WHY SOME PEOPLE
GET RESULTS AND
OTHERS DON'T

BOUNDARIES
FOR
LEADERS

RESULTS, RELATIONSHIPS,
AND BEING RIDICULOUSLY IN CHARGE

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BOUNDARIES FOR LEADERS
By Henry Cloud

Preface:

Leaders lead *people*, and it is the people who get it all done. And to get it done, they have to be led in a way that they can actually perform, and use all their horsepower. Said another way, *their brains need to work.* You can cast a great vision, get the right talent, and yet be leading in ways that people's brains literally cannot follow, or sometimes even make work, much less their hearts.

What I have come to believe is this: while leadership as a discipline is very, very important, the personal and interpersonal sides of leadership are every bit as important as the great leadership themes of vision, execution, strategy, and the like.

Leaders can motivate or demotivate their people…They can create a culture that augments high performance, accountability, results, and thriving, or cause a culture to exist in which people become less than who they are or could be.

There are several aspects of a leader's behavior that make everything work, and one of those is his or her "boundaries." A boundary is a structure that determines what will exist and what will not…The leaders determine what will exist and what will not.

That is what this book is about. You will learn how seven leadership boundaries make everything work and how they set the stage, tone, and climate for people's brains to perform. You will learn how to set boundaries that:
1. Help people's brains work better (Chapter 3)
2. Build the emotional climate that fuels performance (Chapter 4)
3. Facilitate connections that boost people's functioning (Chapter 5)
4. Facilitate thinking patterns that drive results (Chapter 6)
5. Focus on what behaviors shape results (Chapter 7)
6. Build high performance teams that achieve desired results (Chapters 8-9)
7. Help you lead yourself in a manner that drives and protects the vision (Chapter 10) (pgs. xiii-xvi).

> Action Item: This discussion summary is provided as a tool to help pastors and church leaders to process the ideas included in the book. I would encourage you to take time to read the book, because it is full of excellent illustrations that are too extensive to include in this summary. Dr. Henry Cloud is an excellent Christian Psychologist whose insights have tremendous application in day-to-day church life.

Chapter 1: The People Are the Plan

A. Cloud's quotes the CEO of a $20 billion company who asked, "You know what is weird?" Cloud's answered with a question: "What?" To which the CEO replied, "Everybody out there

is always trying to figure out the right *plan.* They meet, they argue, they worry and they put all of their energy into trying to come up with the 'right' plan. But the truth is that there are *five* right plans. There are a *lot* of ways to get there. *The real problem is getting the people to do what it takes to make the plan work"* (pg. 1).

> Q: To what extent would you agree with the CEO that there are many ways to accomplish a company's or a church's set of goals?

> Q: From your leadership experience, how do you respond to the CEO's statement that, "*The real problem is getting the people to do what it takes to make the plan work."*

B. As I meet with leaders and their companies, I find that more often than not, they have smart plans. They know their business, or they would not be where they are. They are strategic, talented, gifted, and experienced. Their "business" expertise got them to where they are, but as they rise to more significant positions of leadership, they need other skills in addition to what their business smarts can provide. They need to be able to lead people to get results…It is about leading the "right people," empowering them to find and to do the "right things" in the "right ways" at the "right times." That is what will bring a plan to real results (pgs. 2-3).

> Q: As you look at your leadership gift set, do you struggle more with knowing what to do or knowing how to get it done? Why?

> Q: On a scale of one to ten with ten being the best, how effective are you at leading people to get results? Why?

C. Henry shares a real life situation in which a very gifted leader had gotten into a situation where he was not effectively leading a company that he started from scratch. It had outgrown his ability to lead people. The company's board of directors hired Henry to serve as a consultant and by using the principles expounded in this book the CEO (Chris) improved his skill set and the company moved forward. Henry uses the illustration to state, "The good news is that the issues Chris and his team faced—the issues that many of you face in your own organizations—are fixable. **When leaders lead in ways that people's brains can follow, good results follow as well** (pgs. 10-11).

> Q: As you look at the "people issues" that you are confronting, can you state with the boldness that Cloud does, "the issues…are fixable?" Why or why not?

Chapter 2: Ridiculously in Charge

A. Henry shares another real life experience of consulting with another CEO. As they were visiting, the CEO was complaining about people issues he faced. Henry asked, "And why is that?" The CEO's response was "What do you mean? I think it is the reasons I just said."

Cloud responded with a question, "I know the reasons you said, but why do those reasons exist?" To which the CEO said, "I don't get it…What do you mean?" Henry answered a

question with a question, "Who is the leader? Who is in charge of the culture? Who is in charge of the ways that it is working, the fact that all of that exists?"

The CEO just looked at him and said, "I am." And then Cloud asked another question, "So what kind of culture would you like? What kind of culture would drive the business forward if you had it?"

As the CEO began to reflect and responded to Henry's question, he described a company culture that was positive, highly energetic, accountable, innovative, and performance oriented. He came alive when he talked about it. And at the right time, there came another question from Henry, "So why don't you build that kind of culture?"

For a nanosecond it seemed that the CEO was going to reflexively blurt out a reason why it could not happen, but then he paused and said something Henry said he will never forget: "You know, when you think about it…I am ridiculously in charge."

Henry wrote, "At that point, I knew he got it. He realized that he would have exactly the culture that he creates and would not have the one he did not allow to exist. Whatever culture he got, he was either building it or allowing it. He was 'ridiculously in charge,' that is, '*totally* in charge,' and at that moment, he owned it. It was his. It was truly up to him. As a leader, he was going to get what he built, or what he allowed" (pgs. 13-14).

Q: If you are reading this summary you are either a pastor or a lay leader in a local church. As such, you are ridiculously in charge of leading that church or a significant ministry within it. Describe the culture that exists. To what degree are you satisfied with it?

Q: If you are not happy with the existing culture, and you have been in the leadership position for at least a year, do you agree with the CEO and Henry Cloud that YOU have either created it or allowed it?

Action Item: List below the specific challenges that keep you from developing the culture you desire. What can you do to transform the current culture into the culture you want?

B. Cloud relates another consultation experience: "I was leading [a conference] for a health care company…and the director of HR asked a key question. 'So, how can you know if the problem is about the leader, or the follower?'

The HR director went on to talk about 'problem employees,' who don't perform or who are difficult. 'There is such a thing as a "follower" who isn't getting it, right?' He asked.

'Sure,' I said. 'But on *whose* watch? In *whose* culture? Who built the team that allows that? Who is over that employee that is a "problem." And who is over the employee that allows employees like that to be that way? And if that employee is confused about the strategy or direction, *who* is it that sets that strategy and direction for their team or the organization?'" (pg. 15)

Q: In a church setting, leaders work more with volunteers than employees. How do you think that could impact the answers to Henry's questions to the HR director?

Q: Does working with volunteers mean that we have to accept poor performance and negative attitudes? Why not?

Q: What difference would clear expectations in the enlistment process have as you work with volunteers?

Q: What difference would accountability and support have on volunteers who clearly understand what is expected of them?

