

Foreword by Marshall Goldsmith

Taking the Stage



**BREAKTHROUGH
STORIES**
from
**WOMEN
LEADERS**



ALEXCEL GROUP

MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

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BREAKTHROUGH STORIES

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WOMEN LEADERS



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The Alliance for Leadership Excellence

MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

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IN DEDICATION

Betty Henderson Wingfield

1950-2011

This book is dedicated to our dear colleague, Betty Henderson Wingfield. She brought joy and value to all of her interactions. People gravitated to her because she was a warm, generous, and thoughtful individual.

After leaving a successful career in corporate America, Betty adapted her leadership skills and knowledge to become an external consultant and coach—where she completed assignments for both private corporations and not-for-profit organizations.

As full as her plate was with family and work, Betty always found the time and energy to support organizations in need. One of these was the Manchester Bidwell Corporation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which is dedicated to educating, inspiring, and empowering individuals and communities to overcome barriers and realize their full potential.

In tribute to Betty, ALL of the profits from this book will be donated to Manchester Bidwell in hope that they might continue their outstanding work.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD VII

Women in Leadership

MARSHALL GOLDSMITH, MILLION-SELLING AUTHOR
AND #1 EXECUTIVE COACH

CHAPTER 1 1

**Finding Me: A Leader Finds Her
Voice and Signature Presence**

LYNN HARRISON AND SHELLEY BESSE

*A smart, well-liked, hardworking, committed, visionary leader from
Envision Financial in Canada claims her gifts in order to make her
voice heard at the executive table.*

CHAPTER 2 23

Navigating the Storm

PATRICK REILLY AND VALERIE CORRADINI

*A highly skilled financial manager from BlackRock navigates the fi-
nancial crisis of 2008 and moves up to become a managing director
while her firm is acquired by another company.*

CHAPTER 3 39

Resilience: From Perfectionism to Willingness

JODI KNOX, Ph.D. AND EILEEN MACHOLL

*On her transition to CFO, a committed leader widens her personal
impact by letting go of perfectionism and embracing a posture of
willingness.*

CHAPTER 4 55

Leading with Heart

PATRICIA WHEELER, Ph.D. AND MARTHA CLABBY, M.D.

*A talented physician from Sibley Heart Center transforms her unit
from one of disorder and inconsistency to a model of effective
and efficient clinical care and herself into a confident and valuable
leader.*

CHAPTER 5	69
-----------------	----

How to Get Others to Follow You

SIMON VETTER AND DEBORAH DOUBRAY

An operations manager from Siemens achieves a positive lasting change in leadership behaviors, resulting in enhanced team cohesiveness, reduced stress, and improved business performance.

CHAPTER 6	83
-----------------	----

Unleashing the Power Within

BARBARA MCMAHON AND SUSAN SEPEHRI

One women's story of how she learned to own and honor her full self in life and in work, discovering deep resources of strength that she had never before acknowledged

CHAPTER 7	103
-----------------	-----

Caring for Results and People at the Same Time

WILL LINSSEN AND KRIS PARK

A CEO from AON Hewitt Associates in Seoul, Korea, breaks through cultural paradigms to drive people engagement in real time.

CHAPTER 8	125
-----------------	-----

Transitioning to an Authentic Leader Role

ELAINE R. MILLAM, Ph.D. AND KIM CUNNINGHAM

A talented, high-performing executive from CalOptima works through transitions at many levels to become a more authentic leader-engendering a more engaged and effective organization.

CHAPTER 9	151
-----------------	-----

Abrasive to Impressive

ROSS MARTIN AND ANNE PARKER

A talented but abrasive leader from Greystone Managed Investments in Canada navigates a challenging but rewarding path to new leadership that turns her critics into supporters.

AFTERWORD	169
-----------------	-----

Addressing Unique Needs to Garner Strong Results

ADAM H. SCHECHTER, PRESIDENT, GLOBAL HUMAN HEALTH,
MERCK & CO., INC.

FOREWORD

Women in Leadership

BY MARSHALL GOLDSMITH

THERE ARE MANY BOOKS ABOUT COACHING THEORY AND TECHNIQUE, some of which target women leaders specifically. Yet, I've found none that tell the coaching story from both the coach's perspective with that of the leader being coached in such a way as *Women in Leadership*. Written by seasoned consultants, I am thrilled that these coaches, many of whom I recruited in the late 1990s to be part of my network of colleagues and partners, have pooled their creative and coaching talents to provide us with this informative and inspiring collection of stories.

Why is a book specifically geared towards coaching women in leadership so important and relevant at this time? For two reasons: One, because coaching is invaluable in helping successful women leaders become even more successful, creating great results for their

teams and organizations. And, two, because women are different from men—physically, mentally, and emotionally. This means my coaching, speaking, and teaching changes when coaching women versus when coaching men. You might ask how it changes, and here is a little example.

In early 2009, I spoke at a women's leadership conference in India. I politely asked the men in the room to leave. My comments were intended solely for women.

I began my remarks by saying, "For the next ten minutes, we will have four rules. These are tough rules, and I'm going to strictly enforce them. After hearing the rules, anyone who feels they will not be able to follow them should leave."

"The first rule is that for the next ten minutes, under no circumstances can you even attempt to be more productive.

