

# The Blueprint For High-Performing Leaders

Self Study Course



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HELPING  
GOOD LEADERS  
BECOME GREAT

# Session 3: Lead Your Team through Right Action

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of Session 3, you will be able to:

- Identify where your team is in or out of alignment with your **Leadership Blueprint**
- Use the **right action** model to improve employee engagement
- Myth Bust unproductive assumptions
- Be clear and specific on **how you will measure** your success as a leader and who can help you

## Reality Check

1. What are you doing differently to encourage a culture of creativity & Innovation?

2. How has your team responded to your discussions about adding creativity into the mix?  
Are you rewarding those who embrace it?

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3. List 1- 3 things that indicate you're making progress on your ideal version of success.

1.
2.
3.

## Session 3 Lesson – Lead Your Team through Right Action

- Watch the video

### The Power of Right Action

What would it be like if your team consisted of the **right people, doing the right things, in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons**? When we ask our clients that question, they smile, take a deep breath and say “That would be dreamy!” Though the concept is simple, putting it into play is not so easy!

Taking time to focus on each stage of the right action model will allow you and your team to align your “must do’s” for each stage of right action. What’s so powerful about applying right action? *We’ll begin by breaking it down into the five elements.*

Remember, as you review the right action model, be thinking about yourself and your team. Imagine if all of these elements were in place right now. What would your life and business be like if every stage was hitting your ideal?<sup>1</sup>

### Right Action Model

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<sup>1</sup> This definition of **right action** comes from a really important mentor of mine; Mike Jay, author, founder of B-Coach and a renowned business consultant.



## The Right People

In the bestselling book *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins states clearly; “Getting the right people on board first, *then* figuring out what their role should be, can solve 90% of personnel problems.”

In reality, companies tend to hire under duress – allowing an old job description to guide the hiring decision vs. creating a position that fits the talent of a potential hire and the need of the company. You need to consider both! We highly recommend applying the wisdom of ‘hire slow, fire fast’ when bringing in new team members.

Your Focus should be on finding the **right** person, not only with the right qualifications, but someone who will be a good match for your company, your culture and your team.

For those already on your team ask yourself;

- Who is ideal that is already on my team?
- Do I have the right people with the right talent?
- What qualities do we need in a colleague, client or recruit?
- Who needs a little more attention to help tip them into star performance?

## The Right Things

As a leader who also coaches, you need to know if your team is doing the right things. Even if they are the right people, they need to know exactly what they should be working on in order to have any hope of achieving the vision. Doing the right things means that **action is in alignment with your expectations of them and the vision** for the future, both on a personal and organizational level.

As a leader, you can coach your people to refine their focus to doing the right things. Does your team know what they should be working on, how they are measured and how they fit into the big picture? How do you know?

### **The Right Way**

The hallmark of an exceptional culture, is the clear understanding by everyone of “Here’s how we do things around here”. New hires are taught by peers and shown the right way to work together and get things done. If a team member starts slipping, others from the team will step in to find out what is causing the trouble and ask how they can help.

*How* does your team and organization rate on doing things the right way? Are they acting in ways that are in alignment with you and your company’s objectives, vision and values? Are they applying processes and systems in the most efficient and smartest way possible? It’s important to be aware of *how each person* is working, and identify where they may be in or out of alignment with right action. If you have a star performer who is a jerk to the rest of the team, you have an obligation to give them feedback and coaching. If no progress is made, you need to help them find a position somewhere else! Observing and then coaching people to do things in the right way strengthens engagement, alignment and execution on your team.

### **The Right Time**

You may have *people, thing, and way* right on target, but poor timing can have disastrous effects.

Consider how timing can accelerate or kill what you or someone on your team is trying to accomplish. It’s as simple as having your team complete the most dreaded (but important) tasks first thing of the day, i.e., prospecting or having a difficult conversation with an unhappy client. For new salespeople it’s understanding the right time to close the sale vs. talk past it, never close, or ask too early!



Imagine that your company has news of a massive restructuring that impacts many people – would it make sense for the news to be announced via the Wall St. Journal before the holiday season? It happens all the time.

### **The Right Reasons**

This is about the meaning behind the work, the “why I show up to work everyday”. What’s yours?

Sometimes people get into sales only with a goal to make money. Fortunately that’s not a problem if it drives you to be the best in the business and clients benefit from your desire to measure success by dollars (as long as integrity is not compromised).

If you truly believe in the product or service and have clarity about the reasons your work matters, you will have the energy and engagement needed for a sustainable, long-term effort and commitment. Which is great for your clients!

You and your team's “why” matters immensely when looking to lead people to achieve their potential and outperform the competition. And, everyone has a different “why.” Find out each person's “why” on your team and you will have the magic formula for bringing out the best in each one of them.

