

Promises, Conditions and Rules of the Game for “Being a Leader and The Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model”

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9 September 2018

This document contains the **eighth** of **nine** Pre-Course Readings for our one-semester Course “Being A Leader and The Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model.”

Some of the material presented in this Course is based on or derived from the consulting and program material of the Vanto Group, and from material presented in the Landmark Forum and other programs offered by Landmark Worldwide LLC. The ideas and the methodology created by Werner Erhard underlie much of the material. The authors are responsible for all errors or incompletions in this work.

Reading 8: Promises, Conditions and Rules of the Game for “Being a Leader and The Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model”

A. What Is This Course About?

Being A Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership as Your Natural Self-Expression.

And, that’s all.

B. What Am I Being Promised from My Participation in this Course?

You will leave this Course being a leader and exercising leadership effectively as your natural self-expression.

While you will not necessarily have all of the experience and knowledge you need to be a truly extraordinary leader, you will have experienced whatever personal transformation is required for you to be a leader – in any environment and no matter with what conditions you are confronted. Even when you personally lack certain experience or knowledge, you will know what to do to be an effective leader.

After years of working with the ontological / phenomenological approach we have found that the “Conditions for Realizing the Promise of the Course”, and the “Rules of the Game”, must be honored (as we have defined “honored” in the new model of integrity) to allow all participants to realize the maximum value from this Course.

During your participation in this Course, please do whatever you have to do to honor the conditions for realizing the Promise of the Course, and the rules of the game as outlined in the following sections.

C. What Are the *Conditions* I Must Fulfill to Realize the Promise of this Course?

1. Course Conditions

- a. Be willing to discover and confront my inauthenticities – where I am not being genuine, real, or authentic. That is, where in my life I am not being or acting consistent with who I hold myself out to be for others, and where I am not being or acting consistent with who I hold myself to be for myself. And, be willing to tell the truth about where I am not being genuine, real, or authentic. What this looks like as-lived: being authentic about my inauthenticities.
- b. Be willing to be open and ruthlessly straight about my ways of being and acting.
- c. Be open to having my frame of reference (mindset) – network of ideas, beliefs, biases, prejudices, social and cultural embedded-ness, and taken-for-granted assumptions – regarding what it is to be a leader, and what the effective exercise of leadership is, examined and questioned, and be open to transforming that frame of reference. And, be open to having my frame of reference (mindset) – network of ideas, beliefs, biases, prejudices, social and cultural embedded-ness, and taken-for-granted assumptions – for who I am for myself examined and questioned, and be open to transforming that frame of reference.
- d. Given that it is essential in developing yourself as a leader, in this Course we will be examining and questioning the constraints and shaping imposed by your particular frame of reference relative to leader and the effective exercise of leadership, and your frame of reference relative to who you are for yourself.
- e. Be open to having my *worldview* (model of reality) examined and questioned, and be open to transforming my *worldview*.
- f. As we will discuss more fully during the Course, one's *worldview* (model of reality) constrains and shapes one's *frame of reference* (mindset) relative to leader and leadership, and one's *frame of reference* (mindset) relative to who one is for oneself. We will be particularly concerned with that aspect of one's *worldview* that constrains and shapes one's *frames of reference* relative to leader and leadership, and relative to oneself.
- g. Be willing to take on fully what is presented in this Course before deciding to accept it or reject it. That is, take on what is presented in the Course even if I don't like it or find it difficult or at first don't agree with it. If by the end of the Course I find that it still doesn't fit for me, then I can discard it. But, if during the Course it does come to fit for me, then do whatever I have to do to master it.
- h. Participate fully and completely in the Course, with nothing held back.
- i. Respect the dignity, thoughts, and confidentiality of my fellow participants.

- j. Have compassion for and patience with the struggle and effort that my fellow participants and I will go through from time to time, which struggle and effort are required to produce the breakthroughs necessary to realize the Promise of this Course.
- k. Be a full partner in producing value for myself; not waiting to have it done to me or for me.
- l. Give my word to play by the “rules of the game” for this Course, which are stated in a Section below. And, I commit to honor that word (as “honoring your word” is defined in the paper on Integrity¹ an excerpt of which you will have read prior to the Course).
- m. Finally, be willing to recognize that in my choosing to participate in this Course I have given my word to fulfill the conditions for realizing the Promises of this Course, and to play by the “rules of the game” of this Course. I give this word to myself, to my co-participants, and to the instructors of this Course. And, I give my word to myself that I will honor that word.