"The second rule is that under no circumstances can you attempt to learn anything. Please stop taking notes.

"The third rule is you cannot use this time to try to help others.

"The fourth rule is that under no circumstances can you attempt to become a better person. No improving.

"For the next ten minutes, I only want you to focus only on your own happiness and self-acceptance."

And then I quit talking and let the women in the room focus. In a few seconds a couple of women at opposite ends of the room began to visibly tremble. Soon half the women in the room were quietly sobbing or openly crying. I wasn't surprised by the response. I've witnessed the same reaction in other parts of the world. Why did these women cry just by thinking about ten minutes of time to focus only on their own needs?

Because they had never given themselves ten minutes.

At the end of the ten minutes, I asked the women in the room, "How many men would get tears in their eyes if they were told they have to focus only on their own needs for ten minutes?" They all started laughing. Even the thought seemed hilarious. My summary

messages for women—more than men—are:

- ▶ Keep your high standards—let go of perfection.
- ▶ Keep trying to improve—stop being too hard on yourself.
- ▶ Keep striving to do meaningful work—look inside yourself the definition of ‘meaningful’.
- ▶ Keep working to help others have great lives—work just as hard to make sure that you have a great life.

With that said, I know you will enjoy these tales of the coaching journey and am sure you will identify with the challenges faced, journeys taken, and “lessons learned” by the coaches as well as the leaders in these stories. Read, learn, and enjoy!

Life is good.

Marshall Goldsmith
Author of *New York Times* bestsellers, *MOJO*
and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

Introduction

ALTHOUGH WOMEN HAVE BEEN SLOWLY ADVANCING INTO THE EXECUTIVE suite, their percentage at the senior levels is still distressingly low. As a result, we tend to hear little about the female executive's day-to-day challenges and how she copes with them.

This unique book sheds light on some issues that actual senior female leaders faced and how they addressed and overcame those challenges. The reader is introduced to eight women leaders who have transformed themselves with the help of a coach. Because each story was written by a female leader and her (male or female) coach, the reader has an open window to the challenges these women confronted, along with what worked for them and how they were able to overcome limitations that stood in the way of their progress. While their struggles are often not overtly different from those facing their male executive cohorts, there is a subtle and unmistakable difference in the tone and content of how female executives tackle obstacles to their growth.

The challenges and coaching topics range from building emotional intelligence to leading a massive change in organizational culture to transforming an abrasive leader. These women have achieved

these results in companies that span the financial and professional services, healthcare, hospitality, and technology industries.

The lessons from these stories will be of incalculable value to other women executives who often feel stretched to their limits, pressed to manage a myriad of diverse difficulties, and unaware of what support they might benefit from or how to obtain it. Female leaders who are considering coaching for their own career enhancement will gain insight into what happens during coaching and how it might personally benefit them. These stories will also be of interest to male executives who share some of the same challenges as their female colleagues. Finally, the book offers first-hand information for those who just might be curious about what goes on during coaching, as well as specific strategies, tips, and techniques for coaching women leaders.

Each chapter was written by a woman executive and her coach, with their personal experiences followed by clearly delineated leadership and coaching strategies and suggestions for additional readings.

All of the author-coaches belong to The Alliance for Leadership Excellence, a close-knit group of highly experienced consultants and executive coaches who are deeply committed to furthering the development of individual executives, their teams, and their organizations by supplying the very best expertise and talent development. For the past six years, Alexcel has been deeply involved in studying the factors that help successful people become even more successful, and navigating beyond derailers that threaten even the most senior levels of organizations.

In the Afterword, Adam Schecter, President of Global Human Health at Merck & Co., Inc., describes how coaching can be an effective developmental vehicle for any executive, male or female, and recommends how it can be used by the same individual at different points in his/her career to continue to propel professional growth and success.

CHAPTER 7

Caring For Results and People at the Same Time

BY WILL LINSSEN AND KRIS PARK

The CEO of a multinational service firm in Asia took on the leadership challenge to significantly improve organizational culture and business performance at the same time by applying a disciplined behavioral coaching process of caring for people and results simultaneously. As a result, the organization produced top-class leadership effectiveness results, employee engagement scores, and business performance.

About the Company

Aon Hewitt is the world's largest HR consulting and outsourcing firm, with annual revenues of \$4.3 billion and 29,000 associates in 120 countries. In Seoul, the Korean subsidiary of Aon Hewitt focuses mainly on HR consulting and services related to pension systems, compensation and benefits, employee engagement, talent management, and organizational and leadership development.

Leadership Is Achieving the Desired Results (WHAT) While Applying Constructive Leadership Behaviors (HOW)

Kris Park advanced quickly through the ranks at Aon Hewitt; within five years of starting as a senior consultant, she became the country manager for all of Korea. A difficult organizational and business environment made these leadership responsibilities even more challenging. Early on, Kris honed her focus on two areas:

- ▶ Delivering business results while improving engagement scores. (This is the WHAT to achieve.)
- ▶ Leading people using constructive leadership styles and applying the Aon Hewitt performance management process of Six Conversations. (This is the HOW—the specific behavioral styles and processes that will get results that are sustainable.)

