

Unity Leaders Journal

Sharing Ideas

The Nakedness of Leadership



Inspiring and developing Unity leaders and ministries brings to mind the tool of affirmative prayer, and our third principle aligned with a single vision. (“Thoughts held in mind produce after their kind.”) This becomes powerfully strong through unified agreements from everyone at the table of conscious leadership.

We begin by shifting our internal thought energy of *leadership* to that of *relationship* at the purest state of connection. **In Unity, it’s the recognition of the Christ in all.** A deeper understanding to “know thy self” begins in applying our principles. Self-awareness is key, even though it’s not much fun in its birth. Unity, at large, is enthusiastic about transformational experiences. *Now Is the Time*—A powerful claim. Is it yours to do? Are you being called into the next phase of leadership to develop the cultural consciousness of our movement and world?

This requires head and heart in sacred balance to serve a world out-picturing in crisis. Culturally, **if we find ourselves in conflict avoidance, we've gone back to sleep** to the upheaval energies we're experiencing globally. Our foundational principles are moving into the next stage of maturity. Transformational experiences are momentarily life-changing, but **staying awake into spiritual maturity invites us to develop our skills** beyond what we think we intellectually know or even *through* beloved past experiences. It's these evolutionary phases that ripen our collective wisdoms.

Oh, No! Vulnerability Ahead

Today, we're called to take the inner experience and story and share it globally. This also **invites us into greater vulnerability**. This is how I lead groups. I'm willing to show you who I am in all the discoveries and also a story of healing. By modeling this skill, we provide communities and individuals space to own the transformative experience and share it.

Skilled conscious leadership creates safety first and then room for each light of God to grow and serve. We open doors for next level healing to occur. To heal is not a suggestion something is broken. The human organism is a healing intelligence. As we consciously evolve, we shed what no longer serves at a more rapid pace. We feel what's bubbling up and also recognize how quickly it's moving us.

We've come full circle, but with a new view to share our story. This is the format by which we flourish through our human lens. The skills of empathy and vulnerability are called into action. **For true relationship to occur, leaders prepare to be in a space of emotional and spiritual nakedness.** This requires development and practice and does not always feel secure. Skilled pastoral care and gentleness is paramount among leadership teams. Culturally, vulnerability has been seen as weak. Many may eagerly retreat to head skills and old models of defense from deeply rooted survival mechanisms, and we see this out-picturing in our world. Openhearted conscious leadership invites every One to the table and all lights on full-beam.

Karen Starz, CNVC (Center for Nonviolent Communication) candidate, conducts community trainings based on the empathy and vulnerability model.

"As a community facilitator, I work with the thoughts people are telling themselves in order to support them into identifying feelings and needs. The aim is for deeper authentic connections. For me, this is key to living Unity principles. An NVC model brings our principles into congruence with communications, especially as a leadership model. Spirit is not learned or taught—it is the Truth of who we are. **Empathy, compassion and communication can be learned.** To thrive as leaders, humanity is called to learn these things on a deeper level."

Empathy is not a soft skill. **When empathy and vulnerability meet, there is a link to true relationship.** We seek to create connections beyond the letters before or after our names or social positions. It is

through vulnerability and empathy we see, hear, and speak to the multitudes. This invites everyone in, unlike anything else. Jesus proved this strategy by claiming his kinship *with and as the One*. Everything develops as a strategy, but this shifts from a power *over* to a power *with*. Life-enriching skills bloom.

Conscious Leadership

H Emilie Cady revealed vulnerability in *How I Used Truth*. After two years she cries to God, “Why this failure?” The answer: “God said, let there be light; and there was light.” (Gen 1:3) It was all the answer she received. She realized after two years, she never said, “**It is done**: God is now manifested as my supply.” She hadn’t claimed her good as here and now. She was still asking.

Conscious leadership takes a position. It’s part of leadership, but creates space for collaboration—open and vulnerable about the process. In the case of Dr. Cady, her genuine response gave way for the miraculous to occur in others. She shared what wasn’t working, left behind fear of judgment and united Divine life with a new creation story. A great metaphysician using vulnerability before it became the latest workshop on-trend!

