

The Blueprint For High-Performing Leaders

Self Study Course



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HELPING
GOOD LEADERS
BECOME GREAT

Session 7: Get Clear

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

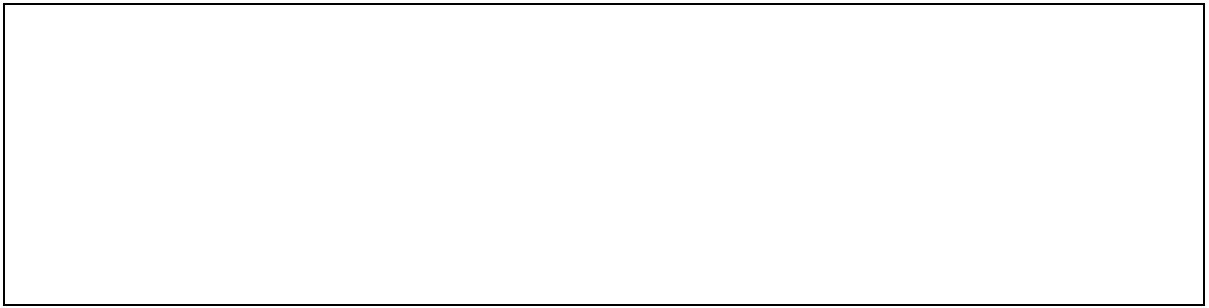
By the end of Session 7, you'll be able to:

- Engage in conversations that create clarity and positively impact business results
- Shift performance through artfully uncovering peoples' true purpose
- Identify the best ways to help people get clarity

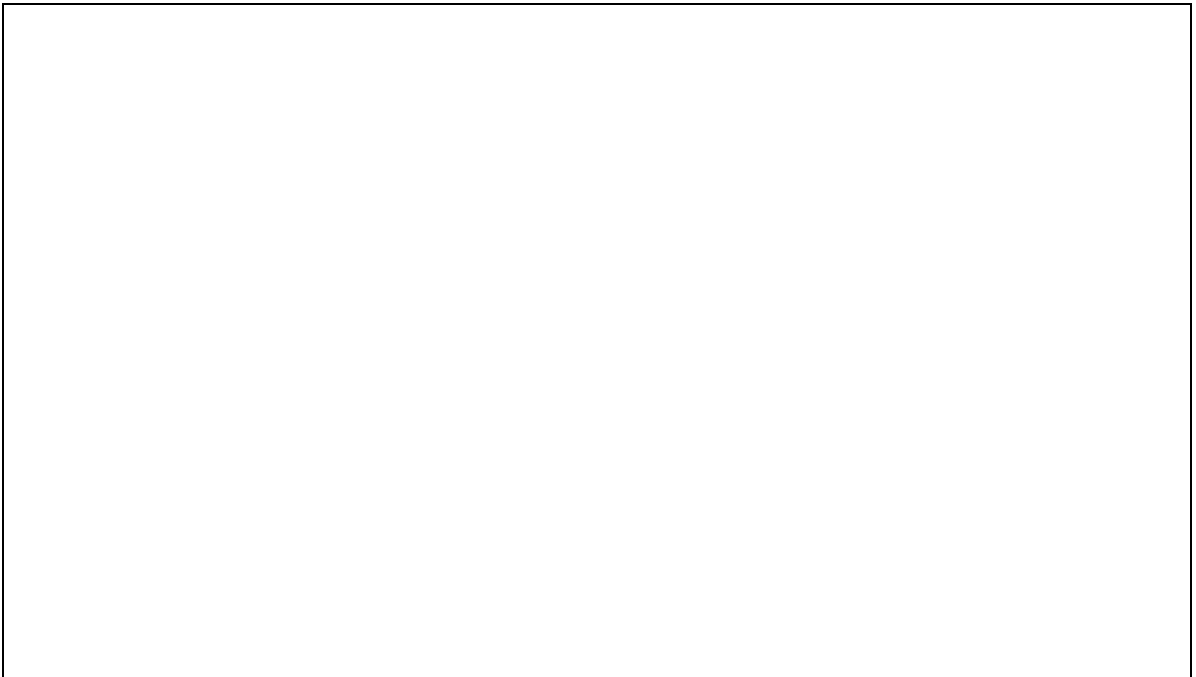
Reality Check

1. What did you learn from **Session 6: Connect to Encourage Shifts & Success?** Also note any changes to your goals in your notes on Sessions 1 & 2; review and update your accomplishments, or challenges you've encountered from the previous session. Jot down any improvements you'd like to make.