The thinking was that improving results is important, but better results can only be sustained if the leadership culture is constructive. Therefore, the often contradictory challenges of better results and better leadership behavior needed to be addressed at the same time.

Intellectually, we know that this combination is necessary (our know how) but daily behaviors in the workplace do not always come out that way (our show how). Especially in Asia, and surely in Korea, an aggressive and forceful style of leadership is the norm rather than

the exception. At the same time, Kris knew from the Aon Hewitt engagement surveys that the typical Korean leadership style does not create the high engagement scores that employees and organizational leaders are aiming for.

You Need to Love the Coaching ... But There's No Need to Like Your Coach!

Kris wanted to use an external coach to accelerate leadership change in the organization. This external coach would have to provide processes and knowledge so that the leaders of the Korean organization could step up their leadership and become internal coaches for their direct reports. Kris firmly believed that coaching is an important responsibility of leaders in the organization. The external coach should be able to accelerate this process and meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Have experience in managing an organization, business, or group of people, preferably in a service or consulting setting;
- ▶ Understand the challenges of multinational organizations and cross-cultural management in a strongly entrenched culture such as Korea;
- ▶ Empower and coach the leader to coach others in the organization;
- ▶ Be generous in letting the leader share insights and materials within the organization to accelerate learning, coaching, and change;
- ▶ Be experienced with or certified to use Human Synergistics International's Life Styles Inventory™ (LSI)¹ behavioral assessment, which Aon Hewitt uses to assess leadership behaviors and styles;
- ▶ Use a well-defined coaching process to keep the leadership change process on track and hold the leader accountable.

¹ Life Styles Inventory™ is a trademark of Human Synergistics International.

These are the most important selection criteria and should be viewed as differentiators.

Some other criteria served as qualifiers, but were less significant:

- ▶ Personal chemistry. As with a doctor, pastor, therapist or lawyer, one does not need to have a lot in common with these professional service providers on a personal level, nor does one expect a lot of empathy. A basic level of personal chemistry, empathy, comfort and courtesy is enough. In the end, the relationship with many professional service providers (including coaches) is more transactional than personal. So, while it is nice to like the coach, especially considering the considerable amount of time spent together and personal challenges that are shared, the effectiveness of professional advice is much more important. Think about it this way: Do you want a lawyer who is nice, charming, understands your problems perfectly, and dispenses advice for hours on end...or, do you want a lawyer who is effective, professional, understands your problems quickly, and gives you precise advice that you can execute immediately? The latter lawyer provides the best value for the money!
- ▶ Gender is not as important as is the ability of the coach to relate to the specific challenges the leader and/or business is facing.
- ▶ Nationality is also less important than the ability of the coach to advise on issues related to cross-cultural management and multinational companies.

The above considerations quickly led Kris to Heartware, a leadership and management-consulting firm with coaches certified in both the LSI assessments and Marshall Goldsmith's Behavioral Coaching Process. Heartware CEO Will Linssen, a Dutch national with 20+ years of business management experience in Asia, was the perfect match for Kris' needs and criteria.

You Can Manage What You Can Measure!

Aon Hewitt is very focused internally on the organizational and leadership development of its associates. Kris was convinced that the coaching approach should

- ▶ Be top down, as improving leadership effectiveness would also influence the organizational culture and engagement of the Korean associates. In the end, the organizational culture is a long shadow of the people at the top.
- ▶ Interface with Aon Hewitt processes. Leveraging the Aon Hewitt performance management process, in combination with the leadership assessment tools that Aon Hewitt uses internally and externally with clients, will drive the change needed to improve organizational effectiveness.

The top-down and process approach would improve impact, buy-in, and speed of implementation.

Aon Hewitt is, by nature, a fact-based organization. Many of its services revolve around data: pension issues, compensation, and benefits are number-based and factual. So, Kris wanted coaching process that focused on measuring and managing leadership change. She also sought an approach that would drive performance management and leadership change at the same time, based on the underlying premise, “you can manage what you can measure.”

Will devised an approach that combined the Aon Hewitt processes with Marshall Goldsmith’s well-known Behavioral Coaching, resulting in the following methodology:

1. Measure leadership effectiveness;
2. Define one to three areas of desired leadership change;
3. Include these change goals in the performance management process;
4. Re-measure to assess if and how change is happening.

1. YOU CAN MANAGE WHAT YOU CAN MEASURE.

Kris applied the LSI assessment that Aon Hewitt uses as a leadership development tool both internally and with external clients. The LSI assessment (360° feedback) includes a self-assessment as well as structured feedback from four to ten respondents such as direct reports and bosses.

