

R  **RE**
LEADERSHIP

in the workplace

VIDEO GUIDE

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SESSION 1

LEADERS WE LOVE TO FOLLOW

What separates the leaders we love to follow from the leaders we have to follow?

- Immaturity adds problems to the problems we already have.
- Mature leaders make problems smaller.

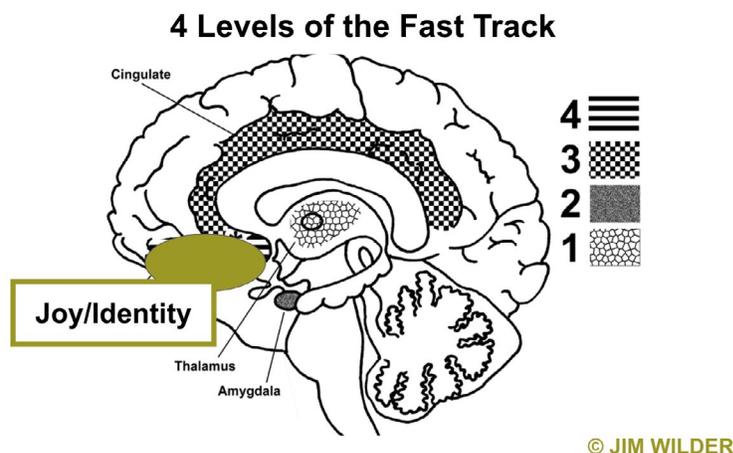
Sandbox Leadership

Richard Davis, “We Need More Mature Leaders” (*Harvard Business Review*, 2011)

The timing could not be worse. The nation’s current problems, as vast and overwhelming as they are, appear secondary to the whims of spoiled children, unwilling to play well together. At a time when we need solid, grounded leadership more than ever, we seem to be in short supply of adults who act like, well . . . like adults.

We will turn to brain science for an answer. Coauthor Dr. Jim Wilder is a neuroscience researcher who has been working in the field for over 40 years.

What is maturity?



Maturity is the ability to act like myself even under stress.

Maturity is enduring hardship well.

The best leaders help their people run on the fuel of joy rather than fear.

The brain wants to run on the fuel of joy.

Fear can make the brain go into a cramp. When this happens I lose access to the higher level brain functions that remember who I am and how it is like me to act.

The 4 characteristics of mature leaders:

- Remain relational
- Act like yourself
- Return to joy
- Endure hardship well

SESSION 2

THE BRAIN SCIENCE BEHIND RARE LEADERSHIP

1. The brain craves the fuel of joy.

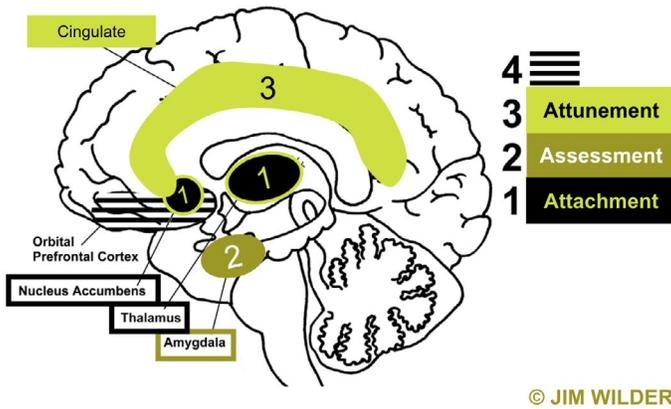
- a. The brain will either run on the fuel of joy or fear.
- b. It is at its best when it runs on joy.
- c. Fear is designed to get our attention when there is a crisis.
- d. When I really need to get something done, how do I motivate myself?
- e. Whatever emotion I need to motivate myself will become indispensable for motivating my team.
- f. Joy gives us the best version of ourselves and our team.
- g. We can define joy as *relational happiness*.