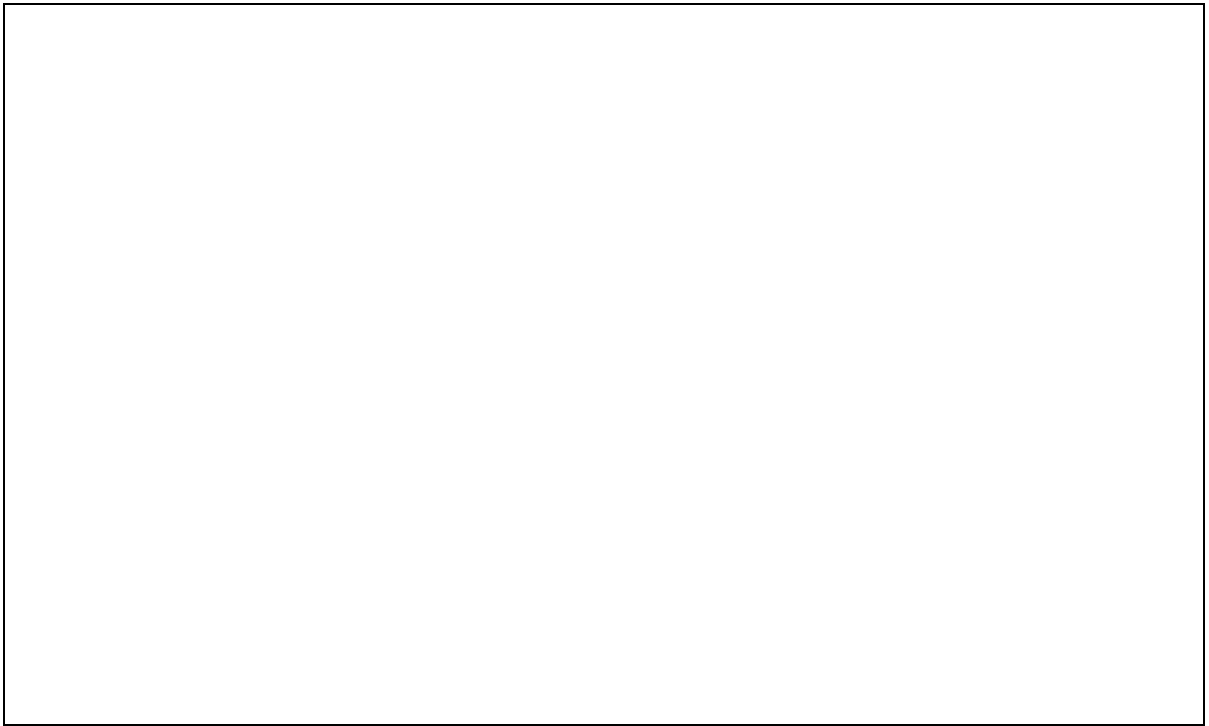
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2. What did you do differently that increased your connection with your team? How will you turn connection into a habit for you with your team?



3. What impact did improved connection have on them, their effectiveness and their willingness to invest extra effort in their performance?



Session 7 Lesson – Get Clear

- Watch the video

How many times have you watched someone work enthusiastically on a goal, lose momentum, attention, and interest only to move on to another goal and go at it again with the same outcome? What about you?

Clarity is the #1 driver in having a good organizational climate. What's the big deal? Just shifting from an average climate to a good climate can accelerate bottom line results upwards of 30% (source Hay/McBer)! Providing clarity is the first step towards creating self-aware, self-correcting employees whose initiative and actions are aligned with you and your organization's goals.

It sounds silly, but in fact, clarity should be the largest focus of your time as a leader — nailing it with yourself and your team will give you the most traction towards accomplishing your objectives and those of your organization. Remember alignment as a leadership imperative from session 3? Clarity powerfully reinforces alignment.

What Is Clarity?