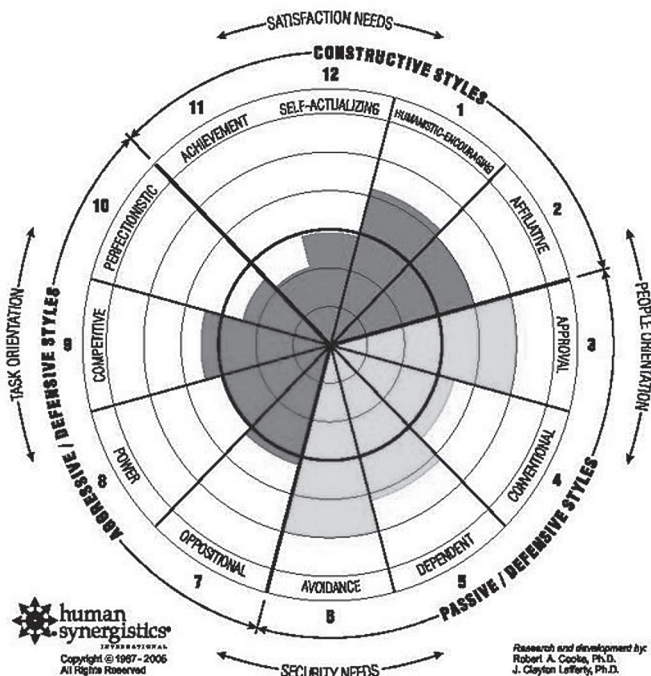
After two years in her leadership position, Kris got her first LSI assessment results. These provided a structured and objective picture of her overall leadership styles.² The assessment showed that Kris was clearly a people-oriented leader, which is very important in the consulting industry. She was also very focused on encouraging people's development (Style 1—Humanistic-Encouraging) while at the same time building strong personal relationships (Style 2—Affiliative). The results also showed that her people orientation included less effective behavioral styles. For example, her high Approval orientation (Style 3) was driven by a personal and cultural need for acceptance by others, which led to too much conforming behavior toward the thoughts and values of others.

The high Approval style is typical of the Korean national culture, which is based on Confucianism. It is also quite common among women leaders in any culture. This need for approval and acceptance by others tends to compromise leaders' personal values and goals, thereby reducing their Self-Actualizing orientation (Style 12). This, in turn, leads to increased time spent on discussions with others (to gain approval), and once decisions are made, the leaders themselves experience reduced personal buy-in and commitment.

At the same time, Kris' Avoidance orientation (Style 6) was also very strong; she was perceived as taking few chances, easily led by opinions of colleagues and superiors in her decision making and execution, and not aggressive nor persistent enough to emphasize

2 LSI style names and descriptions are from R.A. Cooke and J. C. Lafferty, Life Styles Inventory, Plymouth, MI, USA: Human Synergistics International. Copyright © 1973-2001. Used by permission.

FIGURE 1
LSI Description by Others Profile 2006



The Life Styles Inventory™ circumplex. Research and Development by J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. Copyright 1973-2011 by Human Synergistics International. Used by permission.

her own views, influence decisions, or implement initiatives. This orientation is also all too common in women.

Kris realized that, though understandable from a cultural and gendered perspective, these behaviors did not contribute to Aon Hewitt's effectiveness as a multinational company. At the same time, she acknowledged that the elements she wanted to change in the organization were also present in her personal leadership style. The

only way she could shift the company toward a more global leadership culture was if she herself would lead that change.

Since Aon Hewitt has a very open feedback culture, Kris took the initiative to discuss most of the assessment results with her direct reports, asking them for feedback and examples of her less-than-effective leadership styles. She was genuinely interested to learn what they observed. Most leaders tend to avoid asking their direct reports and stakeholders about their observations and perceptions, hoping that people do not really recognize their less-effective leadership behaviors. In reality, stakeholders have a rather accurate perception of what leadership behaviors styles are effective or not.

Kris soon recognized her specific avoidance tendencies:

- ▶ Letting difficult matters pile up on her desk, rather than addressing them promptly.
- ▶ Talking about issues indirectly or communicating in a round-about way.
- ▶ Being too considerate of “what other people think and feel,” which moved her away from the main issues or her own goals and opinions. Not being honest about one’s true perceptions or opinions is also a form of avoidance.

Kris realized these behaviors can be very insidious and subtle. Leaders sometimes unwittingly manifest these behaviors rather consistently, unaware that they are actually forms of avoidance—and that others perceive such behaviors that way.

Kris found that this first step in the process was the most difficult. A 360° assessment relies on the perceptions of others to reveal and articulate a person’s patterns, and this can be a very “in your face” experience for the leader. Once the realization sets in that “perception is reality,” the rest of the change process becomes easier to accept and engage in.

2. DEFINE CHANGE FOCUS— PERCEPTION IS REALITY!

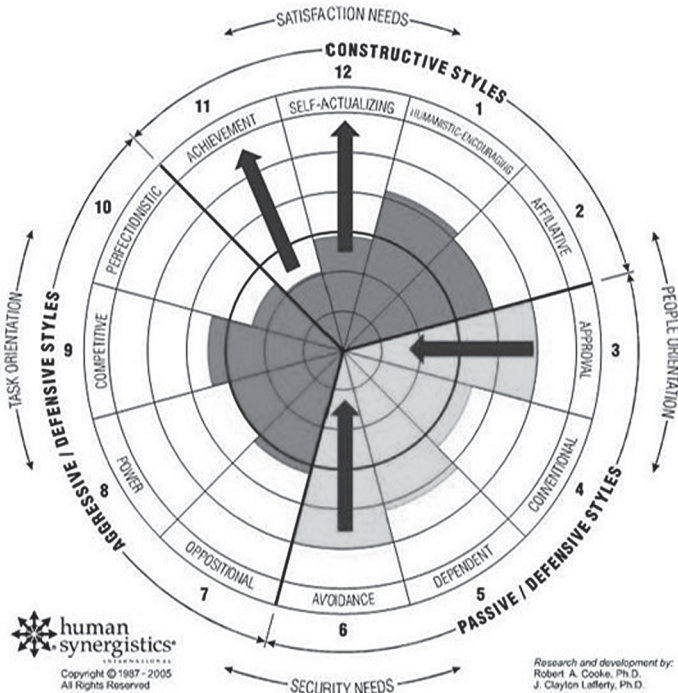
Changing leadership behavior works best when people focus on an area that is meaningful to the leader as well to as the organization. Kris, being a certified LSI consultant herself, recognized that the LSI assessment provided excellent guidance in defining a meaningful focus area for leadership change.

