannot live where our emerging leaders are living, and they cannot live where we are. We can however plan to visit them, and/or for them to spend a time with us in specific training. Here,

the ‘teacher’ elders, and staff of the training would be able to spend deliberate time (hanging out) with ‘students.’ So the opportunities for them to watch us and be with us is present.

We hope that over time, through a myriad of training opportunities, and intimate times with other emerging leaders and elders together, that interpersonal friendships among our leaders (elders, current and emerging leaders) will grow, and communities of learning leaders will develop throughout Asia & the Pacific.

Larger waves of Asian Christians are coming... are we ready? We must raise up the next generation of leaders!

ALLC stands for the Asia Leaders Learning Community. As the name implies, the ALLC exists to see leaders in Asia growing, thriving and multiplying as they serve together as a community of learners.

Join the ALLC community today! Everyone is encouraged to be a part of the ALLC – both as a learner and as a collaborator willing to serve and develop future leaders. Let's multiply ourselves, our ministries and the Kingdom!

Register to receive updates at:

[www.allc.asia](http://www.allc.asia)

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**Asia Leaders Learning Community**