Clarity is about:

- Knowing what's important (the *why*)
- What needs to happen —the ideal course of action (who will do what, by when)
- Considering what is or what could get in the way of achieving the goal

It boils down to knowing what the rules of the game are (how do we win), how are we measured and who's keeping score (consider all stakeholders). In your role as a leader, you make sure each team member asks and has the answers to those questions.

It's not necessary to use strict or exact questioning methods – do be consistent on the method you use. Build on what you've already identified in the earlier Sessions here in your **Blueprint for High Performing Leaders**. Practice truly connecting and your conversations to gain clarity will become a natural discussion vs. an interrogation. Keep developing that sense of curiosity, be objective and remember that "all behavior is perfect" given what a person believes.

Your job is to help them get clear on what's real vs. what's made up. Remember the ladder of inference in **Session 3 - Lead Your Team through Right Action**.

Clarity Creates Six Improved Outcomes:

- **Possibilities:** Clarity allows people to consider more angles and different perspectives.
- **A greater sense of what the person wants to achieve:** This gets people clear about what matters most, how it will look when they achieve it, plus how to be accountable - which makes it easier to attain.
- **Opportunity:** When you're clear about what you want, you'll recognize the right opportunities when they come. You won't be distracted by conflicting choices. It's an easier way to determine what to say "yes" or "no" to! The biggest shifts that come out of clarity are simply from asking and answering questions.
- **Alignment:** Clarity allows people to be aware of what they believe and want and then to align their actions to create those things.

- **Freedom to act:** When clear, the person chooses the appropriate thought, action or emotion, helping them to be more effective so they can do more in less time.
- **A plan of action:** Clarity answers the questions:
 - What matters?
 - Who matters?
 - What am I trying to accomplish?
 - What needs to be in place to give us the best odds of achieving our objective?

Those answers will create specific steps on where to go next.

Things That Get in the Way of Clarity

When things aren't working with your team, like; goals are being missed, conflict is popping up, something is off...look for where people may be confused, unclear or out of alignment.

Here are six ways clarity can be missed:

1. Denying or avoiding the reality of a problem: "Everything is perfect here!"
2. Incorrectly identifying the problem: "We have a training problem, not a hiring problem" and redesigning all of training only to realize that it was the team making exceptions on new hires that was causing the early failures and retention disasters.
3. Falsely assessing the significance of a problem: "It doesn't impact our productivity when a low performer shows up late, leaves early and has no consequences." (Only to watch your best performers get headhunted out the door!)
4. Describing symptoms vs. the root of the problem: "My marketing person is the best in the land, so why isn't my sales team using her? It must be because they are typical sales people who are too "A.D.D." to set an appointment to improve their productivity." (Only to find out the marketing person is talented, but impossible to work with.)
5. Choosing solution 'A,' when 'B' would have been more appropriate: "Even though recruiting is the most critical target to hit, I delegate it completely to an internal or external recruiter and don't stay actively involved." (Only to watch recruiting numbers and quality fall off a cliff.)
6. Putting in place a perfect plan, but disregarding the outside factors (office politics, not everyone has bought in, confusion on who does what, etc.) that could set it off course.

One of our clients, Kim, was brought into a Fortune 500 firm to lead the sales team on a variety of product lines. What she found was discouraging. A wildly successful investment product had been pulled from the shelf because of declining market conditions. But because this product was so popular, a replacement product was quickly created by the home office. However, they only asked for limited feedback from the 6,000 person sales team who would offer it as a solution to clients.

Grand expectations were placed on the success of this next generation investment solution. The only trouble was... it was dead on arrival: the sales force and their clients had no appetite for it because there had been no input or alignment between the developers and the sales team.

If you're working with someone to change their behavior, and the established systems don't support that change (i.e., lack of desire or resources), then no amount of clarity is going to help!

Unless you can manage these six impediments to successfully creating clarity, you're going to repeatedly cycle through the wrong steps, and create even more problems.

Consequences of Coaching without Clarity

Take a look at how many months, years, decades, etc., have gone by without you and/or some of your best hires achieving their full potential. Chances are, a lack of clarity is at the heart of this dilemma.

