

**LEADING WITH A LIMP:  
A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP  
FROM THE WORK OF DR. DAN ALLENDER  
SUMMARY BY JOE NOVENSON**

**Core assumption #1:** All humans are truly fallen.

**Core assumption #2:** To the degree that you face and name and deal with your failures as a fallen leader, to that same extent you will create an environment conducive to growing and retaining productive and committed colleagues.

**Core assumption #3:** To the degree you attempt to hide or dissemble your weaknesses, the more you will need to control those you lead, the more insecure you will become, and the more rigidity you will impose—prompting the ultimate departure of your best people.

**Core assumption #4:** Far more is needed than mere acknowledgment of your shortcomings. An outright repentance dismantling of them—in open and in front of those you lead is necessary.

**Core assumption #5:** While carrying on this act personally, you are corporately entering into an atmosphere in which complexity is the byword of our day. Each decision you make is a jump into the unknown, creating challenges that cost your organization time, money, and possibly morale.

**Core assumption #6:** Few leaders if any escape the second guessing, or worse, the adversaries that materialize in response to their decisions.

**Core assumption #7:** There are wrong reasons to hide your failures.

- a. Fear is a wrong reason: Most leaders avoid naming their failures due to fear, and fear is completely understandable as a motivator, for many organizations function in an atmosphere of pretense and superficiality.
- b. The second core reason to hide failure is narcissism. It takes humility to name our narcissism, and we're often too married to our image to come clean about how messed up we feel and actually are. The lie of narcissism is that we can control an image and a world that is spinning out of orbit by narrowing the field of ambiguity into a simplistic perspective.
- c. Addictions: A beleaguered leader can easily isolate himself or herself and fill his or her loneliness with the cancers of addictive substances and behaviors, ranging from sex to alcohol to simple workaholism.

**Core assumption #8:** This false sense of the ability to control a world spinning out of orbit actually leads to greater self-absorption, and the foolish conviction that we can control the world deepens.

**Core assumption #9:** True core strength is willing to feel helpless and disturbed because we actually are, and it results in a self-disciplined and passionate life rather than a controlling life that fears what may surprisingly arise.

**Core assumption #10:** If you will not face your tendency to lead out of strength instead of weakness, and if you refuse lead out of weakness or, lead with a limp, you will enter into a sinful biblical paradox. If you try to keep your life, you are fated to lose it. If you give up your life, you will find it.

**Core assumption #11:** Jesus teaches that to grow in confidence, connectedness and success, you have to admit to all that you are a failure.

**Core assumption #12:** Most leaders operate out of confidence built on little but the crumbling foundation of arrogance. Few know peace that is not dependent on performance. Few exercise freedom in creativity that are not bound to conventionality. Few possess the capacity to care for people that is not shadowed by either the urge to please them or knuckle under to the tyranny of their "shoulds."

**Core assumption #13:** There is an option of taking another path. As an act of leadership, consider the risk of giving up your life through facing, naming, bearing your weaknesses, and imagine the paradoxical yet promised benefits of actually finding life: life as a leader and life as a participant in a corporate culture that lives out of weakness instead of strength.

**Core assumption #14:** There are five crises that every leader faces. Virtually every crisis faced could be put under one of these five categories.

- a. Crisis of unexpected circumstance;
- b. Complexity of organization, solution, or problem;
- c. Betrayal by those deeply trusted or those newly hired or those regularly served or those reporting of your work;
- d. Loneliness due to the decisions rendered and the cost paid and the crisis faced and the complexity endured;
- e. Weariness due to all of the above.

**Core assumption #15:** There are five typical ineffective responses.

1. Cowardice
2. Rigidity
3. Narcissism
4. Hiding
5. Fatalism

**Core assumption #16:** There are five effective solutions.

1. Faithful courage
2. Conviction-based flexibility
3. Faithful gratitude
4. A trust in sovereignty that leads to openness and vulnerability
5. A hope that's based on the character of God more than the circumstances faced

**Core assumption #17:** Sleepless nights come to the leader because he or she realizes that each problem requires a response that seldom resolves the entire issue. Instead, every response simply creates multiple new problems. This weedlike problem seems to have a pod stuffed with countless seeds that will be sown the moment it is pulled, seeds that will result in a host of new weeds will also need attending. And if that trouble isn't hard enough to swallow, the real issue is more personal—it has to do with the fact that many of these decisions and choices that a leader makes are primarily alone.

**Core assumption #18:** Choices are easy but decisions are not. We make a thousand choices in every day, but a decision is strategic and requires a death . . . a dying to a thousand other options . . . and the putting aside of a legion of possibilities in order to choose just one. In fact, that is actually in the root of the word – de-cide is like homo-cide or sui-cide or patri-cide. In every case, the root word *decidere* means “to cut off.” All decisions cut us off, separate us from nearly infinite options as we select just one single path. And every decision we make earns us either the favor of some and the disfavor of others or vice versa.

**Core assumption #19:** A faithful leader will likely, in time, disappoint everyone. Leadership requires the willingness to not be liked, in fact, a willingness to be hated. But it is impossible to lead people who doubt you and hate you. So the constant tug is to make the decision that is the least offensive to the body you lead and re-align whatever trust can be sought after critical decisions are made with those who wonder if you really know what you're doing.

**Core assumption #20:** Leadership is not about problems and decisions; it is a profoundly relational enterprise that seeks to motivate people toward a vision that will require significant change and risk on everyone's part. The decisions made are simply the doors that both leaders and groups walk through in order to get to the land where the goal is accomplished and redemption can be found.

**Core assumption #21:** The Bible is filled with this example – God seems to choose leaders who don't want to serve, and when they do follow God's call, they often do so with such doubt that it creates new chaos. But God is so powerful that He makes that doubt the context for surrender.

**Core assumption #22:** We should expect anyone who remains in formal leadership context to experience repeated bouts of flight, doubt, surrender, and return. And we should bless such people who have done their level best to escape leadership but who have been compelled to return and put their hand on the tiller.

**Core assumption #23:** It appears God welcomes and pursues the reluctant leader because a leader inevitably uses power and therefore limits the power of others to make things happen. And the abuse of this power is incorrigibly dangerous. Reluctant leaders tend to push power away and to be suspicious of people who accumulate it.

**Core assumption #24:** God seems to pursue reluctant leaders because they don't aspire to hold power; in fact, they avidly work to give it away. They attempt this even as they use power to create a context where power is used fairly, wisely, and with checks and balances. This, by its very behavior, detoxified power by empowering others to bring their vision and passion and gifts to the enterprise. This creates an environment of open debate that honors differences and where no one fears reprisal.

**Core assumption #25:** God seems to pursue reluctant leaders because they fear being caught in pride's limelight and seem to understand that pride is a perverted form of worship as it basks in the light of its own glory and blesses the goodness that originates from within the person who has the pride. Pride is a sucking vortex that, vampirelike, draws into itself the goodness and glory of others until it disappears in death.