2. The brain has a right side (fast track) and a left side (slow track).

- a. The right side (fast track) of my brain manages relationships, regulates emotions, and remembers who I am and how to act like myself.
 - i. The fast track of my brain is like radar. It remembers who I am. It is the part that is most directly related to maturity.
 - ii. If the fast track is operating properly, I will always get the best version of the slow track on the left side.
 - iii. If the fast track cramps up, it keeps my left brain from doing its best work.
 - iv. Maturity is primarily about the fast track of my brain.
 - v. If my fast track cramps up, I will start handling my relationships from the slow track on the left side of the brain. When this happens I will start treating people like problems.

- b. The left side of the brain (the slow track) is like a spotlight. It excels at focus.
 - i. The radar is constantly on in the background and tells me what needs my focus.
 - ii. The spotlight reacts to the radar. The best leaders have a well-developed sense of where to put our focus.

3. The brain operates in levels.



- a. 4 levels of brain function.
- b. Mature people are able to keep higher level brain functions online even when they get triggered. Immature people lose access to their higher level brain functions. Thus, they stop remaining relational and stop acting like themselves.

What mature people excel at is keeping the **Action** level of the brain operating.

What we mean by *returning to joy* is getting these higher level brain functions back online after we lose access to them.

SESSION 3

RARE LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Tale of two nursing units.

Defining Leadership

Leadership is creating engagement in what matters.

- What matters is what needs our focus.
- Creating engagement is primarily about motivation.

The most important leadership task is not results; it is culture.

Without the culture you will not be able to get results on a sustainable basis.

Margaret Heffernan TED Talk “Super Chickens”

Too many leaders are so focused on results that it is the only thing we look at when we hire people or when we promote people. But sometimes people get more results just because they are more predatory. You don't want a team of predators running your organization. This is why maturity matters.

What matters most is the culture. Our culture can be understood as our group identity.

How do we build a healthy culture?

1. **Prioritize Group Identity.** Consider creating an identity statement.
2. **Promote Belonging.** The number one reason most people quit within six months of being hired is that they don't feel like they belong.
 - a. A clear process of becoming part of the group.

- b. A clear mentoring system.
 - c. A consistent practice of celebrating together.
3. **Practice Authentic Appreciation.**
4. **Protect the Weak.**
- a. Locker Room A - Predator leaders run the locker room. The weak get bullied.
 - b. Locker Room B - Protector leaders run the locker room. The weak get helped.

If you want to get good results over a long period of time you have to build a joy-based culture.

SESSION 4

HABIT #1: REMAIN RELATIONAL

The right side of the brain is my relational engine.

The left side of the brain is my problem-solving engine.

Remaining relational is keeping the right side of the brain on so that I am not handling my relationship with the problem-solving part of my brain.

How do we keep relationships bigger than problems?

1. Tool #1: CAKE

- Curiosity
- Appreciation
- Kindness
- Eye contact

This model can help you assess if your relational circuits are on and your dimmer switch is on.

To get your circuits back online break eye contact, and fix the problem of how to get your relational circuits back on. You do this by finding curiosity, appreciation, or kindness.

When people like doing business with you, they are more likely to send business your way.

2. Tool #2: Envelope Conversations

How we handle confrontation:

The more problems we successfully navigate as a team, the stronger our culture becomes.

Two common problems:

1. We avoid the problem.
2. We lead with our upset emotions about the problem.

Three Steps to Envelope Conversations:

1. Start with the relational history (how are we connected to each other?).
2. State the problem.
3. Point to a positive relational future.

SESSION 5

HABIT #2: ACT LIKE YOURSELF

When you are first born, your brain grows from bottom to top. Your identity center is located behind your right eye. It remembers who you are and how it is like you to act.

When we get overwhelmed, we lose access to our identity center. When that happens we stop acting like ourselves and like somebody else.

The ability to act like yourself can be the difference between getting the job done and not getting the job done.

The Fake Alligator Story

What makes us mature are the habits that show up automatically without having to think about it.

There are three kinds of people in any group you are in.

- **Possums** – a possum plays dead when there is danger. They want to avoid predators and problems that feel too big for them. Possums have a weakness they know predators will use against them.
- **Predators** – Predators are really good at tracking weakness in other people, so if they ever have to go head to head with you, they can beat you.