### **Lead Your Team through Right Action**

Effectively coaching your team is one of the many skills needed to become a successful leader. And, using right action to create self-motivating behavior within your team will put you all on the fast track to achieving your goals and having a great time doing it!

Here's a story from the “streets”:

*One of my clients, Liz, was struggling with hiring new sales managers and getting them to be good at helping their salespeople accomplish sales results.*

*After going through the right action model with me, Liz realized they didn't have a profile of the right people who would thrive in the role of sales manager. Instead, they just picked high performing salespeople and hoped they'd work out.*

*After working to craft an ideal candidate profile (right people) and creating an interview process (right things), she solved the problem of a high failure rate for sales managers in her region. She now has the right way to pick the right people and is getting right results with a new sales manager who is leading the region!*

Think of this as sound inner judgment that leads to the best possible personal, business and system results. Right action aligns your team's **internal judgment** with yours. When put into play, right action leads to "right results," which are the best possible outcomes experienced by everyone, including your clients and customers.

Take a moment and consider this saying, "All behavior is perfect". This may sound absurd, but it makes more sense with this addition: "All behavior is perfect, given what a person believes."

You and your team are doing the best you can, based on what you believe you know about your world. Often times what you believe you know is only a small part of the picture.

Everyone's behavior is a perfect match for their beliefs. To change behavior, you need to get to the bottom of what you and your team believe!

### **Right Action Is Situational**

Right action is not absolute; what's *right* will depend on the situation, people, organization and other factors.



*Just recently John, one of my clients, asked for coaching on a relationship with a colleague named Rich, who regularly flew off the handle, going so far as accusing him of undermining his authority and worse. When we reviewed the right action concept, John realized that though he was doing the right thing by being prepared prior to meetings with Rich, his communication style put Rich on the defensive, which then only spiraled their conversations out of control.*

*Once John recognized how he was being perceived, he could focus on adjusting his communication style to the right way for Rich so that they could have productive vs. combative meetings.*

Consider your current mix of people, things, ways, time and reasons – closely look at all five of these elements and identify where they are **in** and where they are **out** of alignment in your organization. Bringing right action into alignment will lead to people who are truly engaged with their work.

Engaged employees is big news! This is really what separates your most productive people from those draining time and energy from you and your team. According to Marcus Buckingham, author of *Now Discover Your Strengths*, only 20% of working people are actively engaged in their work. Another study done by the Corporate Leadership Council, a Washington D.C. think tank, revealed that only 11% of employees are highly committed. Not only are those highly committed employees **20% more productive**, they're **half as likely to leave** as your average employee.

What does this mean to you? Essentially, 75% of employees are neither committed nor uncommitted; they are up for grabs and your effectiveness as a leader will swing their commitment either way! Doesn't that make you stop and consider what's possible with your own people? Aligning right action can help you shift them into the high performance camp!

Even better, a person operating from a place of right action has a greater sense of:

1. Well-being
2. Self-awareness
3. Purpose
4. Competence

Where does right action come from? A number of things influence a person's sense of right action – beliefs, parents, loved-ones, co-workers, organizations, cultures, values, etc. It boils down to individual experience: each person has their own right action operating system inside, though he is probably not aware of it. Your job as a leader and coach is to bring it to the surface. Ask questions to help surface hidden assumptions and beliefs so they are no longer hidden.

Develop a sense of genuine curiosity and ask questions that get to the bottom of what's getting in the way of someone achieving their or the team's potential. See the Bonus Section for questions tied to each stage of right action.

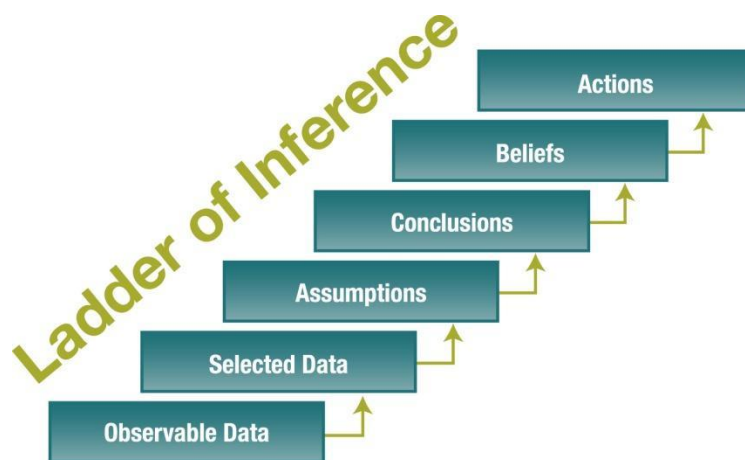
Once discovered, both of you can examine how they are in or out of alignment with their own and the organization's ideas of right action, and create a plan for bringing it into alignment.