**Core assumption #26:** Such pride is contagious. Being in the presence of a pride-driven soul begets a craving in others for more power.

**Core assumption #27:** The reluctant leader God pursues is quick to boast in what the culture sees as the “foolishness of God.” Thus, a reluctant leader knows that his or her calling to lead is ridiculous, but he or she bears the high glory of God’s decision to call weak fools into the work of leading others. Thus the striving ambition of power-hungry leaders to make more and keep more is laughable and unattractive.

**Core assumption #28:** The reluctant leader refuses to get caught up in the hoopla of bigger and better, and refuses to serve some larger good by telling lies to get people involved. Therefore, one should beware of the leader who refuses to plan for their own succession. There are countless horror stories about leaders of Christian organizations holding on to power late into life, and that such refusal to prepare for succession in advance hamstring the organization from developing a high-capacity leader at lower levels for future growth.

**Core assumption #29:** God pursues reluctant leaders because they do not merely give accolades to others. It is their true joy to see others awoken to their potential and exceed their abilities and greatest dreams. It is the hope of every good teacher to have students who take their work further than the teacher was ever able to do.

**Core assumption #30:** In one sense, the only sane response to the hard realities of leadership and the fact that it is ridiculous and counterintuitive and paradoxical for the sinner, is to run in the opposite direction. If you are in fact able to escape to a more private and quiet existence, then count it a blessing of God and His kindness. He has decided to spare you of the costly experience of leadership. But there is another possibility. If God is involved in your life and wants you to be a leader, He will corner you and direct you back into the good that you are to live. So if God does capture you, stop running, count the cost, and lead.

**Core assumption #31:** There is therefore a tension inside the leader that is reluctant, who God seems in providence most to use: there is a passionate flight from leadership awed to an accompanying understanding that they must serve but must do so out of weakness and a revelation of God’s goodness. This is the atmosphere in which the most glory is given to God.

**Core assumption #32:** A leader has a simple definition: it is anyone who has someone following him or her. If anyone looks to you for wisdom, counsel, or direction, then you are a leader. If there is only one little hand that takes your finger and says, “Mommy,” then you are a leader. If there are fourteen high-energy boys on a T-ball team looking to you for guidance, then you are a leader. Anyone who wrestles with an uncertain future on behalf of others and who uses their gifts, talents, and skills to influence the direction of others for their greater good is a leader. **ONCE YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST, THEN YOU ARE NO LONGER A MERE FOLLOWER, FOR YOU WERE CALLED TO LEAD IN THE WORLD. EVERY BELIEVER IS**

## **CALLED TO HELP SOMEONE GROW INTO MATURITY AND SUCH IS THE CORE CALLING OF A LEADER.**

**Core assumption #33:** The core assumption of followers is that they want the person leading to be different from them so we can look up to them, and yet be similar enough to share our values and our perspective. So followers are ambivalent about leaders, to say the least.

- a. Followers tend to want leaders to be physically attractive.
- b. We want leaders to be communicatively adept.
- c. We want leaders who are well educated and open, sincere, humble, and accurate.
- d. We expect leaders to make the tough decisions while simultaneously tearing up with sentiment over Mothers' Day.
- e. **WE WANT AN ILLUSION AND WE WON'T ADMIT IT. WE PREFER THE ILLUSION BECAUSE WE HAVE A DEEP NEED TO BE BUFFETED FROM REALITY. SETTING UP A LEADER TO BE OUR BIG DADDY, OUR BRIGHT AND SHINING KNIGHT, OUR PERFECT MOTHER WHO WILL GET UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND HOLD US UNTIL WE FEEL SAFE, MAKES LEADERSHIP A NIGHTMARE FOR THOSE GOD CALLS. THEY OFTEN FEEL INFLICTED WITH THE CALLING INSTEAD OF ASSISTED WITH IT.**

**Core assumption #34:** One needs to ask, "Who in their right mind would want someone to be a leader? And who would admit that God calls every one of us to lead?" The answer is only the Bible!

**Core assumption #35:** In order to claim the joy and passion of leadership, we must be willing to walk through the valley of the shadow of death and pay high costs in leadership. Every leader will experience at least six realities: crisis, complexity, betrayal, loneliness, weariness, and glory.

1. **Crisis:** – Crisis is dealing with the finite, fallen, unpredictable world that is bent on decay and moves inexorably toward a final and cataclysmic crisis. As leaders, we live on the edge of crisis and, in measure, disaster each day.
2. **Complexity:** – As if crisis were not enough, all leaders must also deal with competing values, demands, perspectives and personalities. As we handle a crisis or even make a fairly simple decision, we are sucked into a vortex of competing possibilities, perspectives, demands and values. Questions like "What prices will be paid in private for public ministry? How much failure does one endure before it's time to release an employee? You can adopt watertight

personnel policies and procedures and still face decisions that would test the fiber of Solomon's wisdom.

3. **Betrayal:** – If you lead, you will eventually serve with a Judas or a Peter. Betrayal in some form is as sure as the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. And somehow the fact that betrayal is inevitable makes experiencing it that much more bitter. Jesus Himself endured the betrayal of both enemy and intimate friend. One of them refused to repent and took his shame in fury to the grave. The other confessed and was welcomed back, instructed to feed his brothers the forgiving love he had received from Jesus. In either case, the wound initially feels the same, and the scars can remain even after there's confession and reconciliation.

David wrote of this agony of betrayal in a profound way:

- a. If an enemy were insulting me,
- b. I could endure it;
- c. if a foe were raising himself against me,
- d. I could hide from him.
- e. But it is you, a man like myself,
- f. my companion, my close friend,
- g. with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
- h. as we walked with the throng at the house of God. (Ps. 55:12-14)

Betrayal brings not only loss of joy but an accompanying fear about the future and wondering what's around the next corner. Betrayal marks the past and mars the future, and once a betrayal occurs, it is nearly overwhelming when one attempts to escape both the self-doubt and the self-recrimination that comes from the one who has been betrayed: "Why didn't I see it coming? What did I do to deserve it? What can I do to make everything right? Why are things getting worse? Why won't this person believe I meant no harm? Am I as bad as this person says I am?" These are all the kinds of struggles that mark the leader who has been betrayed. The betrayer and the betrayed always distort truth. The betrayer twists the truth to garner more power or position while belittling his rival or his former friend. The betrayed distorts truth by over-dramatizing and expecting his ability to repair the breach and to set the record straight to be more strong than it actually is.