2. About Maturity and Courage

Quoting from “Learning As Transformation” by Jack Mezirow & Associates (2000 p. 10, emphasis added):

“Discourse, in the context of Transformation Theory, is that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. ... Reflective discourse involves a critical assessment of assumptions ... [this] requires emotional maturity.”

The “specialized dialogue” we employ is based on our ontological approach with its associated phenomenological (“as-lived”) methodology. Employing this methodology we will be critically examining our personal integrity, inauthenticities, perceptual constraints, functional constraints, worldview (model of reality), and critically examining our frames of reference (mindsets) regarding leader, leadership, and who we are for ourselves. As Mezirow says: This requires a certain level of maturity and the courage to be honest with oneself.

¹ Erhard, Werner, Jensen, Michael C. and Zaffron, Steve. 2008. “Integrity: A Positive Model that Incorporates the Normative Phenomena of Morality, Ethics and Legality” (April 25). Harvard Business School NOM Working Paper No. 06-11; Barbados Group Working Paper No. 06-03; Simon School Working Paper No. FR 08-05. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=920625>

3. Thinking For Yourself

This Course is not about being given answers. It is about empowering you to validate or not in your own experience what is presented, and based on that to think for yourself about what is presented. And, as a result of that process, to expand beyond the way you wound up being – that is, to expand your opportunity set of ways of being, thinking, planning, and action. That is, the Course is designed to give you access to being a leader and the effective exercise of leadership as your natural self-expression.

4. Course Interactions

If in the process of examining your personal integrity, inauthenticities, perceptual constraints, functional constraints, worldview (model of reality), frames of reference (mindsets), and who you are for yourself, you do not want to be interacted with by the instructors please say that if we start to interact with you. At the same time, because sharing and interacting during the Course is so vitally important to realizing the Promise of the Course, please note that if you decline to participate in the sharing and interactions, you may not get the full value of the Course. Know that we have compassion for you in your dealing with these matters. Each of your instructors has had to deal with our own personal lack of integrity, inauthenticities, perceptual constraints, functional constraints, worldview (model of reality), frames of reference (mindsets), and who we are for ourselves, and we continue to do so.

At the same time one must be ruthlessly honest in order to deal effectively with such matters. When we interact with you, please don't confuse our ruthless compassion for anything else, including anger, annoyance, or insensitivity.

D. The Course Rules of the Game

1. The Course began with your engagement with the first of nine pre-course readings, and will not end until you leave the building at the end of the last day of the Course.
2. At the beginning of each session, select the front-most, center-most seat and sit next to someone you have not sat next to previously. Be seated and attentive at the announced start time of each session, that is, actually ready to begin.

3. Be present both physically and mentally for each session of the six days of the Course.
4. Do not be an observer; rather participate actively in the Course.
5. Regarding your name badge:
 - a. Pick up your name badge each morning from the tables outside of the course room.
 - b. At all times, remember to have your name badge visible.
 - c. Leave your name badge in the designated area each night before leaving for the day.
6. If during class you need to use the restroom, please return as quickly as possible.
7. Water will be available in the course room. You may bring bottled water to your seat, or you may bring water to your seat in whatever container is offered at the water station in the course room. Please do not bring any other beverages into the course room except water.
8. Please hold any private comments between yourself and another participant until a break. If you have a comment, put your hand up and we will call on you.
9. When you have a question or comment, or something you want to share, please raise your hand, and raise it high so that we see you as soon as possible. If we call on you, please stand up immediately and go to the nearest microphone stand. (Note that we often call on more than one person at a time to stand up.) Please don't stand up unless we call on you.
10. To manage the progress of the Course, from time to time we may ask those with their hands still raised who we haven't called on (or even those standing that we have called on) if they have a question about the content of the Course, or if their hand is raised (or they are standing) because they have a comment or something they want to share. Given how much there is to cover in this Course, we cannot answer questions that are not germane to the Course, and sometimes we won't have time for further comments or sharing.
11. If you simply want something read again, just shout out "Please read (the whole slide, the last paragraph, or the last sentence) again".
12. So that we include everyone in the conversation (a critical aspect of this approach), from time to time we will call on people who do not have their hand raised. When we call on you, please stand up immediately and go to the nearest microphone stand.
13. During class sessions, refrain from doing any non-course work. (For example: reading non-course material or writing anything that isn't course related.)
14. Cell phones, smart phones, tablets, Personal Digital Assistants, iPads, Voice and/or Video recorders, any type of camera and the like must be turned off, and not even in vibrate or airplane mode during class time. Before the beginning of each session please confirm for yourself that you have done this.