### **Myth Bust Unproductive Assumptions**

Have you ever gotten in trouble or been wrong because you jumped to a conclusion? Who hasn't! Fortunately Chris Argyris, thought leader and Professor Emeritus at Harvard Business School, created a model that explains how and why people very quickly make assumptions based on what they see or hear. Knowing your pattern allows you to gain the discipline required to make better informed impressions and decisions about situations and people.

### **Consider Chris Argyris' Ladder of Inference**

(Also see the Bonus Section for more on this.)



Created by Chris Argyris

This model illustrates how we make assumptions based on what we see or hear. It also explains why witnesses at the scene of an accident will report very different versions of the same accident.

People tend to climb the ladder of inference too fast, almost instantaneously taking what they observe, putting it into their existing set of assumptions, and acting in a way that is far removed from the reality of the situation.

*Two sales managers, Christy and Shane, were friendly peers, yet competitors at the same company and were participants in our high potential leaders program. In one exercise, we ask people to describe how someone they didn't get along with would describe them.*

*I happened to hear Shane describe how his peer Christy saw him. I was surprised at how negative and derogatory the comments were. We immediately coached Shane by sharing the Ladder of Inference, which allowed him to explore his assumptions. The insights he gained about his assumptions inspired him to reach out to Christy with new possibilities of how they could work together.*

*Before our very eyes, we witnessed Shane and Christy turn their relationship into one of powerful collaboration vs. average competition. Together, the two sales managers have given their organization a huge competitive advantage.*

Misunderstandings because of faulty assumptions don't happen intentionally. Much of it has to do with the way the human brain developed thousands of years ago. We are hard-wired to make assumptions quickly, fill in the blanks, and make fast decisions. When coming face-to-face with a lion, this is an advantage, but not in relationships or business!

The problem is that our brains don't distinguish between a **threat to our lives** and a **threat to our egos**! How many times have you felt like you've been misunderstood? Or taken offense to something that was not meant to offend?

Much of the work we do at **McCauley & Co.** is with leaders being groomed to fill senior level positions. In cases of succession, the emotions and stakes run high for all involved. It's typical for there to be tension between the person getting ready to leave & the successor.

*I was working with Jim, one of our clients, using our 360° leadership assessment. His boss constantly rated him lower than his direct reports and peers. Jim's assumption was that his boss thought he was underperforming in key leadership areas. After working through the right action model and using the **C.O.R.E. Performance Coaching Model**, he realized his boss was onto something.*

*Although Jim was already doing a great job, the boss recognized that he had much more talent yet to be applied. His boss knew he needed to step up in specific areas in order to get to the next level and not flame out. Through straightforward conversations, Jim quickly saw his boss as an advocate rather than an adversary and their relationship shifted immediately. Jim is now on the fast track to becoming a partner.*

Climbing the ladder of inference too fast means being caught in the traps of assumptions and faulty beliefs. As a leader, you have the power to coach people to design their business lives in a way that is purposeful and meaningful to them. Coaching is an important part of creating a high-performance environment. And, most leaders and managers don't do it enough!

Being in your position allows you to help reveal the beliefs of the people you work with and this buys them freedom. So, instead of being reactionary (climbing the ladder too quickly), you enable them to see what's real vs. what they *assume* is real.

Where might you be jumping to conclusions when applying the right action model with your team? Make some notes on the Right Action Model in your workbook – identify something that will improve your game. And answer these questions;

What would it mean to you - if you and your team were all aligned, with the right people, doing the right things, in the right way at the right time for the right reasons?

Where do you and your team currently stand with each stage of **right action**?

- Are the right people in place
- Are they focused & executing on right things
- Are they doing it in the right way or their way
- Is the timing right, does it make sense
- Are they in it for the right reasons

Make note of an example of where right action is missing or can be improved within your team and what impact that is having on your success. For instance, do you have the right people in their best role? What can you do to help them get there?

#### **What's ahead for Session 4**

Get ready to shift accountability where it belong by applying **C.O.R.E. Performance: Coaching for Optimal Results & Effectiveness**. In the next session we're going to introduce you to our coaching model which will **transform your coaching meetings** into meaningful, high impact, performance shifting conversations.