4. **Loneliness:** There is an old saying in Washington, D.C.: "If you want a friend, get a dog." Few people will ever have a lifelong soul mate, and leadership makes friendships even more perilous. After all, most people who serve in formal leadership have the power to alter another person's work. The data seems clear: The greater your responsibility, the more rarefied are your friendships. The ones that last over countless crises and conflicts are forged in iron. And those friendships, like true soul mates, are as rare as oxygen at thirty

thousand feet. Therefore, loneliness is one of the prices of leadership. Even the perks of a position which can lead to travel to even desirable locations seem enviable to some, and perhaps sometimes they are. But more often than not, from the leader's perspective, these supposed perks seem paltry compared to the allure of normalcy. Loneliness assaults a leader when he must also absorb the inevitable expressions of disappointment from others when their legitimate expectations are not fulfilled. In other words, criticism often comes in part because leaders, of all people, are so busy that they can never get everything done, such as responding to emails and voice mails. And often they fail to show up at family events or at gatherings with friends. The leader must bear not only loneliness but also guilt that comes with knowing others' disappointment.

5. **Weariness:** Look at the face of a U.S. president when he takes office and then look at his picture four or eight years later. He ages much faster than the rest of us. Few leaders, no matter what margins they build into their lives, can glide through their labor unaffected. The physical body suffers in leadership. Paul says as much in II Cor. 1:8 – “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death.” Weariness is really about the core struggle to hope despite the circumstances and our limitations, not so much about stress and being tired. Will we continue to pray, dream, and fight for people when the battle looks pointless? When the pallor of death begins to shroud the marriage of a friend or a colleague, will we fight to help the couple reconcile? Or will we encourage them to cut their losses since we are too weary and too short on hope?
6. **Glory:** One of the greatest struggles that a leader faces is what to do with glory. A leader who has fought for her son or his team or her staff or a friend will experience a moment of glory. But the greatest glory we can know is to see Jesus' life planted in a heart and watch beauty and righteousness begin to grow. We can weather long seasons of drought and wicked days of opposition when there are few moments of resplendent redemption. But here comes the dilemma: It's not easy to be called to the table to eat and drink and dance with God. It's not easy—in fact it's almost intolerable—to experience the white robes of glory blazing in a pinnacle of beauty and then be told we can't stay there. Even worse, after moments of glory, God generally tells us to engage in difficulty that is almost impossible to handle at our level of maturity and faith. Glory casts us into ease but also into the arms of a relentless God who desires for us to know even greater glory. This process often feels like being beguiled by a one-armed bandit called a slot machine. One of the strongest ways to motivate behavior is by intermittent reinforcement. The slot machine randomly spits out ten quarters after a lever has been pulled an indeterminate number of times. Put the quarter in and pull the lever. Put in eight more quarters, nothing

happens. And then with the ninth quarter, three lemons come up, the lights pulse, and the clang of falling quarters fills the casino. And the fool, previously feeling some level of discouragement, is now reborn and newly committed to feed the bandit more quarters. It simply gave him back what he already put in.

An honest leader will say that sometimes leading feels like this. It feels, though it's not true, that God woos us and we follow Him. We pray, we fast and we give. We urge God to transform our friend or congregant. We talk to the person; we read the Bible with him and pray. And very little changes. The machine keeps taking quarters. We keep plugging away, and then out of the blue a seed takes hold. A bit of green pops out of the ground and the first sweet fruit of new life invites us to party on with delight. And we're hooked. More quarters go into the machine, and we remain as confused by how and when God seems to work as we are at the random payout of a slot machine.

I mean no disrespect to God. It's simply how it often feels since we are servants and not controllers. This is the dilemma of glory. The more the taste, the deeper its hook in our soul and the harder it is to dislodge the hook and flee from leadership. With all the suffering and struggle involved in leading others, why would we not bolt? For one reason: God pours out His presence! God allures us to the point we want to know how the exact episode of the story will turn out.

**Core assumption #36:** Honestly remembering and articulating your life lies is more difficult than knowing the truth. The greater the fear of being caught or found out, the greater the sensed need for subterfuge. Only repentance can break the back of this cycle.

**Core assumption #37:** If a leader advocates a single way of being, that rigid approach captures all his or her ways of thinking and squelches spirited debate, silences questions, and forces the way forward along one narrow course. Such rigidity is a form of dogmatism that narrow options and embraces only one way of operating. It is cultic at best. A leader who gives in to this fear sets up hierarchies that distance him or her from staff and colleagues and he will end up with "yes men and women" who are committed to their good in the organization and not honesty to the leader.

**Core assumption #38:** The mere intensity of leadership and its successive waves of crisis endured produces weariness. Prolonged weariness can easily prompt a sense of fatalism. Ineffective responses to any of the large challenges of leadership such as betrayal, crisis, complexity, loneliness, weariness or glory result in failures that eventually will come home to roost. Any leaders faced with the consequences of their failures sense defeat and become fatalistic instead of embrace their failure with repentance and honesty and trust that God will either bring them through or require them to lay down their leadership . . . both of which can be in His plan.

**Core assumption #39:** There are two familiar models of leader. 1) First, there is the consensus-building relational leader who reads the polls and takes the people the way they primarily already want to go. 2) He is the smooth autocrat who sets the course and convinces people to follow by force of his will and persuasion. 3) But there is a third that is less familiar. He is a mess. He is not threatened by chaos, he jumps into the process, allows the bumpy road to shake out ideas and options and is willing at times to be brash and bold and yet remain tender and kind. He has an odd capacity to trust both himself, and the process, yet he is simultaneously suspicious of himself and open to hearing how others perceive him.

**Core assumption #40:** Such leaders are not born nor are they trained. They are called. If they're called, then they will be willing to believe that God can lead through chaos into something good. Most of us believe that chaos should merely be managed or avoided.

**Core assumption #41:** No one can enter the tough terrain of leadership and not fail unless they are Jesus Himself who alone did not fail.

**Core assumption #42:** The leader must be the most honest and ruthless and quickest to repent.

**Core assumption #43:** In measure, leaders are meant to tell the story of redemption by their lifestyle as they lead others to participate in God's redeeming story. It seems that people who are broken and troubled better tell the story because people who are reasonable and play it safe are never sufficiently engaged in life to understand how to tell the story or how to be the story. They sit back and wait for a leader-storyteller to come along and get them caught up in a life worth living. Broken leaders tend to live with their weaknesses on their sleeve, and it is through their weaknesses that grace can often be most magnified. Weakness is the big idea of the gospel which makes it good news for us who are not terribly healthy nor happy nor holy.

**Core assumption #44:** Jesus' way of leadership will not be normal but inverted, and hence it will neither be expected nor in most cases preferred. It will often be disruptive and anomalous and it will demand one's body and soul, one's fortune and reputation, and every other little god that claims it will keep our lives safe and satisfied must be dashed to pieces. He makes us fools who live in the world's eyes foolishly in order to reveal the economy of heaven which reverses and inverts the wisdom of this world. Thus, He calls us to brokenness, not performance; to relationships, not commotion; to grace, not to success. It is no wonder that this kind of leadership is neither spoken of nor admired in our business schools nor even in our seminaries.