C. Boundaries are made up of two essential things: *what you create and what you allow*…Leaders define the boundaries, and successful leaders define them well in several key areas:
1. The vision, the focus, the attention, and the activities that create forward movement are defined by leaders.
2. The emotional climate of the organization and its culture is created and sustained by leaders.
3. The unity and connectedness of the organization and the teams are built or fragmented by leaders.
4. The thinking and beliefs of the organization are sown and grown by leaders.
5. The amount and kinds of control and empowerment that people have are given and required by leaders.
6. The performance and development of their teams and direct reports are stewarded by leaders.
7. The leadership of oneself which entails establishing one's own boundaries and stewardship of the organization, is required by leaders (pgs. 14-16).

You may be beginning to lead something new, or you may be focusing on turning something around and making it better. A leader's clear boundaries are often what an organization is waiting for, and when it happens, it can create the most valuable company in the world. When a leader steps up and leads, and sets boundaries that provide clarity that cuts through the noise, it is a new day (pg. 19).

Q: As you reflect on the seven boundary areas above, which of them do you have clearly defined in your ministry setting?

Q: Which of the above boundary areas is currently missing and creating the most challenges for you in your ministry setting?

Action Item: Pick the boundary area that needs the most attention, and focus on it as you continue to work through the book.

D. As neuroscientists have shown in recent years, the very best leadership skills are rooted in how people think, in how our brains are constructed and how they operate. Our brains, as we'll begin to explore in the next chapter, are designed to work in specific ways, in specific conditions, with specific requirements. When those conditions are met, smart and talented people flourish. They win!…Sometimes the smartest and most talented leaders are very, very close to significant success, if they can get their 'people issues' sorted out (pg. 21-22).

Q: Describe a leader you know who is very talented and extremely smart, but whose people skills keep him from being successful. How is his effectiveness limited?

Q: You also know someone who is great with people, but who lacks experience or insight. How is his effectiveness limited?

Chapter 3: Leading So Brains Can Work

A. The reason that a leader's boundaries work is that they *actually make it possible for people's brains to function as they were designed.* Said another way, if you are trying to lead people and do not establish effective boundaries, your people will not be able to do what you need and want them to do because their brains can't work that way…Why is that? Just like a computer, the brain operates according to certain processes that are hardwired or encoded in the system. Ignore the operating instructions, and the brain flounders…if *leadership is operating in a way that makes any of those brain functions unable to perform, or creates a team or culture in which they cannot work, results will be weakened and the vision damaged...* So now, let's get specific. What are these brain processes that the leader's boundaries enable to work? Beginning in this chapter and in those that follow, we will take a look at several brain functions that are critical for high performance (pg. 25-26).

Q: When working with computers we have learned the "word" GIGO—garbage in, garbage out. What Cloud is telling us is that the same principle applies to leading people. For example, if you ask a novice to do the work of a veteran ministry leader, and you don't provide them with significant instructions and ongoing support through the process, you better not be upset when they don't do a good job. Think about a major leadership success and also a major leadership failure you have had in recent weeks. Compare and contrast them as it relates to the GIGO principle.

B. Whether driving a car or making and selling cars, the brain relies on three essential processes:
    Attention: the ability to focus on relevant stimuli, and block out what is not relevant—"Pay attention!"
    Inhibition: the ability to "not do" certain actions that could be distracting, irrelevant, or even destructive—"Don't do that!"

Working Memory: the ability to retain and access relevant information for reasoning, decision making, and taking future actions—"Remember and build on *relevant* information."

In other words, our brains need to be able to (a) focus on something specific, (b) not get off track by focusing on or being assaulted by other data inputs or toxicity, and (c) continuously be aware of relevant information at all times (pg. 27).

Q: We will learn that all three are important. Which of the three do you do best? Why?

Q: Which of the three do you need to improve the most? Why?

C. Focusing on the executive functions of "attending, inhibiting, and remembering" is about literally everything… For example, a lot of research has been done on the oft-admired "talent" called multitasking. Guess what? The research says that when we multitask, our brains run in a hampered state. Basically, multitasking reduces an astronaut's brain to that of a confused hamster (pg. 37).

Q: If "multitasking" actually makes us less effective, why do you think it has become so popular?

Action Item: For the next week, be extremely alert to the lure of multitasking and try as much as possible to focus on one major item at a time. At the end of the week, evaluate the difference in your overall effectiveness.

D. When those three processes of the brain are activated, results happen because they *enable the next level of the brain's executive capacities, which are the ones you really want to have activated in your organization.* It's the brain on steroids, so to speak. If executive functions of the brain are working well, and people are structured enough to focus, inhibit, and be conscious of what is important, they can execute the following list of behaviors, which actually are involved in producing results.

Goal Selection: They can choose goals based on priority, relevance, experience, and knowledge of current realities while also anticipating consequences and outcomes.

Planning and Organization: They can generate steps and sequence of linear behaviors that will get them there, knowing what will be needed along the way, including resources, and create a strategy to pull it off.

Initiation and Persistence: They can begin and maintain goal-directed behavior despite intrusions, distractions or changes in the demands of the task at hand.

Flexibility: They can exercise the ability to be adaptable, think strategically, and solve problems by creating solutions as things change around them, shifting attention and plans as needed.

Execution and Goal Attainment: They exhibit the ability to execute the plan within the limits of time and other constraints.

Self-regulation: They use self-observation to monitor performance, self-judgment to evaluate performance, and self-regulation to change in order to reach the goal (pgs. 38-39).

Q: Reflect on the positive impact that these six behaviors would have on your church or ministry area. Why wouldn't you want these behaviors to permeate your organization?

Q: What are you doing to cultivate these behaviors in your church/ministry?

Q: Also, are there things you are doing that hinder the development of these behaviors? Remember, you reap what you sow.

E. As we look further into the foundational role that leaders play in establishing boundaries, ask yourself these questions: [I would suggest spending a *significant* amount of time answering these critical question.]

For Yourself:
- What do I do now to make sure that I am attending to what is most important?
- Have I defined it?
- What do I do to inhibit myself from getting pulled into what is NOT important?
- How do I keep what is important in front of me all the time?
- How do I create a "current river" of information, initiatives, and steps that keep what is important moving?

For Your Team:
- What structures and processes do I have in place to make sure my team is attending to what is crucial?
- Do they know what that is and are they aligned on it?
- In what areas is the team not inhibiting what should be inhibited, and what am I doing to eliminate toxins or distraction?
- How do I make sure the team is creating a flow of working memory with what they are trying to drive forward?

For Your Direct Reports:
- If I interviewed my direct reports, would they be able to say that I help them to attend to the things that drive the results that we have agreed on?
- Do I help keep distractions, conflicting goals, or destructive elements from interfering with their attention?
- Do I enhance or inhibit their ability to stay current on the important working memory?

For the Vision and Strategy:
- Is my vision and strategy clear and communicated in a way that allows everyone in my organization to attend, inhibit, and move toward it?

- Do they know what it is?
- Do they know what it isn't?
- Can they take steps in the right direction?
- Do they know what activities belong to the vision and strategy and which do not?"
- Do they know how what they control directly contributes to the vision and strategy?

For the Church Culture:
- Am I proactively deciding what the key elements of my culture are going to be?
- Do those elements directly drive the attainment of the vision?
- Are there ways that I keep them front and center so that they are attended to?
- What elements am I determined will not exist in the culture and what is in place to inhibit those from occurring?
- What exists right now in the culture that either slows down or prevents the vision from happening? (pgs. 40-41)

F. In a section entitled *From Top-Down to Top-Notch* Cloud states that a "big-brain-top-down" focus type of leadership "has nothing to do with executive functions or boundary setting." He states, "Good boundaries, both those that help us manage ourselves and lead others, always produce freedom, not control." He continues, "People change their behavior and thinking not because they are 'told to be different' but when the conditions are present that require and empower them to figure out what to do and to act on a plan." He concludes by saying, "As a result, their brains will do what they are designed to do: create new ways of doing things, and totally new things to do" (pgs. 43-45).