## Exercises:

1. What changes can you make now that will bring right action into alignment within your organization?

Right people:

Right things:

Right way:

Right time:

Right reasons:



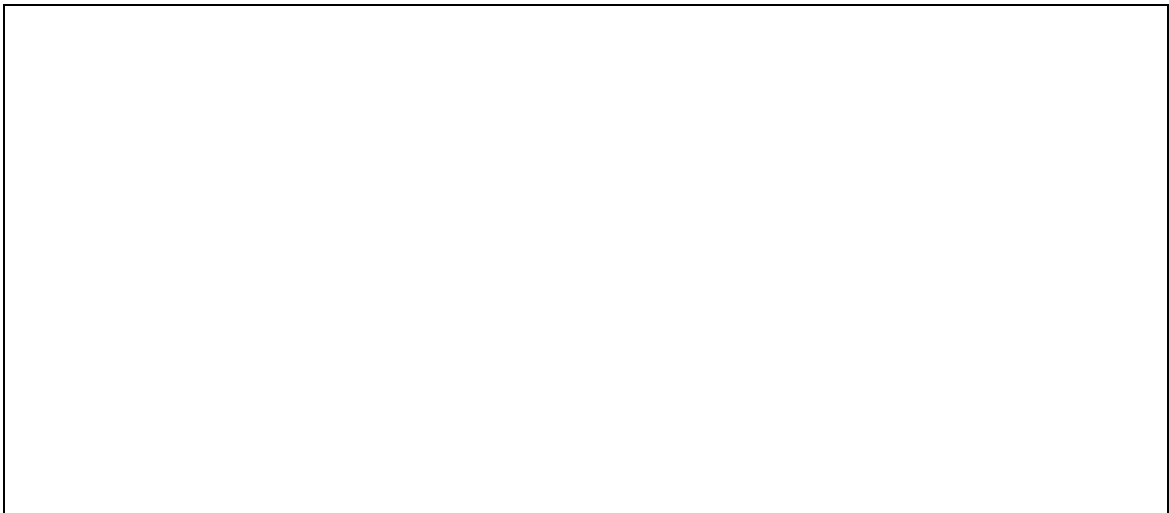
2. What is the biggest challenge you currently face with regards to right action and what are ways you can manage that? Where or who are you climbing the Ladder of Inference too quickly with?

Right people:
Right things:
Right way:
Right time:
Right reasons:

3. To succeed in positively impacting and accomplishing your leadership and performance goals:

a.) Pick a couple of people whom you want to get feedback from on how you're doing on your specific leadership targets. Think of this as your personal "Board of Advisors"

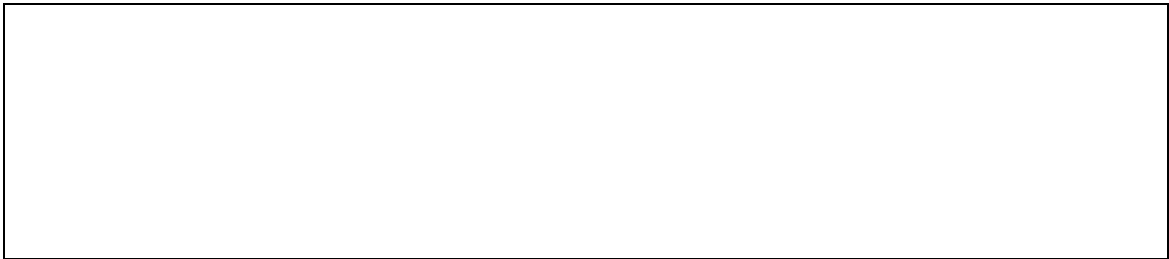
If possible, have at least one of them consistently see you in action with your team.



b.) Plan to share your leadership blueprint with your board of advisors— as much as you are comfortable sharing

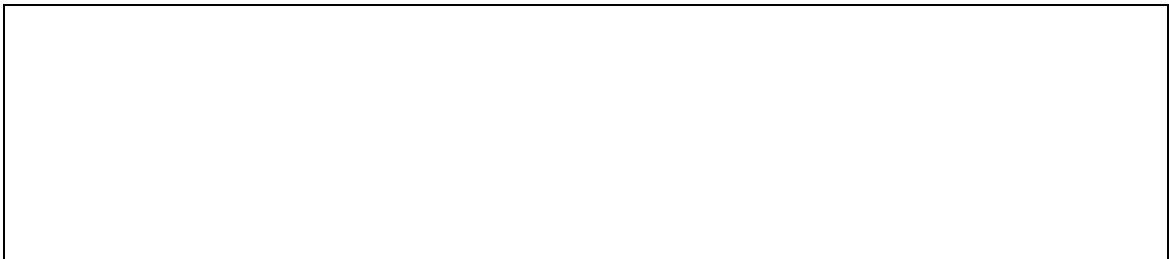


c.) Ask for feedback on your blueprint goals. For example, “What am I missing?” or “What can I do more of or less of that would help me accomplish my objectives?”



d.) Follow up at regular intervals by asking:

- "What changes have you seen me make that will impact my becoming a more effective leader?"
- “What ideas/suggestions do you have for me going forward?"



## Session 3: Lead Your Team through Right Action - Notes

The three most important things I learned from Session 3 are:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Here's how I plan to apply what I have learned:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Terms** (See Glossary)

- **Right Action**
- **Ladder of Inference**

**Extra Notes...**