**CORE ASSUMPTION #45: IF PAUL IS BEING HONEST WHEN HE SAYS OF HIMSELF THAT HE IS THE CHIEF OF SINNERS, IN HIS LETTER TO TIMOTHY, THEN WHY DO MOST LEADERS LIVE IN FEAR THAT THEY WILL ONE DAY BE DISCOVERED AND KNOWN AND EXPOSED AND HUMILIATED FOR BEING THE MESS THAT THEY ALREADY KNOW THEY ARE? IT IS FOOLISHNESS FOR LEADERS TO LIVE IN THE HOPE THAT THEY WILL NOT BE NOTICED FOR BEING THE TRAVESTY THAT THEY ARE. IF THE APOSTLE IS THIS KIND OF MAN AND WE ARE TO FOLLOW HIM AS HE FOLLOWS CHRIST, THEN WE ARE BEING CALLED TO BE A LIVING PORTRAYAL OF THE VERY GOSPEL THAT WE BESEECH OTHERS TO BELIEVE, AND THIS WILL REQUIRE US TO BE HONEST ABOUT BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY PRONE TO TELL THE TRUTH AND TO MANIPULATE . . . TO BLESS AS TO LOOK DOWN UPON . . . TO COWER AS TO BE BOLD. THE LEADER MUST ADMIT THAT HE IS A MAN ATTEMPTING TO BE A HERO WHO IS NOTHING BUT A FOOL. WE ARE BOTH, AND TO PRETEND TO BE OTHERWISE IS TO BE DISINGENUOUS. THE LEADER WHO FAILS TO FACE HIS DARKNESS MUST LIVE WITH FEAR AND HYPROCRISY. THE RESULT WILL BE A DEFENSIVENESS THAT PLACES SAVING FACE AND CONTROLLING OTHERS AS HIGHER GOODS THAN BLESSING OTHERS AND DOING GOOD WORK.**

**Core assumption #46:** There is a difference between manager and leader, and it is in the area of the internal urge to alter the status quo and to see God create a different world. Leaders are, in that sense, a kind of prophet, for they see the present as incomplete and inadequate and are willing to risk themselves and their own comfort and the status quo for the promise of a better tomorrow. A manager, on the other hand, is content to keep the organization running as smoothly and as efficiently as it can function. A manager serves to keep the plane in the air, whereas a leader wants to put a new engine on while the plane is in midair.

A manager wants to approach the inevitable chaos with the tried and true methods that have worked in the past, while a leader knows that it is difficult, but nonetheless necessary, to maybe lose and pay great prices in order for there to be a whole new way. A leader, therefore, must honor intention what is good and true today, and yet be discontent with today in light of what could transpire tomorrow.

**Core assumption #47:** The leader must simultaneously deepen the organization's desire to move while exposing the cowardice and complacency involved in wanting it to remain stationary.

**Core assumption #48:** Leaders step into a morass of hurt and accusation and defenses in order to hear and see the real issues. This ability is often described as emotional intelligence, but in fact it is wisdom tempered with a kind of courage of a paratrooper who jumps out of an airplane into enemy territory that's being strafed with machine-gun fire. This priestly act of the leader connects people with vision in their

hearts with one another as people are warned to pursue reconciliation and kingdom progress.

**Core assumption #49:** A leader must deny the temptation to please people, but rather love them and call them to maturity.

**Core assumption #50:** A leader must learn that if God is sovereign, then crisis, though truly a mark of a fallen world, has edifying implications such as – it will expose the lack of preparation or foolishness or presumption of a leader. A crisis opens up fault lines of shame and blame on our part. This was evident in 2005 after hurricane Katrina ravaged the coast near New Orleans. The state government attacked the federal government and the federal government attacked the state government. Everyone accused everyone for the shame and the blame. This act drained energy and creativity from solving a problem.

**Core assumption #51:** The right definition of crisis is essential. It originates from the Greek and it means “to sift or to separate.” Crises stir things up and divide the weak from the chaff. Crisis exposes our perceived or actual incompetence. We realize we do not know what others presume we may need to know. We simply are not wise or courageous or gifted as we want others to think we are. A crisis, therefore, is more than a mere threat. It is a danger of ruin. The threat of a wind storm that might bring a tree down or impede travel for a few hours is not a crisis. A hurricane that can flatten a neighborhood and kill residents is a crisis that could bring total ruin. Danger is compounded by the shame and blame tendencies of all of us.

**Core assumption #52:** When shame comes, it strips away our core confidence and shatters the value that others may have placed in us. Most leaders will shamefully do anything to escape such a situation that could make them face their shame. People will often set up someone as a sacrificial lamb in order to deflect the shame from themselves. Often, gossip is the dark underbelly of blame being fueled by speech behind people’s backs. It causes such damage because rather than responding to the fire that is burning, members of the organization devote personnel and resources either to putting out smaller fires or handling false alarms.

**Core assumption #53:** The dangerous temptation of crisis is ruthless control by the leader who uses authority to punish failure. Staff members expend enormous effort to avoid confrontation and become overly cautious to do their job. They do the bare minimum to conform without creativity.

**Core assumption #54:** To effectively address a crisis, a leader must draw on creativity in intuition, wisdom, freedom in commitment, and passion. If a leader rules with intimidation and squashes that kind of maneuverability and flexibility, he receives in its place rote, somewhat robotic responses from his team.

**Example:** Mother Teresa. She sees in every person to whom she ministers the image of God and the one given the dignity of God's creation and potential redemption. The first woman she picked up many years ago who was lying on a Calcutta street, her face half eaten by ants and rats, was seen by her as a reflector of God horrifically damaged by the Fall. Each emaciated body in her home for the dying is the suffering and dying reflector of Christ. For her and her community, it is the Savior's honor that is to be maintained by caring for the leprous ulcer they clean, the child they feed, the urine-soaked body they bathe. Mother Teresa once explained, "I would be able to look after only a few loved ones at the most. People sometimes ask me how I can clean the stinking wound of a leprosy patient. They say to me, 'We cannot do it for love of all the money in the world.' I tell them, 'Nor can we. But we do it for love of Him.'" She accepts no money for herself, not even a cup of tea in gratitude. How can gratitude by material be given when the service is to God, based upon His strength and for His glory? Hence, there is no condition upon their service as Mother Teresa and her Sisters of Charity serve the dying.

As a leader, she began her work in poverty when she stepped from Calcutta's Loreto Convent at Entally. Her worldly possessions were three saris and five rupees. The only thing she had in abundance was faith. As she set foot into Motijhil, she did not feel that it was necessary to carry out a survey or make a plan or raise funds. She simply saw that there was a need for a school and began to pray, even though there was no building, no chairs, no tables. On a small open patch among the shanties she began to scratch the Bengali alphabet with a stick on the ground and a few children appeared each passing day and they grew in number until she had a school.

