There is no single Developmental era. Tom Malone carries several core assumptions: Assuring High Performance in the Context. Leaders may create change by playing a central role in the actual change process, or by creating an environment in which others are empowered to act. Leadership Is Distributed. That is, leadership is not solely the purview of the CEO, but can and should permeate all levels of the firm (Peter Senge, “Leading Learning Organizations: The Bold, the Powerful, and the Invisible,” in Frances Hesselbein, et al., The Leader of the Future, Jossey-Bass, 1996). Leadership Is Personal and Developmental. There is no single way to lead. The best way to create change is to work with the particular capabilities that you have, while constantly working to improve and expand those capabilities.

Leadership Develops Over Time. Change is about making things happen, contingent on a context. Leaders may create change by building a new terrain as you are inventing it. Inventing that characterize how each person carries out sensemaking, relating, visioning, and inventing? Then compare notes to see where team members’ capabilities and preferences overlap and where they diverge. How do these different styles complement each other? How do they cause conflict?

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In order to enable effective interpersonal relationships, both practices are necessary. Inquiry means the ability to listen and understand what others are thinking and feeling. It also involves trying to understand how the other person has moved from data to interpretation to assessment, rather than simply reacting to the assessment itself. It requires the leader to suspend judgment and to listen without imposing his/her personal point of view. And yet leadership requires having opinions and taking a stand.

The second area of relating is advocacy. This involves taking a stand and trying to influence others of its merits while also being open to alternative views (Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organization*, Harvard Business School Press, 1992). It means taking responsibility for your own biases and leaps to judgment while being able to say, “I was wrong, I jumped to conclusions based on insufficient data and overreacted.” Yet often in business there is a great deal more advocacy than inquiry. Sometimes we are so busy trying to push our own ideas that we do not really listen to what others are saying.

The third area of relating is connecting. It is the ability to build collaborative relationships with others and to create coalitions for change. Tips for effective connecting are:

- Understand the perspective of others within the organization and withhold judgment while listening to them;
- Encourage others to voice their opinions;
- Be clear about your stand and how you reached it;
- Think about how others might react to your idea and how you might best explain it to them; and
- Think about your connections.

3. **Visioning: Creating a Compelling Vision of the Future.** While sense-making creates a map of what is, visioning is a map of what could be. Visions are important because they provide the motivation for people to give up their current views and ways of working in order to change. Perhaps most importantly, visioning provides people with a sense of meaning about their work. It answers the question “why am I doing this?” Thus good leaders are able to frame visions in a way that emphasizes their importance along some key value dimensions. Tips for effective visioning are:

- Develop a vision about something that excites you or that you think is important;
- Frame the vision with an ideological goal;
- Use stories, metaphors, and analogies to paint a vivid picture of what the vision will accomplish;
- Practice creating a vision in many arenas;
- Enable co-workers by pointing out that they have the skills and capabilities needed to realize the vision; and
- Embody the key values and ideas contained in the vision—“walk the talk.”

4. **Inventing: Creating New Ways of Working Together.** Inventing entails creating the processes and structures needed to make the vision a reality. It involves implementing the steps needed to achieve our vision of the future. Tips for effective inventing include:

- Maintain focus on improving the ways that people work together in your team and organization;
- When a new task or change effort emerges, think through how it will get done—who will do what, by when, and in what configuration;
- Play with new and different ways of organizing work—examine alternative ways of grouping people together, organizing their internal interaction, and linking across different groups;
- Blend sensemaking and inventing.

The four capabilities of sense-making, relating, visioning, and inventing are complementary. Without inventing, visions may remain dreams that never get realized. Invent-
activity, without a base of people who are committed to working together toward the goal, any success may be short lived.

These capabilities can also create tensions that need to be managed. It is difficult to hold an image of the future and the present simultaneously. Balancing people and processes, action and understanding, individual and collective aspirations, can be challenging. Yet it is inherent in the framework that managing these very tensions is the essence of leadership.

While individuals need to exercise all four capabilities, they must also work with others who complement their skill portfolio. In this way, leadership can be shared among many. Where one might be planning the future, another is working with others to invent ways to improve current operations. Thus, leadership is both individual and collective.

**Developing a Signature Style**

The four capabilities, like the compass that they form, are only a tool. It is the change signature that determines how and what the tool is used for. While the capabilities focus on what leaders do, the change signature is about who a leader is. It develops slowly based on experience and skills. It is a key part of the leadership model because it represents who we are as leaders.

Each person’s change signature, like a fingerprint, is unique. Each person brings his/her unique values, skills, experience, tactics, and personality to the role of leader. Each person has his/her personal way of making change happen, although there certainly are patterns across individuals. The change signature is made up of a credo and the characteristic way in which the leader creates change. The term “credo” refers to a person’s core values and beliefs both for themselves and for their organization (this concept is built on that of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, Jossey-Bass, 1993).

The second aspect of the change signature is the way an individual typically embodies the four capabilities and the characteristic way in which that person makes change happen. For example, what are the skills, abilities, tactics, and modes of operating that characterize how you carry out your leadership activities? Some people might carry out sensemaking in a very interpersonal manner, moving from office to office learning from everyone they meet. For others it might be a purely analytic process that starts and ends on the computer. Leaders learn through experiences what is most important to them and how they can be most effective with others. This process is facilitated when leaders take the time to reflect on their experiences. Often people report that they learn more from failure than success, but all experience can help shed light on what kind of leader you are.

Leadership, as presented here, is a combination of four capabilities and a change signature. It is distributed across individuals, and involves sense-making, relating, visioning, and inventing. By engaging in these activities over time, leaders begin to develop their own distinct way of making things happen. Through a variety of experiences, leaders can further develop their capabilities, build leadership capacity in an organization, and create a better understanding of their own values and skills.

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