“Leadership style is a way a leader chooses to lead those following him or her.”

All leaders or up-and-coming leaders, have a style. There are many different styles of leadership. The more styles we’re familiar with and know how to use in different situations, the more successful our leadership will be.

A leader chooses his or her leadership style. However, there are at least three influences on our leadership style:

1. **Personality.** I can’t emphasize enough the power of our personality to influence our life – personal relationships, business/work, family and happiness in life. I advise you to do everything you can to understand your personality and especially your personality strengths and weaknesses. Lead and relate by your strengths, but watch out for your weaknesses! If we can understand these aspects of our life it will help us rise to a new level of leadership.

2. **Culture.** Our national and ethnic culture also affects our leadership style. Many leaders in some parts of the world are more autocratic than democratic. They are more like a “telling leader” than a “sharing leader.” If we’re raised in that kind of an environment it will affect our leadership style. If we’re raised in a more casual country or
We’re not locked into the style we’ve been using! We can learn different leadership styles to use in different situations.

Command and control as a change leadership style destroys virtually any chance of success in nine out of ten transformational change efforts.

We’re not locked into the style we’ve been using! We can learn different leadership styles to use in different situations.

We can learn different leadership styles to use in different situations.

3. Example. Associated with the above point, our immediate example will also affect us. We will either follow or do the opposite of those who have influenced us: parents, educators or others in our close circle of influence.

Stop and think for a moment – who has been a major influence on your leadership style? When you have the opportunity to lead, are you more of a “teller” or “sharer”?

Stop and think for a moment – what is your personality style? Have you taken a Personality Profile to help you discover it? How would you say that affects your leadership style?

Leadership Style 1: Command and Control
Almost everything I’ve read on the Controlling Style of leadership is negative. Here’s an excerpt from an article by Dean Anderson and Linda Ackerman Anderson:

“Command and control is by far the most common change leadership style. Most of today’s leaders were mentored themselves by command and control managers, and the culture of most organizations is still based on command and control norms. It is hard to escape this leadership style’s historic influence and dominance. But as a change leader, you must. Here’s why.

For starters, command and control:

- Limits the engagement and commitment you must develop in your employees, and often actually promotes resistance
- Lessens your chances of creating a change process that will lead to success
When children are young, we usually don’t let them join in the leadership of the family or making decisions for themselves. They just don’t have the life experience or maturity! However, as they grow up and show responsibility and maturity, we allow them to have more of a voice.

I do the same with leaders. If they are new, have little experience or little motivation, I’m more of a strong leader. Or, if they have not yet been grounded in our corporate values or DNA I limit their voice for determining direction. However, as they show self-motivation, maturity and start developing a track record, I start bringing them into the decision-making process. It’s essential to do that as our organization moves forward.

Controlling leadership also assumes the senior leader (the one in control) has the most knowledge about the subject – that may or may not be the case!

So, in summary: Controlling leadership is good when you’re opening up new territory or leading new, immature or inexperienced staff in the beginning stages. But for the organization to navigate through the changes necessary, those you are leading must buy-in to the process and that usually means giving them a voice in the decision-making at some level.
Leadership Style 2: Democratic Style

A leader doesn’t have to have all the skills and knowledge necessary to lead the organization forward! He or she must have wisdom and experience, but doesn’t have to do all the work. This is a key understanding affecting the growth of the organization, business, church or school – we must allow others to speak into the decision-making process.

1. He or she is the one who looks to the future, but brings in others to share their experience, knowledge and understanding and allows them to speak into the situation and use their skills and experience to actually do the work. That’s leadership!

2. I teach church growth, and the key limitation for church growth is the senior pastor making all the decisions and doing all the work. A key to growing to the next level as a church (and school, organization or business) is to bring others in who can do the work with you and for you!

3. The point in this book is a leader must know his or her limits. He creates the vision and sometimes the general strategy, but most bring in others for the next step. He/she allows them to carry the vision to the next step.

4. Get ideas from staff and others and let the final decision rest with the senior leader. A wise senior leader knows his/her limitations.

Leadership Style #3: Transformational Leadership

In my opinion, the Transformational Leadership Style should be a corporate culture because it’s the essence of leadership. Leadership is not about everyone looking at you – the leader – but it’s about empowering others to rise to their level of leadership and thus lifting up you and the organization, school, church or business as well.
The Transformational Leadership style says “I believe in you! I believe there is something in you that can be developed and bring a benefit to you, your family, your work environment and your world!”

The Transformational Leader models hope, integrity and acceptance and tries to inspire others to overcome their personal obstacles and rise to a higher level themselves. Remember, as your followers rise to a new level, your organization, school, business or church will rise to a new level – empower them!

I’m more of a serious, introvertish person. I tend to keep to myself. I remember someone telling me one time that I look angry. It’s not that I’m angry, I just think a lot – however, that does affect the expression on my face! I remember many years ago I decided to change that. I decided that I would become the kind of person that brings life, hope and inspiration to others and do all that I can to equip and release them to do the same. I consciously changed my expression and countenance and consciously tried to be positive and instill hope, purpose and destiny in those I work with and those following me. I also decided that I would be a “resource person” and when I came across something that would benefit someone else in what I knew to be their personal endeavor, job or future desire, I would buy it for them, give it to them or send it to them. That’s the kind of person I’ve tried to be all these years as a leader.