Since she had no money and had no support, she taught herself to beg, and any medicine that she collected was dispensed easily. Such was the beginning of the Missionaries of Charity. No ministry plan, no fundraising, no board, simply calling in faith. In the next 43 years, the institutional venture of Missionaries of Charity encompassed not just schools and dispensaries, but homes for the abandoned children, leprosy hospitals, and places for the destitute and dying. By 1990 there were 456 centers in more than 100 countries. During 1990, 50,000 families were fed, 20,000 slum children were taught in 124 schools, 90,000 leprosy patients were treated, and 17,048 shut-ins were visited in their homes. Six AIDS shelters admitted 661 patients of whom 88 died during that year. And it began with nothing.

During a time when dwindling attendances at most churches is a major concern of denominations across the world, the Missionaries of Charity now number 4,000, and several hundred women anxiously await acceptance into a life of almost-absurd hardship. Cheerfulness and common sense and sturdy health are pre-requisites, and the training the sisters endure for their global outfitting for service is most rigorous.

Mother Teresa has often slept less than six hours a night and when asked why, she has laughingly said that there is enough time for rest in the hereafter. Mother Teresa has described herself as "merely a pencil in the hand of God."

Navin Chawla once wrote of Mother Teresa, "As a Hindu, armed only with a certain eclecticism, it took me longer than most to understand that Mother Teresa is with Christ in each conscious hour, whether at Mass or with each of those whom she tends. It is not a different Christ on her crucifix. . . . For Mother Teresa, to love one's neighbor is to love God; if one is unable to love one's neighbor, one is unable to love God. This is what is essential to her, not the size of her mission, nor the power others may perceive in her. In a recent meeting, she explained this to me simply but meaningfully when she said, 'We are called upon not to be successful, but to be faithful.'"

Mother Teresa often said that her family was a joyful one and that "we were very closely united, especially after my father's death." Mother described her mother as very holy. The local priest of the Sacred Heart Church that Mother Teresa attended with her mother described Teresa's mother as practical in her sense of commitment to everyday realities. Mother once said, "My mother taught us to love God and to love our neighbor."

When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Award in Oslo in December of 1979, her brother Lazar attended the service. He noted that as a child people did not call her by her given name, Agnes, but Gonxha which means "flower bud." Lazar described many times in which he sneaked into the kitchen to steal sweet confectionery desserts, but Gonxha was the only one who never stole the jam. She unfailingly reminded her brother that he should touch no food after midnight if they were to attend Mass in the morning, but he was never turned in to her mother by Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa called her own mother "Nana Loke" which means "mother of my soul."

Mother Teresa witnessed her mother in 1917, after the death of her father, start her own business of embroidering cloth in her home, and her mother turned adversity into enterprise. This enterprise enabled her to bring up her three children.

At twelve years of age Mother Teresa would go to the church library and read and began to sense a call of service. When the parish priest started a branch of the society called Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it began a major change in the life of Agnes who would soon become Mother Teresa. It was in this group that she learned about Christians and missionaries who served all over the world. It was here she learned of the Loreto nuns in Bengal. When Mother Teresa informed her mother that she was called to service, her mother went into her own room for 24 hours and remained there in prayer. When she came out she said to Agnes who had become Mother Teresa, "Put your hand in His hand and walk all the way with Him." In submission to what was clearly God's will, Mother Teresa applied to the Loreto Order in Bengal.

The Sisters of Charity rise at 5:00 AM and work for eight hours or more. This required rest in the afternoons. A weekly day off was necessary and an annual change from the workplace desirable. They have to maintain personal hygiene in order to protect themselves from the diseases they seek to cure. Therefore each sister has three saris: one to wear, one to wash, and one for emergencies and special occasions. They cover their heads for protection from the sun.

She is a prolific correspondent, although she has neither space nor time to keep all the letters that she receives. She kept a book for the archbishop that was neither a diary nor really a matter of conscience, but a record of her actions each day for the archbishop. Her entries are brief and often the dates are inaccurate. She notes that she at times would fall asleep at her tasks out of weariness. She notes in the book that she never felt it necessary to travel the usual administrative path making a survey and drawing up plans and gathering resources and training people. She saw only the immediate need of a particular individual and tried to meet it then and there. If it were an undernourished child, it was not for her to work out a project on malnutrition. She went by the shortest route to get the food for that child. This approach has remained unchanged over the years. People either learn from her or they ignore her. There is no in between.

The people who conquered the Roman Empire for Christ bore the aspect of invaders from another world. So does Mother Teresa. She and they refused the naturalized means of the world. Their conduct fills the heathen neighbor with strangest perplexity. They are so careless of life and so careful of conscience and so prodigal of their own blood and so confident in overcoming by the power of the blood of the Lamb. They are an invading army maintained from an invisible base and placing more confidence in the leadership of an unseen commander than in all the imperial help that they might be proffered. This is what bewildered and angered the heathen around them and did as Mother Teresa kept walking in dependence upon Christ.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> century writer who was not a Christian said, "They inhabit their own country, but as strangers, they bear their part in all things as citizens, and endure all things as aliens. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland a foreign country. . . . They live in the flesh, but walk not after the flesh. . . . They dwell on earth, but are citizens of heaven. They are poor, and make many rich; they are in want of all things, and they have all things in abundance; they are dishonored, and in dishonor they are glorified."

Mother Teresa decided that if the rejection of Church leadership which she received resoundingly in India was not enough to make her humble, then having to beg for the necessities of her ministry would be the ultimate humility producer and it was good for her. But she welcomed the ostracizing and loneliness that accompanied these acts. For Mother Teresa, her faith was not only the main thing, it was everything. It was her

faith that makes her love every human being. Her life is love for God and love from God, and she sees His mark upon the poor. She is obedient to her faith but she is not exclusive with her compassion. There lies the great appeal in her work. One time on March 19<sup>th</sup> when she first left the Loreto convent, she wrote the following which has clearly Catholic dimensions but profoundly theologically accurate implications. "May the immaculate heart of Jesus, cause of our great joy, guide and help, bless and perfect the beginnings of this least society.

Mother Teresa exemplified no narcissism and the willingness to embrace the loneliness of leadership. As she established the Missionaries of Charity, she accepted the three vows common to other congregations of nuns: chastity, poverty, and obedience. But she chose a fourth. "Wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor while being poor oneself." This required that she reject the donations to her personally of large institutions and large amounts of money. Frequently received, she made sure that such offerings were given to the poor and not to her nor the sisters with whom she served. It was forbidden by the fourth vow. To serve wholeheartedly meant that it could not have the heart fixed on anything other than Jesus. Inscribed over every crucifix in the institutions that soon sprung up under her leadership were the words "I thirst." Though clearly, she had mystical, in my opinion, distortions, of how to apply that phrase of Christ. She wanted the reality of Christ's loss for her and her fellow servants to motivate their willingness to lose for others. For most narcissistic leaders, there is a careful calculation of protecting one's turf and minimizing one's losses so that loss is a calculated risk instead of an embraced ambiguity that could intensify at any minute under the unjust treatment or loneliness of leadership as followers abuse or other leaders condemn or culture assails. Mother wanted to embrace it.

She called her ministry to those in incredible poverty and sickness and loss, ministering to God's reflected image in its "distressing disguise."