To reduce the strength of her Approval and Avoidance styles, the LSI assessment and debriefing guided Kris to focus on bolstering her Self-Actualizing and Achievement styles.

► **MOVING FROM APPROVAL TO SELF-ACTUALIZING.** As mentioned, in many cases Korean leaders (and women) are high on the Approval style as they work hard to be liked and accepted and avoid making other people feel frustrated, anxious, even resentful. Self-worth in such cases is externally stimulated as people seek approval from others. It also communicates “Respect ME,” which is personally focused (WHO). Leaders confuse “need to be liked” with “want to be liked” (i.e., appreciation of approval). This is a major difference in relation to Western cultures, where people appreciate approval but do not need it. In contrast, people high on the Self-Actualizing scale accept self (and others) easily for who they are, and look for respect from others for “what I believe and do.” Their self-worth is internally stimulated, i.e., approval of (objectively correct) principles, values, and beliefs, and communicates “Respect my BELIEFS” (WHAT). Understanding the root cause of this behavior provided Kris with the determination to articulate what her leadership beliefs and opinions really were, and to influence others regarding her business opinions and beliefs rather than getting trapped in external approval seeking.

► **MOVING FROM AVOIDANCE TO ACHIEVEMENT.** Leaders who are high on the Avoidance scale tend to be indecisive, self-doubting, apprehensive, and uneasy and might even create a discussion culture in order to avoid decisions, mistakes, blame, or finger-point-

FIGURE 2
LSI Description by Others Profile 2006



The Life Styles Inventory™ circumplex. Research and Development by J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. Copyright 1973-2011 by Human Synergistics International. Adapted by permission.

ing. Such risk-avoidance behaviors are typically driven by a fear of failure (though the Confucian culture is the underlying driver for this behavior in Korea.) Achievement-oriented leaders tend to set clear and realistic goals that are aligned with both organizational needs and personal ambitions. They make decisions to attain high-quality results and benchmark against past goals. Hence, they take calculated risks and think in terms of learning from mistakes.

Reflecting on her personal leadership style, the LSI results, discussions with her coach, and the insights noted above, it all came together for Kris. She realized that strengthening her leadership would mean that her point of reference as a leader would shift from without to within, and that she should lead more from the inside out.

This would refocus her leadership style by strengthening her personal convictions and emphasizing organizational goals while using her natural, well-developed people skills.

After further discussions with her coach and her management team, Kris' focus and goals for development as a leader were narrowed down to specific behaviors:

- ▶ Communicating honestly and clearly
- ▶ Being more confident in her opinions
- ▶ Being more decisive.

From the feedback, she also recognized that developing these behaviors would bring additional benefits, such as:

- ▶ Being more relaxed
- ▶ Seeing the big picture more clearly
- ▶ Understanding people better
- ▶ Being better organized
- ▶ Creating a stronger personal bond with colleagues

Kris saw that just focusing on the first three behaviors would reap a multitude of benefits over time on both personal and professional levels. This was worth the challenge and the commitment for Kris and the organization.

This concept of a strong focus providing a multitude of additional benefits is central to the behavioral coaching process. The same concept also applies to weight-loss programs. That is, when people focus on losing weight by eating healthier food and exercising, they

also receive additional benefits such as better sleep, improved skin, increased confidence, encouragement or praise, and more energy.

Kris noticed that she felt very empowered after this phase, in large part due to her realization that capturing the key to leadership change in three behaviors made change very quantifiable, real, and attainable. She couldn't wait to get started because she realized, "If I focus only on changing these three leadership behaviors, I can get multiple benefits—and that would really change my world!"

3. INCORPORATE THE LEADERSHIP-CHANGE FOCUS IN THE PERFORMANCE-MANAGEMENT PROCESS AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH.

Though success was not a given, Kris decided that the first step was to incorporate the above three leadership-change goals into the Aon Hewitt performance-management process. So, aside from business-related goals, Kris also defined general goals for leadership behavior change for herself and others in the organization. She used the well-defined and interactive Aon Hewitt performance-management process in which associates chart out their performance goals for the next four quarters. The associate and the direct boss review these milestones three to four times over the upcoming year using the Aon Hewitt Six Conversations discussion questions:

1. What is expected of me? What are the key responsibilities of my role, and what am I expected to deliver?
2. What should I develop? What are the key skill areas I should develop and how will I focus on those areas through the year?
3. How am I doing? This is the ongoing communication between associate and manager using the performance plan that has been developed.
4. How did I do? At the end of the performance cycle, feedback is collected with the performance management tool.