Q: God created humanity with a purpose and then established boundaries for us. He also gave us considerable freedom within those constraints. Compare and contrast what God has done for us with what Cloud is suggesting for healthy organizations.

Q: God also created mankind in the image and likeness of Himself. One of those elements is that we are creative beings. Cloud suggests that in the right environment people's brains will do what they are designed to do: create new ways of doing things and totally new things to do. Has that been the reality in your leadership experience? Describe a time when you saw people's creative nature burst forth. If you've never seen it, let me ask why do you think that might be the case?

G. When leaders are leading in a way that helps their people and their organization attend to what needs attending to, inhibit what gets in the way or is destructive, and stay aware of what is relevant to the next step, the organization takes on a whole new identity. It becomes *powerful.* The power is felt in a number of ways.
1. The power of people being *engaged*—they are alive and focused.
2. The power is a force for *driving results.*
3. The power is felt in *constant adaptation and learning.*
4. The power is felt in the *growth of the people*—in churches where no one is driving attention, inhibition, and remembering, noncontributors can safely hide, drift along, and sometimes stay for years and add virtually nothing to the mission. They become a drag on the church.

5. The power is felt in the *forward motion* that is created.
6. The *customers and the market* feel the power. For those of us in the church it means that people can walk off the street and feel the difference in your culture. That's why in some churches visitors come back and in other churches they come once.

Q: As you review the six items above ask yourself are these true of my church? Which ones are, and which ones are not?

Action Item: Take time to envision what your church would look like if all six of them were true. Then think about the three areas of "executive function" mentioned in this chapter: attention, inhibition, working memory. How effectively are you implementing these three critical processes?

Chapter 4: The Emotional Climate That Makes Brains Perform

A. There are consequences of a leader making people feel crummy…The cold hard scientific facts are that your people think better when they are not stressed, afraid, or depressed. Yet many leaders do not put a lot of thought into creating a *positive emotional climate* for their people and sometimes they create the exact opposite. As a result of their leadership, they create stress, fear, and sometimes even depression…In the upper brain, higher cognitive capacities operate—such as logic, judgment, creativity, problem solving, advanced forms of thinking, working memory, planning prioritization, big-picture thinking, empathy, and so on. All of the good stuff that creates high performance—the things you want your people to do…In the lower brain, there is not a lot of what we call "thinking" going on. It is only about "fight or flight"…And when the options for "fight or flight" aren't available, it's as if a giant "freeze" button gets hit (pgs. 52-53).

Q: As you reflect on the emotional environment you have created in your church/ministry, how would you describe the stress level?

Action Item: The next time you meet with your leadership team, ask them to describe their personal stress level as it relates to life in general. Then ask specifically about their emotions and stress level as it relates to the ministry environment. Discuss the issue as a team and identify the types of stress that are present.

B. As research suggests, people don't leave jobs—they leave bosses…One very successful leader I know has put this research into a simple, powerful policy at his company: If any leader wakes up in a bad mood, he instructs them to "stay home. I don't want you bringing that into the office." As with flu, it's best not to infect the whole office with your bad mood (pgs. 56-57).

Q: If it is true that people don't leave jobs, they leave bosses, could it also be true that people don't leave churches, they leave pastors/leadership? Discuss your answer with your leadership team.

C. There are two human drives. One is connection and the other is aggression. Aggression here does not mean anger. It means initiative and energy, used in the service of goals. Everything we do is either relational or goal directed—or, ideally, both. Basically, we are "lovers and workers." We have relationships and we do things. We connect and we accomplish tasks. Care and drive. Be and do. Love and work. The love requires positive relational tone and the work requires drive, expectations, and discipline.

An integrated leader does both at the same time in a way where one affects the other…The problem in leadership is when we do *one without the other.* When we care about people but are not giving them the boundaries that lead to aggressive accomplishment—things like structure, goals, and measures of accountability—we fail them…But the opposite is also true. When leaders are only "task oriented," aggressively pursuing results with no focus on the emotional tone of their interactions, they set off stress reactions in others. People's brains freeze up. They don't work well when under stress. So the trick here is to give people the direction, structure, and accountability that drive good energy, but to do it in a way that does not create stress (pgs. 58-60).

Q: Often times we speak of the two human drives in terms of either being people oriented or task driven. Of the two, which has been the stronger drive in your leadership style?

Q: As you look at your tendency and reflect on Cloud's description of one without the other, can you see how an imbalance can create stress in those you lead?

D. Cloud suggests two major ways to help us as we balance these two human drives: enhance our empathy and learn to be hard on the issues, and soft on the person. To enhance our empathy, Henry suggests a couple of things. First, we must become more self aware. This requires us to be open to feedback—to hear from others how we are being perceived—it can be VERY different than how we think we are heard. And it also requires us increase our capacity to put ourselves in the other person's shoes.

The second way is to be hard on the issues, but soft on the person. As a leader, you may be thinking you are in an adult-to-adult conversation, but simply because of your role, you might be seen by the other person as a parent figure…Be aware of the fact that as a leader, your position carries much more psychological and emotional weight than you know…You can be steadfast and have clear expectations without being harsh, critical, or demeaning (pgs. 60-62).

Action Item: As a pastor or key ministry leader, you are viewed by most people as "unapproachable." You have a position of power, you have Bible training and knowledge, and you have a special calling from God. As such, the above counsel needs to be taken very seriously. Ask a trusted friend who knows you and your ministry setting to critique you in these important areas.

E. Cloud points out that there are two types of fear. "By destructive fear, I mean the kind of fear where people are *afraid of a person, instead of concerned with the issues.* The right kind of fear, or better yet—positive stress—is when we are concerned about some potential reality

and the consequences of that reality, instead of fearing someone's anger, or shame, or a relational consequence of some sort for a mistake…Positive stress is absolutely necessary to achieve results. Grounded in reality, it is produced when the emotional climate is supportive but honest and when the focus is on achieving a goal rather than on assigning blame or shame. Here is a way to think about this issue:

Reality is all that matters. The gap between where we [really] are and where we want to be, which is the goal, does not go away by itself. We have to close the gap…the quick way to think about healthy fear is that it motivates us to make reality better in some way, and to avoid bad outcomes.

As [positive] stress goes up, performance goes up—until a certain point. If the stress gets too high, the curve goes the other way and performance diminishes. In other words, when the stakes are high, we get better—at least until the risks become too much to handle, and we freak out or shut down.

These two sets of reality consequences—the promise of positive outcomes and the fear of losing something of value—are among the most fundamental drivers of human performance. Use them together, and you have a formula for leading others toward great things" (pgs. 65-69).

Q: Have you ever experienced destructive fear? Describe how it impacted you.

Q: Have you experienced positive fear/stress? Describe how you reacted to it.

Q: The Bible tells us we should "fear God." Using the terminology above, describe the kind of fear we should have towards God.

Q: How should our "fear of God" affect the climate we create and permit?