She relished the verse "What you do to the least of My brethren, you do to me." She took the hand of Hindu biographer Chawla and taught him this lesson as she pressed into his palm first his thumb and then each finger, one at a time, while she counted aloud, "You—did—it—to—Me! The Hindu author was spellbound by her grasp of serving God by serving the forgotten.

Mother Teresa and her sisters began every day at 5 AM. They spent one-half hour in pure meditation upon the Word of God. Then they worshiped corporately for the Roman Catholic Mass. Responsibilities on housework duties, cooking and washing and administration, would be distributed, and by 8 AM after a breakfast of tea and chapattis, they would fan out in every direction of the city for service. Hence, three hours of private and corporate worship and a brief meal preceded any service whatsoever. Aloneness with God permitted them to free themselves of narcissism and the sensed aloneness from humans—which is the necessary result of leading.

One of the rules that Mother Teresa required is that they always minister in twos in accord with Jesus' custom of sending out His followers in twos. She believes this is necessary because of potential danger and the need for constant encouragement. She requires that her nuns not eat or drink outside the convent or workplace. They may not even accept a cup of tea. Knowing how hot an Indian summer day can be, each sister carries a bottle of water in her cloth bag. These were generally cheap plastic water bottles or recycled medicine bottles. When asked why she asks that no one accept such small gifts, she said, "Often the cup of tea is something that the poor can ill afford. I cannot refuse them and take from the rich. It is simpler not to accept from anybody. That way, no one is hurt."

Her fellow servants are required to travel as do the poor. They usually walk, or if the distance is far, they use public transportation.

Often the sisters simply pray as they walk, measuring the distance in a curious way. . . . "It's five rosaries away," said the pair in Rome when they asked me if I wished to accompany them on another house visit. "Upon seeing my perplexed face," the author of Mother Teresa's biography said, "they burst into peals of laughter and explained that they measure distance in terms of the time taken to pray."

Lunch is at 1 PM. Then they are required to rest for one-half hour. This thirty-minute nap is vital. By 2 PM, the sisters are back at work and are continuously at labor until 6 PM when they return to the mother house. They then spend one hour in adoration. This corporate worship caps the day. There is then some time for food, recreation followed by a half-hour of prayer, but they are always in bed by 10 PM.

For Mother, most of the day is spent visiting the hundreds of houses that contain her fellow servants who minister all over the world. When people ask her for a business card, she hands a small card, yellow with five lines printed on it.

The fruit of silence is prayer  
The fruit of true prayer is faith  
The fruit of faith is love  
The fruit of love is service  
The fruit of service is peace  
Mother Teresa

At the end of the day after other sisters have gone to bed, Mother Teresa retreats to her small office with a single table and a single chair and responds to the administrative tasks and letters that she has received.

Mother takes no day off, but the sisters take off on Thursdays.

Sisters possess three saris in all. On Thursdays they mend and darn them. Mother sets the example. No one has ever seen her in a sari that is not nearly mended and patched. There is no air conditioning and only one fan in the mother house, and it is in the parlor and is meant for visitors. None of the sisters ever use it.

In an age of self-indulgence where quality of life is the catch phrase of our generation, it is difficult to explain an ever-growing number of young women who give up everything to work in this context.

There is no television, video, fax machine, washing machine, no generator, no toaster. The food is cooked on the charcoal stove and the fuel is the same as that for the very poor.

When Mother Teresa was asked if they had a radio or newspaper to learn what was happening in the world, she responded by saying, "No, we have the reality."

Amazingly, the Missionaries of Charity wear their happiness like a badge. Mother has said, "The best way to show gratitude to God and people is to accept everything with joy."

One would think that with this lack of narcissism and the loneliness, for some of these women never see their families for up to ten years only because they have moved to another section of the world and do not have the money to return to their families for visits, still the numbers grow. The numbers of those who stay at Sisters of Charity far outstretches those who leave. Today there are over 4,000 sisters and novices all over the world. Training has several stages. There are six months of aspirancy, one year of postulancy, two years of novitiate. Only then can they take vows. They then enter into a five-year period called the juniorate. During the juniorate, vows are renewed each year and on the sixth year the vow is called the tertianship after which they take their final vows. Before their final vows, they are sent home for three weeks. Mother does this personally and her intentions are clear. The life ahead calls for tremendous and unusual dedication and the girls must have final opportunities to decide carefully whether they wish to remain and serve.

When it comes to money, she flees narcissism and control like the plague. She's been offered millions and told she could live off the interest. She has said, "What is the good of that money, if I cannot use it when and where it may be needed? I don't want the work to become a business. It must remain a work of love. Money . . . I never give it a thought. It always comes. We do all our work for the Lord. He must look after us. If He wants something done, He will provide us with the means. If He does not provide us with the means, then it shows that He does not want that particular work done. I forget about it." Mother had never accepted government funding or church maintenance funds, and yet she maintains 468 house of the Missionaries of Charity around the world, and not one sister is distracted from her true work of comforting and

helping the lonely, the afflicted, and the despairing. One hundred countries are the recipients of her service, and even on the day when she received the Nobel Prize, the house in Delhi had no food nor money for the cheapest of food which would have been dal or lentils. As the sisters were getting ready to simply boil rice to assuage their hunger, a car drew up with the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi's daughter-in-law, Sonja, in it. She brought vegetables fresh from the garden. Mother Teresa chuckled and said, "The children and the sisters ate well that day." Hence she refuses any effort at fundraising. She forbids it. No co-worker is permitted to raise any money for the society. No funds are ever invested. Mother has said, "I do not need money in the bank. I need money to use for people." Funds that are received are spent almost as quickly as they are received, on medicines particularly for leprosy, AIDS and tuberculosis, and then on food and milk powder. Some donations are enormous. A single behest last year was almost three million Swiss francs. As it happened, the money was quickly spent on much needed supplies for Eastern Europe. Mother holds dear the sacrifice of money, not the reception of money nor the saving of money nor the investing of money. She loves to give it away.

Mother Teresa approached the Pope himself to ask for a place for the poor to stay within the Vatican. It only seemed appropriate to her. This was quite a difficult request, for the Vatican is crowded and small, given the number of people who actually serve there. The Pope responded immediately without prayer and said that it would be done. It took a long time and every time Mother Teresa returned, the Pope with chagrin said it was not yet ready. Finally the building was prepared by her fourth successive visit, and the Casa Dono di Maria was erected which now holds two dining halls which seat sixty people each, and a place for elderly to stay. Mother has said, "Now the poor are the only ones who can get into the Vatican without a ticket." Mother thinks that is a great thing. Mother Teresa has tried to resign more than once. She tried the first time in 1973 when she was 63 years old. She tried the second in 1979 when she said, "I am old and tired. It is too difficult for me to do the work. It is time for a younger sister now." In 1983 at 72 she fell, seriously ill for the first time, when she was visiting Rome.