15. No open computers or tablets during the session. If you find it necessary, you may make hand written notes.
16. Do not take a photograph of any individual who has not explicitly given you permission. Do not take a photograph of a group of people without the explicit permission of each person in the group.
17. While you may not use computers or other devices during any session, please bring your computer and/or other electronic devices so that you can download Break Assignments during breaks and so that you will be able to review the slides presented during the Course in the evenings if you wish.
 - a. The instructors and the instructors' assistants will use their computers during the Course in the conduct of the Course and for making notes regarding the development of the Course.
18. In this Course, take the opportunity to demonstrate leadership by empowering and enabling your fellow participants – especially when things are difficult for them.
19. Be open to being empowered and enabled by your fellow participants. In order to be a leader, you must master being an effective follower.
20. During the class when another participant is speaking, do whatever you have to do to be engaged with what they are saying – this is an exercise of leadership, and is a critical aspect of the power of the Course.
 - a. Experience has shown that, to the degree that you work to find elements of yourself in what others share about themselves, you will have important insights about yourself, even though you are doing no more than listening. Moreover, you will be learning what leaders need to know about listening and about human nature.
 - b. Don't let yourself get “bored” when we are working with others – put yourself in their place and you will realize value for yourself. Or at the very least, you will learn something important about developing leadership in others, a critical aspect of being an effective leader. By the way, being bored is often a non-conscious cover-up (or a conscious ruse) to avoid looking at something about yourself.
21. If you need to stand during the Course for any reason, including if you find yourself falling asleep, please stand up and walk to the designated section of the room, which will be identified on the first morning of the Course. We ask that you stay standing in the designated section and that you engage yourself fully in the course while you are standing. As soon as you have handled the issue for which you are standing, please return to your seat.
22. Honor confidentiality regarding what other participants share during the Course.

- a. With people who are not in the Course you may share what has been shared by participants in the class, **but do not ever mention the name of the person who shared it, or any company or other institution name, or the names of anyone else who was involved in that sharing.**
 - b. You are responsible for managing this request; obviously we are not able to guarantee it. You should know that in our years of doing this work, we have not heard of people violating this request.
23. You are welcome to share anything that we, the instructors, share about ourselves.
24. We invite you to share with others anything about yourself or the material that we cover in this Course – and, because of the value you will create for yourself out of that sharing, we encourage you to do so.
- a. We also encourage you to share the insights that you produce for yourself out of your participation.
25. While we encourage you to share freely, do not solicit other participants for your personal or professional financial gain during breaks or around the Course.
26. The following is critically important: Don't walk out of the Course at the end of the day upset or stuck with anything, or upset with any instructor or participant. Get anything that you are stuck with or upset about complete for yourself before you leave for the day. To accomplish this, see one of the instructors any time before you leave the Course for the day.
27. In this Course it is vitally important that you come prepared to each session having fully completed the break assignments requested of you so that you can effectively engage in the course work we will do based on those assignments.
- a. Complete each of the break assignments before the next session. You will have assignments on every break including meal breaks and overnight. Since completing each of these assignments is required for you to realize the Promise of the Course, do not schedule personal engagements or obligations for yourself during the breaks, meals, and evenings for the duration of the Course.
 - b. This Course will not be easy, and in order to fulfill on the Promise of the Course your participation both in the course and in having done the preparatory work is required. The Course gets done through your participation.
 - c. About one-third of this Course will involve deep personal introspection on your part and the part of your fellow participants to identify and relax those personal ontological constraints that must be dealt with for you to be free to be a leader and exercise leadership effectively as your natural self-expression. This kind of sharing will create a level of openness that may be unfamiliar for you or perhaps occur as unusual. Doing this is an exercise in authenticity, and authenticity is one of the four factors that comprise the foundation on which leadership is built.