F. As the person in charge of setting emotional boundaries, your job is twofold. First, do everything possible to create "good fear," the positive performance anxiety that activates healthy stress…Second, diminish destructive fear, which is communicated through tone, lack of structure, and the threat of relational consequences—anger, shame, guilt, and withdrawal of support.

That is what people need from their leaders, the knowledge that their leader is *for their success* and if a mistake is made, that leader will stand beside them and help them learn and improve, not punish them…Research shows that a "getting better" orientation goes much further than a "being perfect" orientation.

As human beings we have the ability to gain insight and to change. But here is the key: **the act of "paying attention" to what I need to do differently and better next time can't happen if I am afraid of what you might do to me now.**

You as a leader must do away with negative stress in your organization. Observe it in yourself, in your teams and in your culture. Build the positive boundaries that will drive "attending" to positive behavior and "inhibit" toxic fear (pgs. 70-74).

Q: As the person who is "radically in charge" you set the tone for yourself and for your church. Is the emotional climate what you want? Is it a climate that is honoring God? If not, what are specific steps YOU can take to begin to change it?

Chapter 5: Power Through Connection

A. Cloud asks two critical questions: Why does connection matter so much in human performance? And how can leaders create it and enhance it? He answers the first in a very matter of fact manner: when we are emotionally and relationally connected to others, stress levels in the brain diminish. Put simply relationships change brain chemistry. The balance of the chapter is used to answer the second question.

Q: Another way that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God is that we are relational beings. Does it surprise you to find out that science affirms the human need for relational connections with others?

B. The first element necessary for unity and connection to occur is simple but profoundly missing in many leadership scenarios: the right kinds and the right amounts of time together. You cannot grow a plant by dipping it into the dirt once a year. It takes an ongoing connection to build a root system (pg. 84).

Action Item: List below the ways your church staff/ministry team connects on a regular basis. For example weekly staff meetings, monthly leadership team meetings, quarterly one-on-ones, annual retreats, etc. After you have listed the various meetings write next to the meeting the percentage of time spent focused on accomplishing tasks vs investing in one another (the two areas we talked about in the previous chapter).

C. Just getting together does not bring unity, as bad meetings have shown us all. But neither does not getting together. For deep connections to take hold, certain ingredients have to be present that address the three executive functions I mentioned before: attention to things that connect us, inhibition of things that cause us to disengage, and repetition of processes that keep working memory alive.

Leadership author Patrick Lencioni gives a good example of a model of "meeting dosage" in his book *Death by Meeting*. He distinguishes between four different structures of meetings:
   Daily Check-in: 5-10 minutes
   Weekly Tactical: 45-90 minutes

Monthly Strategic: 2-4 hours
Quarterly Off-site Review: 1-2days.
Whether you follow this model exactly is less important than that *there is a structure, with attention to structure and dosage.* When you get these right, you will have *set the agenda around the activities that will drive connection, instead of just "getting together"* (pgs. 86-89).

Q: Review the meetings you listed in Question B in light of both Cloud's and Lencioni's suggestions. What areas do you cover well? What structural areas do you need to consider including in the future?

D. Structure and dosage dictate what and when you are going to take the medicine [hold meetings], so to speak, but you also need to make sure you are dispensing the right stuff. We know from neuroscience that certain *kinds* of relational and emotional interactions build connection and unity based on patterns of the brain's functioning. Here are some of those ingredients that build connected unity: [an excellent section worth the read]
   1. Shared Purpose
   2. Awareness—we both need to know and operate from the same set of facts and realities.
   3. Nonverbal Cues
   4. Collaboration
   5. Coherent and Relevant Narrative
   6. Conflict Resolution—at some point every high-functioning team I have ever worked with has had to grapple with some very emotional and conflict-laden interactions *before* they get to their highest levels of collaboration and achievement.
   7. Emotional Regulation—not blowing a gasket
   8. Emotional Reflection
   9. Emotional Repair
   10. Listening—Leaders are notorious for not listening. They are often persuaders by nature, and in their interactions they try to convince people to accept their version of reality or their answers without really appreciating where the other person is coming from. They are guilty of "giving an answer before they understand" (pgs. 90-96).

Q: Which of the above emotional and relational interactions are a regular part of your meetings?

Q: Have any of the interactions been missing completely?

Q: Do you take notes during meetings? Do you refer back to your notes later to make sure you are following-up as needed?

Q: During meetings, do you say "I hear you," when you aren't really listening or didn't really understand what the other person was trying to say?

Q: If you tell someone during a meeting, "I will get back to you on that issue," do you have an established pattern for fulfilling your commitment?

Action Item: Take time to evaluate your meeting structure, frequency, and the level of emotional and relational interaction involved. Begin to take the appropriate steps to build boundaries that facilitate connections that boost people's functioning.

Chapter 6: The Gatekeeper of Thinking

A. The chapter opens with research done by Martin Seligman and published in the book *Learned Optimism.* The study examined the performance of more than a thousand insurance agents, comparing the results of those who had been hired based on passing an aptitude test with the results of a group of agents who had flunked the hiring test. The flunkies won. Big!

How did they do it? It turns out that there was another very important difference between the two groups of agents—aside from whether they could pass a test or not. The "flunkies" were *optimists.* And the smart guys they were compared to were not. The takeaway lesson is this: take someone who "can't" but thinks he can, and compare him to someone who "can" but thinks he can't. The positive thinker wins every time.

The prevailing thinking patterns of a team or an organization—its norms and belief systems—will define what it is and what it does. Not to mention what it doesn't do or what it doesn't allow for. And the leader's boundaries determine the thinking that prevails.

The reasons organizations get stuck in one way of thinking are manifold, but *one of the main causes is the failure of a leader to spot negative thinking and effectively set boundaries that prevent it from taking root while also making sure that optimism rules.* What you create, and what you allow, is what you get as a leader—especially in the area of what people are thinking (pgs. 99-102)

Q: Would you describe yourself as more of an optimist or more of a realist?

Q: What does Seligman's research and Cloud's experience indicate about the effectiveness of your leadership?

Q: How would you describe the thinking pattern of your leadership team?

B. Negative thinking is not just something out of some self-help book, encouraging you to "think your way to a new life!" As Seligman and many other researchers have shown, it has *real results in the real world, affecting the real bottom line.*

A positive and optimistic brain is a productive, energized brain ready to explore new ideas and to grapple with hard problems….[by contrast] "learned helplessness is a change in the software of the brain that occurs when one of the most fundamental laws of the universe is interrupted in our lives: *the law of cause and effect*…in infancy I can cry for food; in adulthood I can get a job to buy a meal…if you feel lonely, you can call someone and go to dinner together. The operating principle we learn is: *do something good and something good happens to you*…We depend on this law every day…It really works until *we find ourselves in*

a situation where we are continuously affected negatively, and we have absolutely no control over the things that are affecting us.

When such a change occurs, your brain tells you to basically "do nothing." Why? Because your brain thinks, "It won't make any difference." Your brain thinks that since you have not control over what is making you miserable, it might as well give up trying to have any control at all.

The big lesson for leaders is this: In a learned-helplessness situation, the brain can make a big thinking shift in how it tells your entire system to respond. It just goes passive and shuts down. Initiation stops. Creative thinking stops. The search for solutions stops. Problem solving stops. Trying new options stops. It's game over, or at least on pause. That is learned helplessness in a nutshell (pgs 108-111).

Q: Describe a time in your life when things were out of your control and it seemed that all the external forces were negative. How did you respond?