Sandbox leaders are either possums or predators.

- **Protectors** – Protectors track weakness in others so they can make sure they get help. As in Session 3, it can help to think in terms of locker rooms. We love to follow protector leaders.

Every infant is born a predator. They want instant gratification.

Children are learning to work for and wait for things, but it is still all about what they want.

Adults have learned to say no to themselves in order to do what is best for the group.

As a protector leader my first job is to make sure that others feel safe sharing their weaknesses with me. I can assess my level of maturity by whether people voluntarily share their weaknesses with me or feel the need to hide them.

SESSION 6

HABIT #3: RETURN TO JOY

Returning to joy doesn't mean being happy all the time or getting rid of upsetting emotions.

Returning to joy means getting your higher level brain functions online after they have dimmed or shut down. It is about getting our joy center re-engaged after it has shut down.

Why is returning to joy so important?

- I am responsible for regulating my emotions. If I turn into a different person with every new emotion I feel, people will learn to walk on eggshells around me.
- I am responsible for regulating my team's emotions.
- Emotions are the primary motivator in everything we do in life.

There are six big negative emotions we need to learn to regulate.

Shame is the emotion that makes you want to hang your head.

- The clinical word for people who have no ability to return to joy from shame is *narcissism*.
- The two fastest ways to lose the trust of your team
 - Don't admit when you are wrong.
 - Throw others under the bus (put the blame on them).

Anger is the emotion that *I just want to make something stop*. If I use anger to motivate myself and others, I will wear out everyone.

Disgust is the emotion that *I want to get away from something "poisonous."*

Sadness is the emotion that *I have lost what brought me joy*.

Anxiety. Anxiety and fear are different emotions. **Fear** is the reactionary emotion that *I want to get away from something dangerous*. **Anxiety** is always rooted in my imagination. It is imagining a situation that creates an emotion I can't handle.

Despair. Despair is the emotion that says, *"This is hopeless. I lack the time and resource to get this done."*

Very few leaders are good with all six of these negative emotions. We grow our maturity by growing our ability to regulate these emotions.

How do we do return to joy?

Validate

- Non-verbal validation (body language)
- Verbal validation: Name the emotion accurately and identify the size of the emotion correctly.

Comfort

Your job isn't to fix the emotion. Your job is to make the problem smaller and more manageable.

- Strategy 1: Tell people what is not going to happen.
- Strategy 2: Look at the problem from a new perspective.
- Strategy 3: Make a simple plan.

Recover

This is the result of Validating and Comforting. You know someone has recovered when they feel like themselves again and like they can move forward.

Two strategies for creating emotionally healthy cultures.

1. Monthly relational meeting. Short updates (2-3 minutes) on what is happening in each other's lives.
2. 1-minute emotional check in at a second monthly meeting.

SESSION 7

HABIT #4: ENDURING HARDSHIP WELL

Maturity can be measured with the question, “How much weight does it take before I stop remaining relational and stop acting like myself?”

All leaders are guaranteed to face hardship. Much of leadership is about problem solving. The weight of leadership is related to the emotions of the expectations we face.

Five Levels of Emotional Development

Infants can't handle any weight at all. The adults have to handle the emotions for them.

Children are learning how to handle their own emotions.

Adults are learning how to handle our own emotions and those of our people.

If we are lacking adult maturity, we become sandbox leaders because we are either infants who cannot take care of our emotions, or children who can only take care of our own emotions.

Parents are well-practiced adults and are now ready to pass on the practices of maturity to others.

Elders have successfully raised a family and are able to help the community handle the weight of the problems they face. They are difficult to overwhelm.

Infant Stage

- Infants don't handle their emotions at all. Their brain doesn't have the circuitry to do this.
- Infants are really good at letting people know they are upset.
- Parents are supposed to recognize what is wrong and help.

Trauma interrupts maturity development.

- **B Trauma** is the bad stuff that happens to us.
- **A Trauma** is the absence of the good stuff that we need. If no one helped us return to joy from our upset emotions, chances are we never learned that skill. This leaves holes in our maturity development.