5. How will I be rewarded? A discussion around compensation occurs based on the associate's attainment of goals and business results.
6. What's next for me? This may be an ongoing discussion around the associate's career growth and expectations.

For Kris, incorporating the leadership-change goals into the performance-management process created automatic focus, both for her and her stakeholders, on the leadership-change issues for her and the organization. It drove them to plan actions and work proactively toward these change goals, to ask for feedback on how the change was occurring, and to create buzz and discussions around change in the organization.

Putting herself out there was not easy at the start, but it helped Kris take bold steps in making change visible. This encouraged others to do the same. From the assessment process and conversations with her stakeholders about the results, Kris realized that leadership is very open and visible to all people in the organization. People know what leaders do and don't do. So there is really nothing to hide anyway. Not talking about it does not mean we are not communicating it. Our behavior or absence of behavior does all the talking anyway. So, we might as well have the discussions with our stakeholders and articulate our leadership change efforts.

Every month, Kris reviewed her action plan and adjusted it for the next month, making her leadership change visible to her stakeholders and the rest of the organization. During monthly breakfast meetings, Kris and her stakeholders discussed feedback from the previous month and expectations for the next month. Not only was Kris' leadership change on the agenda, but all stakeholders received feedback and feedforward from each other.

Some of the specific steps she implemented were:

► **COMMUNICATING HONESTLY AND CLEARLY**

- ▷ Speak openly with individual employees about their strengths, weaknesses, and areas to develop

- Communicate clearly on organizational performance goals and results to all employees on a quarterly basis in town hall meetings or similar settings.

► BEING MORE CONFIDENT IN HER OPINIONS

- Be clear, honest, and articulate with her own opinions, even when they conflict with the opinions of others
- Become more discerning in which opinions to stand by as a leader, and when to be considerate and empathic toward others
- When differences of opinions result in confrontation and friction, remain strong in her opinion while being constructive in the dialogue.

► BEING MORE DECISIVE

- Be more straightforward in communication; talk about issues as they come up instead of delaying them to the next meeting
- Drive discussions to closure and decisions, focusing on stakeholders' needs while not being overly sensitive to people's feelings
- Worry less! A natural worrier, Kris would become concerned that things might not turn out as intended and would doubt her decisions. This tends to rub off on others. Instead, she focused on being a warrior, fighting to execute her decisions and see them through.

At the same time, Kris kept reinforcing her naturally strong and constructive leadership styles as Humanistic-Encouraging and Affiliative all around. This greatly facilitated the above changes.

By nature, Kris is very achievement oriented, persistent, and eager to learn and develop herself and others. Leveraging these strengths, she set specific targets and worked diligently toward them. The performance-management process provided an excellent opportunity to get feedback from stakeholders on her progress every two or three months. As she applied this process to her direct reports, she also solicited feedback from them on her progress. This not only created a level playing field, but by opening up and being vulnerable,

she displayed self-confidence and provided a platform to talk about organizational leadership and culture change.

Encouraged by her early successes with this approach, Kris applied the same process to her direct reports. All managers participated in the same LSI assessment process that she had. At this point, Kris took on the role of coach to her direct reports, supporting them in analyzing their LSI feedback results and guiding them in defining their own personal change foci. In this process, both leader and direct reports needed to take a hard look at themselves, and find the courage and grace to commit to meaningful leadership change for themselves and the organization. As Kris experienced, a lot of emotions and ego can surface at this stage. Some are more pronounced than others, depending on the people and issues involved. Good conflict management skills and Kris' caring personality helped her navigate these hurdles in the feedback process with her direct reports.

Kris and Willy both experienced this phase as the most difficult one. They learned that the challenge is to keep the implementation process on track, not get sidetracked with busy-ness. At the same time, during implementation the feed-forward suggestions can become somewhat personal. At times, this created some tension during the interaction with stakeholders. It also opened the door for Kris to provide feed-forward suggestions to her direct reports. Though this process took some getting used to, it turned out to be a great renewal of interaction, with stakeholders able to freely talk about change implementation on a rather personal level.

4. RE-MEASURE. WHETHER YOU THINK YOU CAN OR YOU THINK YOU CAN'T, YOU ARE PROBABLY RIGHT.

After two years of focused leadership change, Kris repeated the LSI assessment with her direct reports and the results indicated remarkable leadership effectiveness changes. The most notable can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ Almost all Passive/Defensive and Aggressive/Defensive behaviors had been reduced to levels that did not negatively affect the overwhelmingly Constructive behaviors.
- ▶ Her change foci of communicating honestly and clearly, being more confident in her opinions, and being more decisive had clearly boosted her leadership confidence and resulted in significant and visible improvement of her Achievement and Self-Actualizing styles.
- ▶ The slight reduction of the Humanistic-Encouraging style was not a concern since the opposite styles of Power and Oppositional virtually disappeared.

As demonstrated in Figures 3 and 4, the LSI results provided Kris with objective evidence that her efforts were making a huge difference in her organization and that the leadership change had made a remarkable impact on her personal style.