Q: Take time to describe the external forces that are impacting your ministry today. Would you say that currently there are more positive forces in play or more negative? How does that impact your leadership?

C. Without intervention or reframing learned-helplessness becomes even more pronounced and predictable in a *thinking* style. Seligman put this thinking style into three categories, the "three P's" which are:
   - Personal—bad things are happening because I am bad in some way.
   - Pervasive—it's not just one or two things that are going bad, nothing is going well.
   - Permanent—I don't think things are going to change. Nothing is going to be any different. So why try?

They have learned that they are helpless and there is nothing they can do about it. What happens then? They feel awful, their relationships suffer, and their performance tanks. Their brains change too…Until *they discovered they could rewrite the software* [in their brains] (pgs. 112-114).

Q: Describe a time when you felt like you were locked in a permanently negative situation. What did you do?

Action Item: Most of us have either experienced or observed a ministry setting where learned-helplessness had created a permanently negative culture. Describe the impact that kind of thinking had on individuals as well as the overall effectiveness of the church/ministry.

D. Cloud suggests two evaluation steps: audit your own thinking and then audit your team's way of thinking…He suggests that as you list the things that are negatively impacting thinking you must acknowledge that "these conditions could have truth in them. And you certainly don't want to replace learned helplessness with denial of reality. Instead you and your team

must look at whatever external realities exist and begin to figure out a 'non-helpless' response to those realities. There is always something you can do."

Great leaders don't let their environments change them into helpless thinkers. When Martin Luther King Jr. had a vision of living in a country where color was no longer an obstacle, there was a lot in his current environment to be pessimistic about. Color truly *was* an unchallenged obstacle at that time. That was true. But he thought differently about the power to change that, and today we have a much different country. He did not buy into helplessness in the face of huge obstacles.

What you want to look for in your people is a degree of *active engagement they have with negative realities.* What do they do when things get tough? Are they passive? Do they go negative and become helpless? Do you hear "three P" thinking? Or do they actively engage? (pgs 117-119).

   Action Item: Take time to do a personal audit of your thinking processes. To what extent does "three P" thinking exist in your own mind?

   Action Item: After you have taken time to reflect on your thinking processes, do an audit with your team. What changes, if any, do you need to make? What boundaries do you need to establish?

Chapter 7: Control and Results

A. The chapter opens with the story of Tony Dungy's acceptance of the "hopeless" task of coaching the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Instead of focusing on all the negatives that were in place that he could not control, Dungy identified three critical areas that differentiated good football teams from bad teams: turnovers, penalties, and special team play. And then he began to focus on them because they were factors he could control that also could contribute to success.

   The lesson for leaders is clear: *Focus your people on what they have control of that directly affects the desired outcomes of the organization.* When you do that, two powerful things happen. Not only do you get results, but you also change the brains of your people so they function better and then get even more results, in a spiraling, upward direction. Both are important (pgs. 125-127).

   Q: Describe a time in ministry when you felt like Tony Dungy should have felt in his first season at Tampa Bay—helpless and hopeless?

B. Earlier we said that for the brain to be at its best, the executive functions of attention, inhibition, and working memory must be present. Then we said that a positive emotional climate, connectedness, and positive thinking add to the brain's ability to perform as well. Now we are adding another extremely important element to the recipe: **control.** A sense of being in control changes people's brains and affects their performance big time.

It turns out that our brains just love control. When we perceive that we have the ability to be in control of things that affect some result, we get amped. It is the exact opposite of what happens in learned helplessness. Instead of powerlessness creeping in, it is intoxicating empowering, in a good way.

This is why leaders must turn into "control freaks"—just not in the way we usually think of. Instead of being a control freak by controlling other people, leaders must turn into control freaks about letting others be in control of what they should be in control of that drives results.

So great leaders do the opposite of exercising control over others. Instead of taking all the control, they give it away. They help people take control of themselves and their performance…What I mean here is a leader who obsessively focuses on helping his or her people get back in control of *themselves,* to drive their own activities that directly affect outcomes (pgs. 127-128).

Q: If being in control is counter to learned helplessness, how important would it be in creating a fruitful ministry environment?
Q: If you were honest with yourself, what kind of control freak are you? If your not sure, ask the people you work with.

C. Henry wrote about a consulting situation where he was discussing learned helplessness when he heard the words that he never wants to hear…"This is just the *new normal.*" Cloud said, "I wanted to scream, but for some reason I was able to see the moment as an opportunity. 'Yes, you are right,' I said, 'This has become the new normal. And that is exactly *your* problem.'"

I went on to explain that the thing he was calling the "new normal" was a *state inside his head.* "It has become normal to you to feel the way that you feel, and we really don't do much about trying to change what is normal," I continued. "So since you now think it is normal, you think there is nothing you can do."

In circumstances like this, the leadership mandate is exactly the same one Tony Dungy embraced: *find and focus on the things that you can control that affect outcomes.* And the good news is that when a sphere of control is reestablished—when boundaries are set to limit negative thinking patterns, on the one hand, and to identify the factors over which one does have control, on the other—learned helplessness can be reversed (pgs. 128-130).

Q: Are there circumstances in your ministry setting that you have described as "the new normal?" If there are, describe them.

Action Item: Take time to discuss "the new normal" circumstances with someone outside your church/ministry setting who understands the "three P's" to help you determine if it is truly something new and exciting or if it is a case of learned helplessness.

D. Henry has developed a process that has been successful in reversing learned helplessness. It involves all the elements discussed in the book. It is comprised of five components:

1. *Create Connections*—using small groups of six to ten people set up structured time and space for people to go through the process. Groups must establish a positive tone, in a safe environment, where people are honest and willing to share their victories and their difficulties with each other.

2. *Regain Control*—use a "Control Divide". Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle creating two columns. In column one write down things that you have no control over that are making ministry difficult. Next, take five or ten minutes and REALLY worry about the items on the list—they are real and you don't want to be in denial. Next, draw a circle around the list and stop thinking about that column. Next, and most important, in the second column write down everything that you DO have control over that can create positive results. Then make prioritizing and doing those activities the primary focus of your every day activities list.

3. *Take Note of the Three P's*—First, through self observation write in a journal or log the negative thoughts that are impacting you. Next, review each of the thoughts and write specific counterarguments and actual facts to refute them, one by one. Finally, grasp the counterarguments and take positive action. The positive impact of this step is multiplied when it is shared in the small group context established in step one.

4. *Add Structure and Accountability*—Social psychology research has shown that when people assign a specific time and place for completion of specific tasks and goals, their chances of success increase by up to 300 percent. Structure, stability, security, routine, and predictability—all are necessary for our brains to function at their highest levels. I've encouraged individuals, including some very high-performers, to break their daily activities down to very small increments, sometimes as small as thirty-minute segments, and specifically plan what they would do in that time. It sounds pedantic, but it absolutely works. Having them write down their objectives for each thirty minutes of the day helps identify and isolate activities that are particularly endangered due to inaction and three P's thinking.

5. *Take the Right Kind of Action with the Right Kind of Accountability*—By right kind of action I do not mean mere activity. Busyness is not action that builds momentum or results. The action you want is action that specifically drives results. And the accountability you want is the kind that drives success, not the kind that only measures results and keeps score. What I'm talking about is accountability that creates high performance and results. Figure out what that is, and you will undoubtedly see winning results as well. Said another way, don't count the score. Count the behaviors that run up the score (pgs. 131 -149).