28. Given the phenomenological as-lived pedagogical discourse (methodology) used in this Course, some people will choose to share what they have discovered about the way they wound up being and the limits it imposes on their ways of being and acting when being a leader or in the exercise of leadership.
- a. If you are personally unwilling to participate in such deep reflection, you should not be in this Course.
 - b. While you may choose not to share your experience of doing so, if you are unwilling to be present when others share their experience of doing so, you should not be in this Course. And, in making this decision, you should be aware that from time to time such sharing may include participants authentically sharing crucible-like deeply personal incidents from their lives, and expressing various emotions in the process.

E. What Contributes (And What Does Not Contribute) To The Power Of The Course

1. During The Course, What Contributes to The Power of the Course:

- Be open and be coachable.
- Sharing a current example of or a personal experience of what is being presented in the Course.
- Sharing an insight, opening or breakthrough that has resulted from dealing with or applying what has been presented in the course.
- A query (including a “yeah but”, “how ‘bout”, “what if”, or an opinion) with the intention to further your understanding of, or to clarify for yourself, something specific being presented in the Course.
- Your repeating back to the instructor something presented in the Course for you to confirm the accuracy of your grasp of what has been presented.
- An expression of something you are struggling with or cannot resolve presented as an opportunity to be worked with to get it resolved. (This is distinct from a simple expression of helplessness. It requires you to do the work to identify something specific like a word, phrase, or sentence you didn’t understand.)
- Asking how what is being presented might look like in action – that is, what does it look like as it is lived? (While the difference is subtle, this is distinct from asking for an example.)
- Sharing an example of a personal experience that seems inconsistent with what is being presented in the Course as an opportunity to be worked with to get it resolved.
- When you are sharing, participate in a way that “forwards the action” for everyone in the course and yourself – an expression of leadership.

- Forwarding the action means for example, taking something presented, or something said by another participant, and building on it to expand its usefulness or potency, or making it clearer or more readily accessible.
- Authentic dissent can also forward action. There is obviously a range to “forwarding the action”. At the other end of this range, examples of not forwarding the action would be: distracting conversations, making others wrong, refusing to allow the discussion or presentation to go on, or refusing to accept something for consideration.

2. What Dilutes the Power and Progress of the Course:

- A comment, opinion, or counter-argument or criticism, disguised as a question.
- Something that comes up for a participant (a “yeah but”, “how ‘bout”, “what if”, or an opinion) that seems to be inconsistent with what is being presented, which the participant presents as an invalidation of what is being presented in the Course rather than looking for a resolution (one way or the other).
- A “that’s like ...” share triggered by what is presented that muddles the rigor of what is presented.
- Attempting during course sessions to lead a different course for the other participants, rather than to contribute to the Course as being led.
- Attempting to substitute terminology and/or theory from another discipline (no matter how valid) rather than struggling to see how the discipline of this Course applies and what it makes available as contrasted with the terminology and/or theory from that other discipline.
- Attempting to validate what one has to say based on its likely being the view of others in the room, or attempting to enlist others in that view.
- A rant (something that comes out in an emotionally-charged string that is triggered by something that happens in the room).
- Rambling on without making any point.

Your instructors will intervene if any of the above happens.

F. A Review

OUR PROMISE

You will have experienced whatever personal transformation is required for you to leave the Course **being who you need to be to be a leader**, and with **what it takes to exercise leadership effectively as your natural self-expression**.

In other words, you will be a leader, and you will have what it takes to exercise leadership effectively as your natural self-expression.

To realize the Promise of this Course you must fulfill the Course Conditions as we have stated above.

REFERENCES

Erhard, Werner, Jensen, Michael C. and Zaffron, Steve. 2008. "Integrity: A Positive Model that Incorporates the Normative Phenomena of Morality, Ethics and Legality" (April 25). Harvard Business School NOM Working Paper No. 06-11; Barbados Group Working Paper No. 06-03; Simon School Working Paper No. FR 08-05. Accessed 06 February 2016. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=920625>

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