In December of 1989 when Mother Teresa had a dizzy spell, despite the pacemaker that had been inserted in 1983, she considered stepping down. Finally, with the permission of the Pope in 1990, she stepped down. However, the sisters voted her back to leadership unanimously. Mother Teresa was not happy with the outcome. She didn't want to hang on. But she said she would do it because "it is better to serve than to be served."

**Core assumption #55:** Controlling this in the leader is inevitably caused by fear. The pursuit of power and control is an attempt to eliminate chaos and uncertainty so that someone does not have to fear what cannot be predicted. Power is wielded as an antidote to fear. It keeps the reservoir of fear from reaching flood level. Then, power freezes the top layer of fear and turns it into the ice of arrogance. The controlling

leader will appear far more confident and self-assured than what is actually the case. Underneath a façade, the controlling leader is terrified. He will use intimidation and shame or silence in order to keep people from getting near the curtain to find out that the mighty Wizard of Oz is nothing more than a middle-aged man who isn't quite sure how he got there.

**Core assumption #56:** Power and control are like a high-flying trapeze that takes the leader farther and farther above the ground with each swing. The greater his achievements, the harder is to let go. But the leader only gains confidence in Christ after he forces himself to let go. It's confidence in the goodness of God that the leader really needs. Brokenness and surrender absolutely terrify the controlling leader.

**Core assumption #57:** Leaders need humility, but humility that actually is a gift of God comes from suffering because no one is humble by nature. Hence, God makes us suffer to lose our arrogance; in order to become humble and broken, we must fall off our throne. To be broken is not a choice, it is a gift.

**Core assumption #58:** There are only three possible responses to the absurdity of a sinner leading: controlling fear, flight by fear, or welcomed brokenness as our sins are unmasked by leadership. There are four realities that must be faced by the person who is truly humble and broken.

1. I am never sufficiently good, wise, or gifted enough to make things work myself.
2. My failures will harm others, they will limit the process, and they will harm myself, no matter how hard I try to avoid the failure or the harm.
3. The greater harm that I can do is to try to limit the damage I cause by not participating in the solution, by quitting the process, or by pushing for control.
4. Calling out for help from God and others is the deepest confession of humility.
5. To be humiliated—that is, to publicly fall off our throne of power—is to stand face to face with the deepest and truest reality of life: we have never been and will never be meant to have God's power. We are not God. Hence, I cannot make an organization thrive. I can't make my kids believe. I can't create intimate joy with my wife. I have very little control even over my own thoughts, feelings, or choices. Oh, I do have some, but it is naïve and arrogant to assume that I even have dominion fully over myself so that I can do whatever I choose. What I do have is the ability to enter into the flow of paradox, while confessing one's failure to have control is the actual first step in the redemptive process. Even the less theologically articulate Alcoholics Anonymous understands this.

**Core assumption #59:** Leadership requires courage as G. K. Chesterton defined it.

Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of a readiness to die. Jesus said, "He that will lose his life, the same shall save it," is not a piece of mysticism for saints and heroes. . . . A soldier surrounded by enemies, if he is to cut his way out, needs to combine a strong desire for living with a strange carelessness about dying. He must not merely cling to life, for then he will be a coward, and will not escape. He must not merely wait for death, for then he will be a suicide, and will not escape. He must seek his life in a spirit of furious indifference to it; he must desire life like water and yet drink death like wine.

**Core assumption #60:** Leadership can be paraphrased in the following phrase:

I don't know if I am right, nor am I sure the path chosen is the best, but after reflection, feedback, debate, and prayer, I am choosing this path. In the process,  
I will seek life like water and drink death like wine.

**Core assumption #61:** Courage. Anne Lamott has said it well. "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."

**Core assumption #62:** Sometimes leadership feels like juggling flaming chain saws.

**Core assumption #63:** The more a person is driven by emptiness and inadequacy due to their woundedness, the more self-centered and violent that person will become—and the more oppression they will bring to the world. When a leader fails to deal with their own woundedness, they fall into patterns of oppression. Those patterns are either aggressive or passive-aggressive, but they're always present.

**Core assumption #64:** A leader is often a wounded individual who feels drawn to rectify, to amend, the suffering that he or she has endured in the past. It appears noble, and often in fact is, until new wounds of betrayal are suffered that repeat the original harm. Then the nastiness begins. A leader who has either not faced his or her wounds or acknowledged the defenses he or she has erected as protection from harm may become cruel, defensive, belittling, arrogant, emotionally insulated and even a sexual predator—reflecting some of the characteristics of a narcissist. The more powerful that person's leadership actually becomes, the more likely these tendencies are.

**Core assumption #65:** Being betrayed by another is that deep psychic wound that often unearths the woundedness of the leader.

**Core assumption #66:** Leaders who are driven by their wound under emptiness and their isolation create cultures of idolatry. They become self-absorbed and yearn for followers who are captured by their glory.

**Core assumption #67:** Like it or not, leaders who are motivated by their woundedness ultimately become narcissistic. This narcissism is a continuum and goes all the way from:

1. Lack of interest in the perspective of others;
2. Highly opinionated who must be heard;
3. Emotionally detached to everybody else's position but their own;
4. Ruthlessly utilitarian where people are valued exclusively in direct proportion to the respect they give to you.

**Core assumption #68:** Success is not merely harnessing chaos and driving the troops to perform a certain task well. Success requires the shaping of one's character to the contours of the One who calls us to lead—Jesus. The antithesis of all narcissism is Jesus, and any model of leadership that endures or enables narcissism is utterly opposite to Him.

**Core assumption #69:** To the narcissist, humility is too similar to humiliation which is a reminder of some betrayal that they've suffered in the past. Since, become like Jesus involves failure and brokenness and humility, the narcissist will spend their life avoiding further betrayal by refusing to need God or other people at the core of their being. Look at how God dealt with Jonah's narcissism. He called him to preach to the people he despised the most. It was a little bit like asking Ralph Lauren to become a greeter at Wal-Mart. Jonah fled the humiliation of being a prophet to the hated people of Nineveh. When he was finally forced to do what God wanted him to do, instead of becoming humbled he became dark and furious. He preferred death to being humbled. For the narcissist, the choice is simple but making it is profoundly difficult. They either rage against God's call to humility or they rest in His righteousness. There is no alternative.

**Core assumption #70:** There is a loneliness to leadership. Simply honoring confidentiality puts a leader in the direct path of the Mack truck of gossip. Leaders generally know 70% more information than those they lead, and this gulf separates us. Psycho-linguists, those who study how we talk with each other, tell us that it is rare for a person to ask more than two meaningful questions of another person, especially if the other person is in some kind of distress. We really don't want to help; we simply want to resolve the problem. This is magnified when people relate to leaders who often

struggle deeply with critical decisions that few really want to understand. For to enter into a deep understanding of the person who is in leadership means that the one who is beginning to understand must lead in measure and no one really wants to do it.