- Cast the vision
- Keep the standard high
- Speak and show hope to those who are following you
- Encourage them “you can do it”
- Provide the resources and training they need

Leadership Style #4: Guiding Leadership

Guiding Leadership Style (or Coaching Leadership Style) is perhaps similar to Transformational Leadership, in that the goal is to bring out the best of those who are following you and invest into them. The Guiding Leader is a balance between the Controlling Leader and the “Uninvolved Leader.”
If the person you’re working with is lowly motivated, has little experience or knowledge then you must have higher supervision. If the person you’re working with is highly motivated, has much experience and knowledge, then you will have less supervision.

As I’ve mentioned in a previous lesson on Leadership Styles, we relate to different staff, volunteers or followers in different ways, based upon their experience, knowledge and level of motivation.

Here is the general rule of thumb:

If the person you’re working with is lowly motivated, has little experience or knowledge then you must have higher supervision. If the person you’re working with is highly motivated, has much experience and knowledge, then you will have less supervision.

This kind of leadership is skillful leadership. It means that “one size doesn’t fit all.” It means that you must know the people you’re working with or who are under your supervision.

It’s much easier just to treat all people the same, but Guiding Leadership requires you to play attention to the individual and relate to them according to who they are and their level of competence. With High-Capacity Leaders it’s not necessary for him to oversee them a lot. He points them in the direction – tells/explains the vision and goals – and they go and accomplish.

With Low-Capacity Leaders he must spend more time. He tells, explains, shows but also has to walk with them step-by-step until they gain experience and understanding. Then he backs away step-by-step and allows them to rise up.

Below is an excerpt from an article on Coaching Leadership from Toolshero.com.

*The basis of the Coaching Leadership Style is the dynamic interaction between the leader and the employee. This gives rise to valuable insights and the achieved results are discussed and analyzed. This is done by means of providing and receiving feedback, asking questions and conducting motivating conversations. A good coach encourages the learning process of the coached person and promotes the*
responsibility and independence of the employees. A coaching attitude of the leader ensures that the employees continue to work autonomously and independently without removing the initiative from them. A good coaching leader has his employees perform their work independently, but still makes them feel supported and involved in their work. The independent aspect in coaching makes this style excellently suitable for independent teams.

Leadership Style #5: “Not-Involved” Leadership Style

This style of leadership is also called Laissez faire. Here is the definition:

A non-authoritarian leadership style. Laissez faire leaders try to give the least possible guidance to subordinates, and try to achieve control through less obvious means. They believe that people excel when they are left alone to respond to their responsibilities and obligations in their own ways.

This is at times true! That’s the point of these lessons – we must learn different leadership styles for different situations and different kinds of people.

Here are some quotes regarding this style:

You can’t always be uptight and breathing down the necks of the people working for you. Sometimes you have to take a step back and let the people do what they know to be right. Let them do their jobs, laissez-faire leadership can work if you have smart people behind you

If you are working under someone that has a LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP style you may be able to get away with some things.

I struggled early in my career because I had a boss who practiced a laissez-faire leadership style, which meant minimal and brief contact throughout the work day.

Sometimes this style really is good for those you are leading. It helps them be creative and
resourceful. It helps employees not to be dependent on you. It helps them learn to take a risk. However, sometimes what appears to be Laissez-Faire is actually just a lazy leader or a leader who really doesn’t know how to lead!

Characteristics of Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by:

- Very little guidance from leaders
- Complete freedom for followers to make decisions
- Leaders provide the tools and resources needed
- Group members are expected to solve problems on their own
- Power is handed over to followers, yet leaders still take responsibility for the groups decisions and actions

There have been a number of well-known political and business leaders throughout history who have exhibited characteristics of a laissez-faire leadership style. Steve Jobs was known for giving instructions about what he would like to see to his team but then leaving them to their own devices to figure out how to fulfill his wishes. Former U.S. President Herbert Hoover was famous for taking a more laissez-faire approach to governing, often by allowing more experienced advisors to take on tasks where he lacked knowledge and expertise.

Here are some benefits of this style of leadership:

- Works for motivated teams with high expertise and skills.
- Creative teams may value the independence.
- Works well when the leader provides the needed information and materials to start a project.

Drawbacks of this style:

- Not good for groups lacking the needed skills, or who must meet a deadline or lack motivation.
- Can result in poor performance and outcomes.
- The leader may appear not caring or non-supportive.
- There may be confusion over roles within the group.
Leadership Style #6: Servant Leadership

Here are six characteristics of Servant Leadership:

1. **Honest.** Shares their struggles and fears. Shares their experiences to the benefit of his/her followers.

2. **Every person is important and is worth spending time with** or receiving the services of him, his church, school, organization or his business. However, he cannot always be the one to help that person. Sometimes he shows they have value by directing them to someone else who can help them instead of himself.

3. **KEY: Leaders develop their followers.** Leaders develop others and help them to become all that they can be in this life. Give them resources. Give them advice. Train them. Help them solve problems. Help them discover their weaknesses and strengths.

4. **Don’t do everything yourself!** You develop others and help them rise to the next level by allowing them to do some of the work. You do what you can do and allow them to do what they can do. Allow them to do more and more until they can do everything that you can do! Then you go find another person to develop!

5. **“To show the way, you must know the way.”** How do we know the way? Study. Ask others. Fail and try again! Gain experience in many different areas and pay attention to the principles that work across the board in different roles and responsibilities.

6. **I believe our success and reward is people.** We help people find success – by honest and righteous ways – and we will have true success.

They key characteristic of servant leadership is the Servant Leader takes consideration for those under his/her leadership.
HOMEWORK:

1. From among the *Six Leadership Styles*,

   - Summarize in your small group the six leadership styles taught in this lesson.
   - Which leadership style does your boss use to relate to you?
   - Which style *would you like* the leader over you to use? (How would you want your boss to relate to you?)