Conscious leadership is committed to the power of affirmative prayer, while tapping into the creative genius within the people in a movement valuing unity. We are blessed with conscious leaders in our communities devoted to serve in a greater way. **This requires communication, connection and heart-centered relationships.**

Trusting the Christ-centered calling of those saying “yes” to specific areas of leadership as ministers, spiritual leaders, boards, lay leaders, and chaplains, we know what trust looks like. Unity Worldwide Ministries’ as a professional worldwide organization through active teams and staff are called to lead, guide and encourage spiritual communities through leading-edge services and resources. With trust and blessings we see the imprint of our value of *unity* as Unity Worldwide Ministries and Unity World Headquarters occupy sacred ground together. We celebrate the incredible guidance of Spirit by those courageously serving during this phase of conscious leadership. Trust and prayers are invited as we greet God in expression through each person called to serve. My heart expands in gratitude each time I pause to consider the tireless love, service and devotion of so many everyday on behalf of Unity.

Rev Howard Caesar, has witnessed the phases of leadership within himself, as well as in community. He served as my minister as I began my path and continues to serve in this role for me today in a present and authentic way. After more than 40 years of ministry leadership he says, “**The three most important things in building a strong ministry or any organization are: Relationships, Relationships, and Relationships.** You try to find the most emotionally healthy, spiritually conscious people you can and then grow together, bond together, and accomplish together. Leadership teams require loyalty, honesty, mutual respect, and support. **It is essential to effectively communicate the vision of what you are trying to accomplish together, and the quality and standard at which you are reaching.** Together you align

holding the consciousness of the goal. Whatever the challenge, it is vital to bring key players together in a spirit of oneness, with prayer and the knowing the way is being revealed. It is the state of 'knowing' together that amazing things flow with Spirit."

As we peel back layers of our humanness and surrender to the Divine, we raise consciousness. We become aware of our kinship and celebrate our diversity. Our internal response to change reveals how we navigate each season. **We're invited to embrace a learner's mind while being open to the wisdom teacher within and around us.** Being the observer is a great gift for the next season of conscious leaders. There is powerful wisdom from the ages within us, as well as the wounds of ancestral evolutions. It is all there. **When we look closely, we reveal what is to be healed, released, and welcomed.**

Embracing Conflict

In my years as a coach, trainer, and grief facilitator, I acknowledged results, which motivates, but it's when everything appears to stop moving outwardly that I've witnessed discouragement, sadness, or anger within groups and individuals. This is where the magic actually *begins!* **Embracing internal and external conflict is a powerful tool.** The stages of growth happen exponentially here—and our faith factor is called to kick in! We share sorrows and joys. **We move beyond the story we've created to a celebration of true community.**

Stages of grief are apparent in all of life, though we are at various viewpoints in the spiral of evolutionary thinking, not only in the aftermath of physical death. I agree with M Scott Peck's idea of "true community" and believe we're at the edge of this experience every time we chose to step beyond pseudo-symptoms and embrace our world and communities where they are. Not only the light within every person but also those moments when we've forgotten who we've come here to be. It's a *both and* conversation.

About true community Peck wrote, [It] "requires little deaths in many of the individuals." We can see this as a shift from the "me"-personality into a collective "we" in unity. For me, this is surrendering to what is and holding the possibility of what's being created in Divine Mind. I've witnessed many "little deaths" on my own journey, as I know you have too. I see it this way: **Meet me where I am, see me, I'll see you, and let's walk together.** It's a greater call to listening in a big way. Peck refers to this "as soft quietness descends. It is a kind of peace. The room is bathed in peace."

Conscious leadership opens the door to vulnerability and empathy. Developing Unity leaders and ministries is about true community connection. We believe we create our visible world through our highest level of conscious thoughts, so in this belief, **a mighty stream of coherence is formed when we join our collective hearts and minds** to affirm a unified vision and unquestionably a value of unity.

Unity's fifth principle (Through thoughts, words, and actions, we live the Truth we know.) reminds us to not only know truth teachings and principles, but also to internalize them into practice. We embody them and produce the highest possibility for our ministries and leaders as a whole.

We're all called to lead in some way. We meet the world within each other with great care and celebrate the many expressions of God within it. We roll up our sleeves, open our hearts, shine our light and declare a "A world powerfully transformed through the growing movement of shared spiritual awakening."

Doug Duerr

Rev Doug Duerr serves our ministries as Leadership Coordinator for UWM. He oversees Member Services-related trainings, creating greater coherence to field ministries. Doug is also an author, coach, yoga teacher, grief facilitator and adjunct faculty member with UWSI.

2 Responses to The Nakedness of Leadership



jp whitfield

NOVEMBER 29, 2017 AT 10:37 AM

interesting!!! I am in another major transition in life. I note it now as 'little death'i consciously. thanks



Douglas Duerr

NOVEMBER 29, 2017 AT 1:15 PM

Thank you for sharing! Yes, we experience many of those "little deaths" of letting go along the way- releasing into new possibility! Blessings