**Core assumption #71:** Loneliness in leadership is rooted in integrity because it must eschew those alliances with people when they conflict with the integrity of the kingdom. Hence, loneliness is highlighted when things follow an unagreed-upon course into adversity, and folks want to save their own hides. A true leader must not then just melt to the ground. He or she must stand and quite possibly intercept arrows. Deceit grows in an organization when people feel like they have to hide in order to survive. This creates a labyrinthine litany of half-truths and lies that eventually make the community cynical and mean. The mission of the organization is lost in the fury of people's fighting to keep power and avoid being exposed.

**Core assumption #72:** A leader recognizes that every organization has a zoo of unacknowledged elephants that sit in the center of the room, and he or she will not accept the unspoken rule which is, "Never name that elephant and make people uncomfortable."

**Core assumption #73:** The leader must help people to seek truth, and we do this by modeling this when we are exposed for not seeking it in ourselves. Honesty is not just saying what we actually think or feel; it is the willingness to be laid bare before the eyes of truth so that other people may learn how to do it. Most leaders will never allow themselves to be laid bare. If your need for another's approval is more important to you than the need for truth, then you are not ready to lead.

**Core assumption #74:** An honest hunger for truth requires the leader to remain open to everyone, including those with whom they most disagree and have conflict. It requires that he or she remain open to the fact that we desperately need the very people who challenge and contradict our cherished notions of truth. Although we may never agree, nor do we need to do so, but we do need others, especially those who challenge us to dig deeper and become more human.

**Core assumption #75:** A true leader knows that honesty easily degenerates into name-calling, blaming, judgmental critique in the name of being honest. Too many people have chosen to say terrible things to others under the banner of telling the truth. This is not honesty, but cruelty and thinly-veiled vengeance. Honest promises to remain tender and kind and full of hope, despite personal cost, and always desiring the other person's growth. With biblical honesty, the more we remain by that person, the greater will our desire be to be known and to know and to help them.

**Core assumption #76:** A leader must be honest about their own failures for the honor of Christ. Ironically, people cannot reach out to a leader who is arrogant, self-sufficient and independent; they can only reach out to someone who is in need. Being

cared for means that leaders must reveal their own suffering, so that others can enter the war that is in their hearts and help them, too.

**Core assumption #77:** Every leader will feel the press against the wall of difficult and busyness because they are deeply involved in a work that is advancing against forces of darkness. But the burned out leader has allowed that intensity and exhaustion to take away the pleasure of hope. When a leader loses hope, virtually everything else can entangle him or her.

**Core assumption #78:** A leader will be escorted by Christ into unlimited need and expanding opportunity because the kingdom is advancing. We will feel the tensions between desperation of the broken and command at attention to our family. One must live with that tension and be faithful to Jesus. Here's the tension: The more need there is, the more action is necessary to respond to the opportunity. Yet the more we act, the less energy we have in reserve. The more energy we expend, the less we have to give. And until our reserves are replenished, we can't motor forward because our fuel has been depleted. It's a simple formula.

**Core assumption #79:** A biblically-called leader is drawn to the fight, but once we engage, our bodies suffer stress and exhaustion—and we can find that we are in over our heads. All the best-laid plans of mice and men can't insure what will transpire.

**Core assumption #80:** Need is like a wide "maw," always open and waiting to devour us. For most of us, we think the only solution is to get busier.

**Core assumption #81:** Though being busy seems like the polar opposite of laziness, it is actually the busy person who is not so much active as lost. A lazy person does little to nothing, while a busy person does almost everything, but the similarity is that both refuse to be intentional. Busyness, hence, is the moral equivalent of laziness.

**Core assumption #82:** The leader must learn that the schedule that has back-to-back meeting seldom provides an opportunity to reflect, learn, and plan. Instead, it follows the tactic of "ready, fire, aim."

**Core assumption #83:** A leader must understand that busyness is often nothing more than a yearning for meaning satisfied by meeting the expectations of others instead of doing what God has called us to. A frenetic pace will, in the fullness of time, reveal one's threadbare soul. The revelation is not merely that we are exhausted and need a break. It isn't simply that we are overextended and need more balanced lives. It is rather . . . a truer revelation is that we've lost sight of our calling and the One who calls us.

**Core assumption #84:** The tipping point for the clear sign that we are becoming too busy is—we become disillusioned with our first love and have fallen in love with lesser

lovers. What should have originally led us in ministry . . . that which was to be our true north . . . the true star of motivating ministry . . . is the gospel and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. An over-busy person is often lost in expectation meeting so that they have no sense of spiritual vitality. Jesus simply gets lost and obscured in the debris of our personal busyness and weariness. Proof that this is the case is how we will become disillusioned when the thrill of a challenge wears thin. Most leaders love the adrenaline rush of intensity, and many privately confess to loving certain kinds of crises and high-demand situations because they bring the same physical arousal that extreme sports do. But as the crisis dissipates and disillusionment follows, then we're more in love with our activity than the Savior Himself.

Another good sign for a leader coming to his or her senses is when we finally prefer the smaller role and the least opulent quarters and are happy with Jesus. The leader who comes to his or her senses realizes that discontent cannot drive leadership to create a better world. For leadership requires dismantling and rebuilding.

Let me illustrate. Leadership is a lot like starting a diet in the midst of a wedding reception. Everyone is feasting and partying, and the temptation is to return to the trough. A leader is not only dieting during the reception, but is trying to convince other guests at the party to reconsider their food intake. If he's lucky, he'll encounter no greater harm than being ignored, but he is much more likely to be tossed out into the street. Therefore, the wrongly-motivated leader won't last long. The rightly-motivated leader will not only diet, but he will also teach and preach and write about a better diet. He must lose weight himself and be healthy and even love tofu. He'll have to bear the ridicule and gossip and patronizing treatment of others, and ignore the innuendo and personal affront, all the while attending dinners where everyone else devours greasy ribs and grease-sodden French fries. Such a leader, energized by Jesus, will endure the discontent and avoid the narcissistic temptations of discontented and disillusioned-driven leadership.

**Core assumption #85:** "Vision alone is enough to drive people" is a stereotype and a lie that must die. Many see this as Christian of and in itself. But we must remember Moses. Before he led a nation, he wandered in Midian for forty years and tended sheep. Our days spent in the desert may be shorter, but they will be no less agonizing because they are a season of death.

A leader's dreams must die if a deep soul is to be born.

**Core assumption #86:** A leader must learn from failure to not fear the contempt of others, and also must learn from success to not trust the applause of others. When contempt and applause no longer move one's heart to hide or strive, then you are beginning to prepare to ask the question, "What will really please God?"

**Core assumption #87:** The nature of leadership will have to compel people by model to reconsider the cultural norms that say, "Get it while you can! Push yourself to

the limit!" The assumption for many is that you must make hay while the day is long, and rest when the evening comes. The problem is that evening never comes. So people live until they die in early retirement. Hence, the leader learns that he or she must often disappoint many in order to please the One who must be pleased, Jesus.