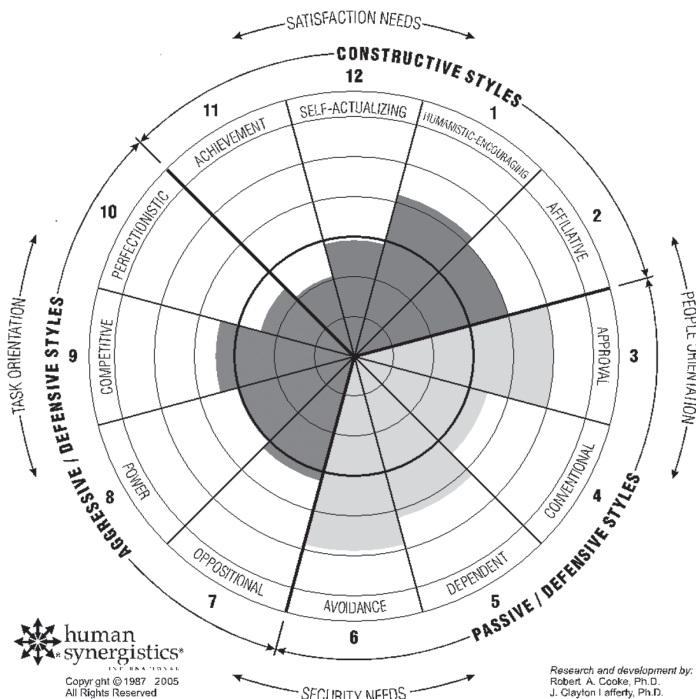
They showed clearly that Kris had become more discerning in exhibiting Constructive leadership behavior and reduced her Defensive behavior significantly. Most remarkably, her Defensive styles of Avoidance and Dependent almost disappeared, mainly because her stakeholders reported that she reduced tendencies such as

- ▶ Easily being led by what others think and providing safe ideas,
- ▶ Leaving decisions to others and avoiding risks in decision making,
- ▶ Being overly cautious and eager to please others,
- ▶ Self-doubting.

At the same time, the opposite Constructive styles of Achievement and Self-Actualizing improved significantly, mainly because her stakeholders reported that she improved tendencies such as

- ▶ Being achievement-oriented, especially concerning difficult and challenging tasks,

FIGURE 3
LSI Description by Others Profile 2006

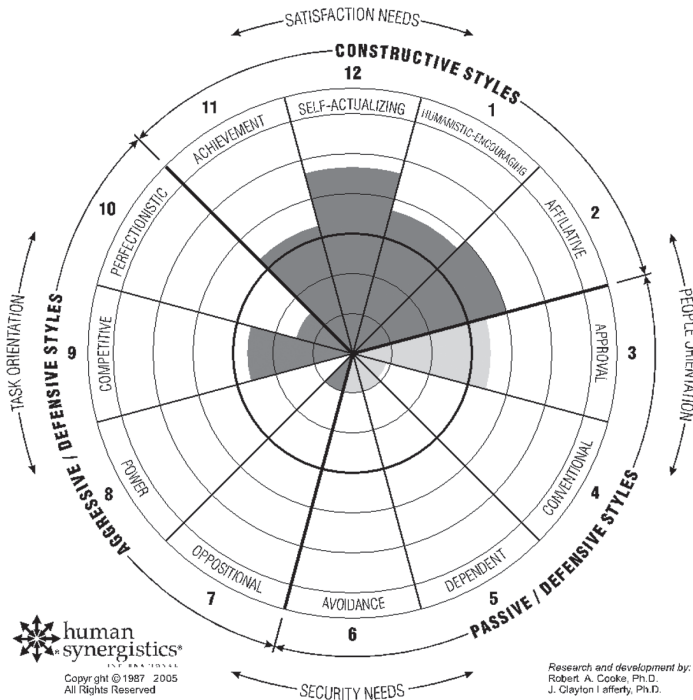


The Life Styles Inventory™ circumplex. Research and Development by J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. Copyright 1973-2011 by Human Synergistics International. Used by permission.

- Thinking ahead and thinking for herself,
- Enjoying responsibility,
- Coming across as confident and well grounded,
- Communicating her ideas easily.

As a positive side effect, it was also evident that her other Defensive styles such as Approval, Oppositional, and Power had significantly

FIGURE 4
LSI Description by Others Profile 2008



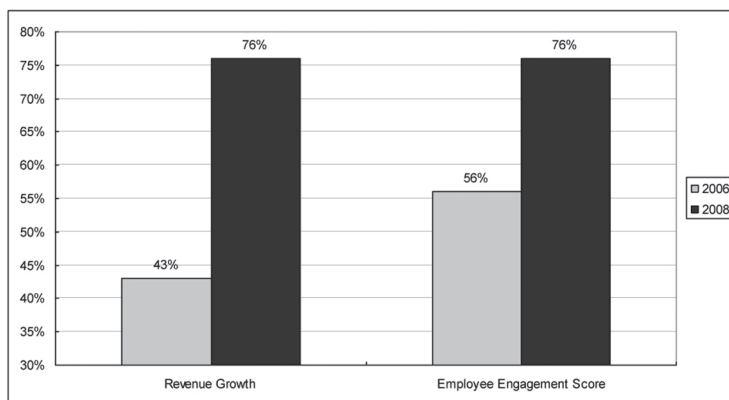
The Life Styles Inventory™ circumplex. Research and Development by J. Clayton Lafferty, Ph.D. Copyright 1973-2011 by Human Synergistics International. Used by permission.

decreased without any seemingly deliberate effort. This happens all the time in many areas of our life: By focusing on one area of change, we get multiple benefits.