Action Item: Identify one of the "new normal" items from section C above and use Henry's process to help you deal with the learned helplessness.

Chapter 8: High Performance Teams

A. The chapter is a case study of a team development process Henry used with a company developing a team around a new CEO. It lays a good foundation for the next chapter. For our purposes, I will only include a few critical bullet points included in the chapter.

   Henry makes the point that an effective team requires more than healthy relationships and good communications. He writes, "Nothing drives strong teams like great performance, and what drives strong performance is a commitment to a shared vision and shared goals with behaviors and relationships aligned with reaching those goals."

   Everything that causes bad outcomes is in your control to change, and everything that causes good outcomes is also due to your behavior. Change behavior, and you change outcomes. That is power and empowerment.

   Which brings me to another point Values make it possible for a guiding language to develop that gives structure and identity to the boundaries of behavior we want to encourage and prohibit.

   My point is that teams need a results-based method to determine which values and behaviors fit the real needs of the business (pgs. 154-165).

   I would suggest taking time to read the chapter and process the questions on page 166.

Chapter 9: Trust Makes Teams Able to Perform

A. The opening case study has valuable insights for pastors/ministry leaders who are new to their role. Henry was consulting with a CEO who was the new leader of a significant business unit. What the CEO quickly discovered was the "disorganization and lack of clarity he saw." Henry's initial advice would work for any new leader—"My first suggestion was to divide the business into two areas of focus with two questions:
   A. What were the immediate short-term activities (remember those execution functions of attending inhibiting, and working memory) that will be required to meet the immediate goals.
   B. What were the activities that will be required to get the job done for the long term (pgs. 167-168).

   Q: How would Henry's advice help a new leader achieve focus and success?

B. That opening case study discussed a team that had developed an immense amount of trust. Henry's question was then, "How do you get to that kind of trust?" His twofold answer is the outline for the balance of the chapter: "The only way is to work on it proactively and diligently. And in my experience it takes two components. First, a good definition of what trust is, what it means to the individuals and the team as a whole. Second, agreement on how it is going to get executed.

Cloud continues, "When defining trust, here are some of the components that I think matter most:

1. *Connection through Understanding*—Remember, people do not trust us when we understand them. They trust us when they understand that we understand them. This segment includes a powerful illustration of a team that was able to get to a high level of understanding and the difference it made.

2. *Motivation and Intent*—Intent is the key to trust. As I said in the book *Integrity*, if we know that someone's intent is to help us, that they are "for us." We open ourselves to them. We give to them. We cooperate with them. We invest in them. We share with them. We work, and even die for them. But if they are "not for us," there are only two other possibilities. They are "for themselves" and neutral to us, or they are actually "against us"…To truly trust someone, we need to know that they are looking out for us as well as for themselves, and thinking about how things will affect us, especially when we are not there to look out for ourselves.

3. *Character*—character encompasses a wide range of attributes—from morals to ethics to personality traits, attitudes, and ways of behaving. For instance, if someone is impulsive and leaps into action before they do their due diligence, we would not say that is a moral character issue, but it certainly is a pattern that we see in the person's makeup that affects their work. Or, if someone is a poor listener, or is a political maneuverer, or is domineering, we would not say they are of "bad" moral character, but we would say there are issues about their makeup that affect the team…Credibility is about "believability." A person's character patterns give them credibility or believability in a certain domain.

4. *Capacity and Ability*—Someone's capacity to actually do what we trust him or her to do impacts trust. Someone can be very connecting and understanding, and have a really good intent toward us, but still not be trustworthy to do something specific because they don't have the capacity to pull it off.

5. *Track Record*—We can trust people to do what they have done in the past. Or another way, the best predictor of the future is the past, unless there is some intervention that has made things different. That is a track record" (pgs. 173-186).

Q: As you look at these five critical areas for establishing trust, which ones do you excel at?

Q: Is there one that you need to address? If so, what specific steps can you begin to take today to build trust in that area?

Q: As you look at your leadership team, are there trust issues that need to be addressed? If so, what specific steps are you going to take to deal with the issues?

C. Henry wrote, "Earlier I noted that trust is built in a team by two things. The first is to define it, to mutually understand the elements and the anatomy of trust itself. The previous section gives us that anatomy…The next question is how to form a team around those elements. How

to execute it…There are many methods, but here is a path that I have found very helpful that takes trust to deeper levels of becoming an aligned, results-oriented, accountable performance team.

1. *Define Trust*—We talked about the dimensions of trust above. To execute those, take that list of elements and talk about them in your team. Go through each one, and get everyone talking in the way I described above.

2. *Define Your Shared Objectives as a Team*—A team is a group that has to work together to get a shared vision or goal accomplished.

3. *Define Operating Values and Behaviors That Will Get You There*—What is this team's collective purpose? What values will bring that vision to reality? What behaviors will demonstrate and drive those values? Then look at how the team presently works and how they need to change their behavior in order to be the team that can accomplish what they have decided they want to accomplish.

4. *Utilize Case Studies*—Go through a few case scenarios, good and bad, and ask yourself these questions: What values would have prevented the bad outcomes from happening? And what are the values that made the good outcomes occur? When did we win and why? When did we not win and why?

5. *Make specific Covenants for Behaviors*—A covenant is a promise to perform. Get with your team and figure out what the covenants are that are going to make your values realized, and which will drive your results.

6. *Develop Accountability Systems*—Great teams are driven by performance. And several things fuel performance, but two of the most important ingredients are measurement and accountability.

7. *Put In an Observing Structure*—What I am talking about is the practice of the team observing "how it is working." Henry suggests a three step process to accomplish this. First, take about five or ten minutes at the end of your regular team meetings and ask the question, "How did we do today on practicing our values?" Second, appoint someone for each meeting to be in charge of sharing how he or she is living out that value in the teams that they lead below them. Third, make time and space to work on building the team" (pgs. 188-195).

Action Item: As a team work through the two step process suggested above: First, develop a good definition of what trust is, what it means to the individuals and the team as a whole. Second, come to agreement on how it is going to get executed.

Chapter 10: Boundaries for Yourself

A. Leaders open themselves to outside inputs—There is a law of leadership physics that affects many leaders without their being aware of it, and it can do them in if they are not careful… The law is this: the higher you go in leadership, the fewer external forces act upon you and

dictate your focus, energy, and direction. Instead you set the terms of engagement and direct your own path, with only the reality of results to push against you…So since your direction depends much upon you, and with so much hanging in the balance there's a question that becomes very important to answer: *How are you leading yourself?*

Henry uses a real law of physics to make his point. The second Law of Thermodynamics says that everything in the universe is running down, running out of energy, and becoming less organized and more disordered. But an important aspect of that law is that it only applies to a closed system, meaning that it applies to things that are left unto themselves and shut off from outside intervention...But in an open system, the result is quite different. Disorder and decline are not inevitable and can, in fact, be reversed if the system opens itself up to two things: a new source of energy and a template (a template is anything that serves as a guide, pattern, or model.) You need force and you need the intelligence to inform action. If you have those two things, higher order functioning can take place. In a very tangible way, that is what leaders do when they pump energy and guidance into an organization or a team.