We need to recognize where we are. Start there, and begin to fill the holes left by trauma.

Infant level leaders are good at letting people know they are upset. They expect someone else to recognize they are upset and do something about it.

Which SADSAD emotion do I most often handle like a child or infant? I need to start developing a plan to deal with this emotion.

Infant level leaders create toxic maturity.

Child Stage

Child level leaders have learned to take care of their own emotions. They tend to manage the team in the way that is best for them without taking others into consideration. It tends to come across as selfish leadership. I need to make sure my team's emotions are taken care of and not just my own.

Child level leaders have trouble creating win/win solutions. They see things as *me vs. you and I am going to win.*

You can't help where you start and where you have holes. All you can do is recognize where you are and begin building the skills and habits to handle emotions better.

Sandbox leaders are stuck in child and infant level leadership.

Adult Stage

Adults can take care of themselves and also others.

Upside down maturity means I can take care of you, but I can't take care of myself at the same time. I am still only taking care of one person at a time.

Adults quickly recognize when they have lost joy, know how to rest and take breaks, and renew their joy. They also do this for their people because they can take care of two people at the same time.

Parent Stage

Parents have been taking care of two people for so long they are ready to help others handle their emotions. Parent level mentors don't simply pass on task skills to others – they help them handle the weight of the emotions in the workplace.

Elder Stage

Elders fill gaps. They see the holes in the maturity development and are able to step in like a surrogate parent.

Elders often have to learn how to return to joy from disgust because they see the immaturity in the workplace so clearly.

SESSION 8

A GROWTH PLAN

Take AIM on Maturity

Assessment:

- Which stage of maturity are we in?
- Are there particular emotions that cause me to revert to infant or child level maturity?
- How much of a particular emotion does it take to make me revert?

Identity Group:

- Who do I most need in my life in order to be the best version of myself this year?
- Who is not going to be predatory to my weakness?
- Who is going to help me grow my maturity rather than use my weakness against me?
- Sometimes my identity group is outside of my workplace.

Maturity Workouts

1. **Quieting** – This is the most basic emotional regulation tool.
 - a. Breathe in a box.
 - b. Exaggerate emotions.

- c. Soothe my body.
 - d. Tense and Release.

- 2. **Appreciating Others** – Become a joy spreader.

- 3. **CAKE** – Relational Circuit Training
 - a. When my switch is on and my relational circuits are on, CAKE comes easily.
 - b. When my switch is off, CAKE becomes nearly impossible.
 - c. Practice CAKE intentionally (Curiosity, Appreciation, Kindness, Eye Contact)
 - d. Journal about times you succeed and fail in using CAKE skills.

- 4. **Identity Groups** – Collect protectors
 - a. Best if done in person
 - b. Check in emotionally
 - c. Not there to counsel or fix each other
 - d. Create an identity statement for the group – *We are the sort of people who . . .*
 - e. Tell stories of times we handle emotions well and when we handle them poorly, and think through what maturity might have looked like.

- 5. **Planning** – Plans create hope that things will be okay.
 - a. What is the worst thing that could happen?
 - b. What is the best thing that could happen?

- c. What is the most likely thing to happen?
- d. Make a simple plan to handle the most likely thing to happen.

6. Welcoming Shame

- a. If I don't learn how to handle shame well, then I will not grow.
- b. We need to learn to welcome shame messages.
 - i. Invite honest critique.
 - ii. Thank people for the critique.
 - iii. Tell them how you implemented the critique.
- c. Shame and Sales
 - i. Excellent sales people are able to handle the shame of being with people who are not happy to see them. They excel at entering situations that cause shame and leaving those situations with people feeling joy.

7. Stop Self-Justification – Ending a bad habit

- a. Journal about times you felt shame and self-justified.
 - i. When did you feel attacked? (who, when, how)
 - ii. How did you react?
 - iii. How should you have reacted? What would maturity have looked like?
- b. Share that journaling in your identity group.
- c. Practice

These maturity workouts are meant to help us grow in our ability to handle emotions like adults.