Clearly, Kris had mastered the skills to pinpoint leadership behaviors that were less constructive in working with her stakeholders, and had the resolve to substitute these behaviors with constructive ones that created better results all around.

Kris was very pleased with these results, as they confirmed that her efforts to change her personal leadership styles were bearing fruit and being noticed by her stakeholders. Also, the Aon Hewitt engagement results showed that the changes were noticeable throughout the Korean organization at all levels. Figure 5 shows that it achieved significant improvement in employee engagement scores, and with 76 percent engagement in 2008, was comfortably in the Best Employers zone. Moreover, this engagement score had improved significantly from 56 percent in 2007; this meant a lot to the Korean leadership team and to the organization as a whole. At the same time, Aon Hewitt Korea demonstrated impactful financial results, such as 76 percent revenue growth and 372 percent profit growth in the two years from 2006-2008. Profit as percentage of revenue improved as much as 2.3 times in that period. The strong correlation between leadership-effectiveness changes and the improved financial results was a great encouragement to Kris and her direct reports.

FIGURE 5
**Aon Hewitt Korea Employee Engagement
and Revenue Growth in 2006 vs. 2008**



At the same time, her direct reports note that

- ▶ Kris' decision-making process has become smoother and more decisive. She has continued to listen closely to all stakeholders, and she shifts the process from discussion to decision in a timely manner. Kris enjoys diversity and considers what others share with her. She reaches a clear conclusion, makes a decision, and then communicates to all involved with clarity and conviction. This lets everyone know when it is time to discuss, when decisions have been made, and when to focus on execution and delivering results. Everyone has a voice, but Kris has the final vote. This provides great clarity for all in the organization.
- ▶ The change process helped Kris to be clearer in her communication. People got engaged in the process as change efforts and results were made visible and communicated well. Rather simple solutions, such as breakfast meetings with key managers and town hall gatherings with all employees, have shown to be effective.
- ▶ Her relentless focus on organizational and personal change produced the intended results, and this gave Kris the confidence that she and others were doing the right things. This resulted in less tension and stress and a more relaxed atmosphere at work. With the confident, more mature leader that Kris has become, all employees can see the fruits of these change efforts, on a personal level for Kris and on an organizational level as well.

REFLECTIONS

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

In Korea, people say, “You cannot cut your own hair.” The coaching experience provided Kris with the following insights:

- ▶ **EMOTIONS ARE PART OF THE EXPERIENCE.** Getting feedback, being coached, and implementing change touches on a lot of emotions in all involved, from the leader to the direct reports. Most conversations are personal, one way or another.
- ▶ **PROCESS IS PIVOTAL.** Leadership change is a methodical process that needs to be managed well over time. In this way, change happens more effectively and is faster and better directed. If a methodical process is lacking, then change is random at best and/or tends to come about through the School of Hard Knocks (which is a lot less pleasant!).
- ▶ **COACHEES BECOME COACHES.** The coaching experience and related processes helped Kris to roll this out in the organization in an effective way. All leaders know that coaching and developing leaders in the organization is a must. The coaching experience provided Kris with all the tools and knowledge to apply this in the organization on a larger scale and to turn leaders into internal coaches for their direct reports.
- ▶ **MEASURE AND MANAGE.** Leadership change does not happen overnight; it is a longer-term process, impacted by many variables over time. Therefore, measuring behaviors and results is important. This feedback creates personal accountability as well as a sense of achievement over time. The multiple variables that come into play just need to be managed, the same as with other business goals.. Working in this way is encouraging as results become visible and provide confidence in the chosen direction.
- ▶ **CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE CONVERSATIONS BECOME PART OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE.** The frequent use of feedback and feed-forward creates an atmosphere of open communication.

REFLECTIONS

When a leader reflects with others on his/her leadership style and asks for ideas for change from stakeholders, this opens the door for other leaders to have similar conversations with their direct reports. This creates constructive conversations throughout the organization around personal and leadership change that is future oriented. People can get excited about change when it is not about looking back to the past but about creating a better future for themselves and the organization as a whole. That is very empowering.

RECOMMENDED LEADERSHIP BOOKS

George, B., & Sims, P. (2007). *True north: Discover your authentic leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The story of success*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Company

Rath, T., & Conchie, B. (2009). *Strengths based leadership: Great leaders, teams, and why people follow*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.

Though these books do not address gender issues in leadership in particular, their focuses on success factors such as awareness of strengths, power of purpose, and dedication to success are immensely valuable for women leaders.

RECOMMENDED COACHING BOOKS

Goldsmith, M. (2007). *What got you here won't get you there: How successful people become even more successful*. New York, NY: Hyperion.

Stoltzfus, T. (2008). *Coaching questions: A coach's guide to powerful asking skills*. Coach22 Bookstore.

Underhill, B.O., McAnally, K., & Koriath, J. J. (2007). *Executive coaching for results: The definitive guide to developing organizational leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.