Set a boundary on your tendency to be a "closed system," and open yourself to outside inputs that bring you energy and guidance…Great leaders simply don't buy the old saying that it is lonely at the top, even if they do accept that the buck stops with them. When it does stop with you, the last thing you need to be is isolated…What I'm talking about is outside support and input—support from people who can be objective, who don't have a vested interest in outcomes, other than their care for the leader and his personal and professional growth…The fact is that we all get subjective and do not see the whole truth, about ourselves or about others. We need outside eyes to help us. We need another set of ears to hear what is going on (pgs. 197-202).

Q: Very few Baptist Churches have a structured process for accountability for their pastors. As such Cloud's opening statement about having fewer external forces as you rise in leadership can apply even to a very young and immature pastor. As you look at your pastoral role or ministry position, describe the accountability process that is in place. With wise council, do you need to discuss a healthy appropriate process for balancing accountability, responsibility, and authority with your church leaders?

Q: Think for a few moments about his analogy using the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Now take a few minutes and list the ways you personally have opened yourself to be mentored, encouraged, and challenged by others. If these two steps indicate that you have become a "closed system," what are some things you can do to change that?

Q: Many of you have heard me say, "there is one person in the world about whom you can never be objective, and you look at that person in the mirror every morning." Do you agree that it is imperative for a pastor to have men from outside their church who can help them look objectively at themselves and their church? Do you have people that are helping you do that?

B. Cloud continues this theme in two sections entitled "Leaders Identify Where They Need Fresh Input" and "Leaders Are Hungry For Feedback." He states, "you might be facing

something you never have faced before…Being an open system means, basically, that you are not arrogant enough to think that you have all the answers…In my experience, when there is a real problem in an organization at the top, one of the issues always in the picture is a leader who cannot take objective input or who is arrogant. They have boards comprised of "yes" people, and they surround themselves with others who do not tell them the truth out of fear. Or there are those who do tell them the truth and are marginalized (pgs. 203-205).

Q: How much do you open up to outside sources of information, feedback, support, energy, expertise, etc.? Your answer might reveal why you feel stuck and why the laws of physics have been working against you.

To be the best you can be you must develop a hunger for feedback and see it as one of the best gifts that you can get…Good character welcomes feedback and foolish character fights it off…Set very, very strong boundaries with yourself against any tendency you might have toward defensiveness, blame, or denial when given feedback. The weakest leaders are threatened by feedback and often completely closed off to insights that are so easily seen by others. Strong leaders embrace feedback, seek to understand it, and put it to use (pgs 205-209).

Action Item: Discuss with someone you know and trust, AND someone who will be honest with you, whether you are hungry for feedback or if you push back when given feedback.

C. Boundaries on thinking and fears are discussed in three specific areas: Don't define yourself by outcomes, Don't be ruled by fear, and Don't put off change…One of the most performance-limiting and devastating ways of thinking is to over identify with a particular result…Set boundaries on your tendency to allow single events or results to define you. You are not your last bad result. Look to more dependable measures, and hold yourself to better standards than any single outcome… He then returns to the "three Ps" and encourages us to ask questions like:
- Personalizing—
  o What event or other person has made you begin to question yourself and your capabilities?
  o What or who has the power to make you go negative?
  o What outcomes have you been personalizing to your detriment?
- Pervasive—
  o What outcome or person has had the power to make you begin to feel bad about more than that one event or outcome, that is you begin to feel like everything is going south?
  o You begin to question the church, the convention, or more?
- Permanent—
  o What outcome or person has had the ability for you to feel like it is never going to be good?
  o What is making you see the future negatively?

Remember the first person you have to lead is yourself, and if someone or any outcome has that much power over you, you have lost your rudder (pgs. 209-211).

D. As a leader, you cannot allow a pattern of fear and avoidance to rule you…In my experience, many great leaders go through a three-stage process when it comes to facing their fears. First, they fear it and put it off. Next, they push through the fear, make the decision and it is painful. And finally, they wonder why they waited so long to make it after the pain is gone and they have resolved the problem (pgs. 212-213).

    Q: Think through the last time you struggled with fear in making a decision. How closely did Cloud's three-stages fit your personal experience?

E. He challenges us to avoid putting off change in two specific ways. The first is the need to have absolute certainty before we make major decisions. He gives a personal example and the thinking that helped him to finally make a decision. "I realized something. There was no more piece of specific information that I needed. I was just looking for more comfort and there was no info that was ever going to give me that. I had to decide, to trust the smart people, and to eat my discomfort. I had to pull the trigger…With most big decisions risk cannot be entirely eliminated. Deal with it and get moving.

    Another resistance to change is the desire to "make sure everyone is on board," or "we reach consensus," which sometimes code for "I want to make sure everyone is going to like it…" Resistance to change is a fact of life. If you want change to take hold, you must have good boundaries to contain the forces that are working against the effort. Typically change initiatives are confronted by three types of reactions, as explained by change expert John Kotter. One group will "get it" and be on board with you…The second group is the skeptics who will not be so quick to come on board…The third group is composed of the "no-no's" who are dead set against the change and unlikely to be persuaded otherwise (pgs 214-216). For more details on being a more effective change agent let me recommend Kotter's book *Leading Change* or its companion which gives the same information in parable form *Our Iceberg is Melting.*

    Q: One of the distinct advantages a pastor or church leader has in this area is the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Describe a time when you felt a clear prompting from God and made a tough decision to move forward. What happened in that situation?

    Q: As wonderful as God's leadership is, I have seen pastors and good lay leaders ignore clear evidence of Divine leadership and respond just like the remnant in Judah did when they ignored the word of God (see Jeremiah 42). Can you think of a time that you felt God's nudging, but you ignored it only to discover afterwards that you chose poorly? How would clearer boundaries have helped you avoid that mistake?

F. The balance of the chapter encourages us to set boundaries in four additional areas: Boundaries on being disengaged from your key church leaders, Boundaries on your personal weaknesses, Boundaries on your time and energy, and Boundaries on identifying and eliminating destructive patterns.

Regarding the first area, Cloud writes, "While it isn't the only source of feedback, it is nevertheless critical that you always have a good feel and a strong sense for how you are doing with those who have a stake in your performance and your church's results…The process of staying in touch, whether with those above you, below you, around you, outside the church, or the community, should always be in the spirit of service" (pgs. 217-219).

Q: How connected are you with key leaders in your church? Describe those relationships.

Q: How connected are you with a "typical church member?" Realizing that your answer will be different if you are pastoring a church of 25 or one of 2,500, describe how you stay connected with them.

G. He next discussed setting boundaries on your weaknesses. Again he uses a real life story of a brilliant leader whose weakness was communicating his thoughts and ideas to "an average human." From their perspective he would take giant leaps in logic which left everyone asking, how do we get from point A to point B. Henry heard from team members, "We just need him to connect the dots a little bit."

To help the leader and his team, they walked through a three step process. As with most issues in life, step one was getting the leader to recognize the truth, it wasn't the team's problem, it was his. Henry wrote, "As the old saying goes, if one person calls you a horse, blow it off. But if five do, buy a saddle."

The second step they used was to establish a team covenant that if anyone was not "getting it" at any moment, it would be seen as a gift to the team if they interrupted and just said, "I don't see how you got from here to there. Show us the steps."

In this situation they added a third step. They picked one member of the team to serve as "translator." It was his responsibility to fill in the gaps between the leader's pronouncements and the action steps required to bring the idea into reality (pgs. 219-221).

Q: Describe an area in your life where several people "called you a horse" but you blew them off. That is until you realized, "I've got to buy a saddle." What happened to your effectiveness as a leader when you acknowledged that you had a problem and then you began to work on solving it?

Q: Name an area today where you have heard from several people that you might need to change. What will it take for you to recognize that it might be you?

H. The next boundary area he discusses relates to your time and energy. He opens this section with the exhortation that leaders need to periodically do a time audit to evaluate how they are spending their time. He reminds us that, "the higher you go as a leader, the more responsible for yourself you are for how you allocate your time." If you are not familiar with a time audit, it is an exercise where you log how you spend your time. Some do it in 15 minute segments and others in 30 minute time segments. After you have logged for a few weeks, you take time to evaluate your actual time usage compared to your stated priorities and values.

Q: As I mentioned earlier, Baptist pastors are normally given the authority to spend their time as they choose. Have you ever done a time audit? If not, then it's past due. If you have done one before, when was the last time you did it? Is it time for another one?

As he continues to discuss time, he writes, "remember the 'big rocks first' rule. If you put the big rocks in a jar first, you can also get the little rocks in, then the sand, and then the water. But if you do the smaller stuff first, the big rocks will never fit. Your time is like that. What is vital to achieve your vision? Are those getting on the schedule first? Give them first priority, but assign them a time and place, so that they actually get done. If you are not familiar with the "big rocks rule" go to YouTube and watch the video entitled "Put the Big Rocks in First" by Stephen Covey.

Cloud continues, "In my work, I have always seen a high correlation between success and the leader's propensity to put the vital activities, such as team building or strategic work, in the calendar first and not move it later. They have the discipline to do what is vital but not "urgent."

The lesson is this: boundaries on time, just like financial budgets, force us to prioritize good decisions. If we treat time like it is unlimited, we will say yes to a lot of things that really are not high value. And we lose our way. When you know how much time you have available, and that it is fixed, you will spend it strategically.

Q: So, what are your "big rocks?" List your top five priorities.

Action Item: After you have completed your time audit, evaluate how much time you spent on your "big rocks" vs dealing with the tyranny of the urgent.

He then moves to a discussion of boundaries on our energy by stating, "Your energy is one of your biggest assets and must be managed. Figure out who and what drains yours." He gives several personal examples of things that drain him. His primary point is that we need to make sure we don't schedule a major energy drain just before we go into a high energy meeting or attempt to work on a high energy project. He also reminds us that there are certain people that will drain our energy. Some of those contacts can be minimized through healthy boundaries. Some are unavoidable. Many times I have heard a pastor talk about someone approaching them just before worship time with a major problem (energy drain) and that conversation put a damper on the whole service (pgs. 221-226).

Q: Think about situations and people who are energy drains for you. Are there boundaries you can set that will minimize the impact or at least permit you to schedule them so that they don't impact other vital areas?

I. Most people can solve a problem. But leaders must get above the problems that are not being solved and see that there may be more than a problem going on. Instead of a problem there may be a pattern, and patterns are what will end up ruining your church. There are two kinds of patterns that I want you to look at that might require some boundaries.

The first is a pattern masquerading as a problem—that is a problem or a situation that keeps happening over and over again is not a problem. It is a pattern. Patterns can be with people…[patterns can involve] your own behavior...At other times these problems that are patterns involve the church itself.

By these patterns of weakness, I am not referring to areas where you do not have strengths or talents…I am referring to patterns that have to do with you as a person, such as being conflict-avoidant, or impulsive, or risk-adverse, or distracted, or overcommitted, or afraid of authority, or people pleasing, or resistant to making hard decisions, or fear of failure, etc. If you're not sure what he means by pattern, he gives some excellent illustrations in this section, and I would encourage you to read them…Remember, you never need new ways to fail. The old ones are working just fine. And until they are addressed, they will continue to work.

At other times these problems that are patterns involve the church itself…Here is the important distinction: problems, when addressed, are solved. Patterns, when addressed as if they were only a problem to be solved, remain. This is where many leaders get stuck, as they often are depending on someone's performance to turn around, yet it continues to be the same. They just keep telling them to do better. They only address the problem when they really ought to be addressing the underlying pattern [of behavior] (pgs. 226-229).

Q: Is there someone on your leadership team who consistently fails to meet obligations or expectations? Have you addressed the issue on multiple occasions without any positive results? If so, then you need to address the pattern of underperformance rather than simply treat each incident as a problem.

Q: As you look at your own activities, are there times when you seem to be running into the same problem over and over? Could it be that you have established a pattern that needs to be addressed?

Q: Think back to some of the great successes and worst failures of your church. Are there patterns of activities that made the difference? Specifically look at the failures for people or attitudes that contributed to the poor results.

Then there is the second group of patterns, which is the repetition of the same work. What I mean by this is that if there is something that only you can do, at least in the beginning, but then you find that you are doing that same thing over and over again in the same way, and you pretty much have it nailed, it might be time to turn that over to someone else. There is a pattern of work, a repeatable formula, to what you are doing, and that means it is probably transferable. Leadership demands that you move it down the organizational tree. If there is a known path of work, and it is repetitive, it can probably be taught. And if someone else can be taught to do it, it might be time to delegate that work, so that you can get back to doing what only you can do: lead…Then you can reserve your time and effort for the tasks that require a leader's deeper involvement.

When you realize that you are radically in charge, it does not only mean you are in charge of others or in charge of what goes on in the church. It also means that you are radically in charge of yourself. My experienced with high-level leaders is that there are two kinds. The first kind of leader is defined by the work. The second kind is in a process of actively defining the work, and they do that by first defining themselves and taking charge of who they are going to be and how they are going to work. They have good self-leadership boundaries (pgs. 229-231).

Action Item: List below the church/ministry related activities you do on a repetitive basis. For example visit prospects, make hospital calls, sermon prep, etc. After you have made your list, put a check mark next to every activity that someone other than you could do. Now, begin to invest in FAT (faithful, available, and teachable) people and equip them to do those activities.

Action Item: Now go back to your list and circle the things only you can do. Look at your time log you did earlier and see how much time you actually spent on the activities only you can do.

Conclusion

I hope I have been able to convince you that just because you have smart people and a good plan doesn't mean you will succeed. Those are necessary conditions, but they will never be sufficient. It takes more than that.

It is going to require you to accept that you are ridiculously in charge and that you are responsible for establishing the climate for success, setting the terms and expectations for performance with your people, for your organization, and for yourself. You have hired smart people, right? And you have a great plan, right? What could possibly go wrong? The only thing that could get in the way is the failure to create a culture where brains can flourish, where people are inspired and empowered to do their very best work.

You can take charge and lead if you develop boundaries in the following ways:

1. Help people attend to what is important, inhibit what is not important or toxic, and remember what they are doing.
2. Create an emotional environment that is free of the wrong kinds of stress.
3. Build teams that are deeply connected.
4. Help people to think optimistically and root our pessimism.
5. Help people get in control of what they can control.
6. Build great teams that are high performance.
7. Lead yourself in ways that create great performance in others (pgs. 233-237).

Action Item: Realizing that Rome wasn't built in a day and you can't effectively work on all seven areas at once, which of the seven categories above is in greatest need in your church/ministry? Review the chapter that relates to that topic and begin to implement the changes that will change the culture. May God bless and be glorified by your efforts to improve the health of your church.