- Without clarity, you can't really go beyond superficial learning, which can lead to people working too hard at the wrong thing. You need to be clear in order to transform your way of thinking and thus your actions.
- Without clarity, there's a chance you could be coaching someone on something that doesn't really matter to them or the organization. This gets both of you nowhere.
- Coaching without clarity creates a huge dependence on you as the leader. A person cannot have self-generating behavior without clarity.

Clarity's Relationship to Organizational Climate

Daniel Goleman's work (*Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 2000) identifies clarity as the number one driver of a good working climate or environment, a place where everyone can do their best every day.

As a leader, evaluate what climate you believe you create for your team and then get either 180° or 360° feedback on that.

- 180° feedback is when you and your direct reports both complete the same evaluation of the climate you create.
- 360° feedback is when the evaluation is completed by a variety of groups including your direct reports, but also your boss, your peers, your customers, your suppliers, and anyone who can give you valuable feedback.

Both of these exercises will enlighten you as to whether what you think you are doing is a match for what others experience.

Note to self: You judge yourself based on what you *intend*, however, you are judged by others based on their perception of what you do, i.e., your *behavior*. How do they receive what you intend... Is there a gap between the two? There usually is! How can you improve it?

We measure the climate in a team or organization by these seven factors:

1. **Clarity** — Everyone within the organization knows what is expected of him or her. Clarity is the #1 driver of a good climate and consistently shows the strongest relationship to employee productivity.
2. **Responsibility/Autonomy** — Employees are given authority to accomplish tasks without having to constantly check for approval. Employees feel encouraged to use their best judgment and to do what they think is right, rather than merely keeping out of trouble.
3. **Standards** — Challenging, but attainable goals are set for the organization and its employees. They focus you and everyone in your organization on doing your best.
4. **Rewards** — Employees are recognized and rewarded for good performance, even for small wins and progress.
5. **Feedback** — Recognition is directly and differentially related to levels of performance. Progress is frequently recognized and honored. Setbacks are openly discussed for learning opportunities.
6. **Team Commitment** — People are proud to belong to the organization and to their teams. This pride is directly related to the performance of the group and organization and to values, i.e., they are proud to belong to a firm as well as a team with values they share or respect.
7. **Flexibility** — There are no unnecessary rules, procedures, policies, or practices. New ideas are allowed to flow freely and are considered fairly.

The research shows that moving from just an 'average' climate to a 'good' climate creates a 30% increase in the bottom line results. Imagine what moving from 'good' to 'great' would do!

Because it's so difficult to accurately observe yourself, we've found it extremely valuable to bring assessments into our leadership effectiveness engagements. Following are examples of Assessments we use to help our clients get clear on where to focus for success:

Assessments

- **Behavioral Styles:** Measures people's interpersonal strengths, preferences and limitations, and how their behavior affects others in a work environment.
- **Values:** Measures what motivates people, while identifying personal values and what matters most to them. Most people who pursue work that is matched with their values are engaged and energized by their career and thus more successful.
- **Talent:** Measures what talents people bring to the job – this is useful in identifying potential and how to best engage your people in your organization. This is also helpful when hiring for specific talents needed for a position.
- **Emotional Intelligence (360°):** Daniel Goleman's research indicates that 90% of star performers have high emotional intelligence. Also called EI and or EQ, this tool looks at the ability, capacity, and skill to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, others, and groups, thereby leading your team to successful outcomes. Remember, when you're doing a 360° assessment, you'll be getting feedback from stakeholders, including your boss and direct reports.
- **Leadership Style (180°):** 70% of the success or failure of an organization, division, or team is directly tied to the leader. People leave leaders, not companies. The Leadership Style assessment is designed to identify the leader's management and leadership style and how they are leading their team. Remember that when you're doing a 180°, you're hearing from your direct reports only.
- **Organizational Climate (180°):** Designed to assess the climate of an organization. Identifies areas that are helping or hindering performance, and improving or reducing effectiveness of the team.
- **SPQ Gold:** Sales Preference Questionnaire looks at potential call reluctance in sales professionals. What stops them from earning what they are worth as salespeople?

- **MBTI - Personality Type Assessment:** The MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®) is designed to help people understand their unique personality type and the way they relate to others around them.

Clarity and effectiveness

Being clear as a leader and grooming your direct reports to create a culture of clarity will improve everyone's effectiveness and engagement. Why do we care about engagement? Engaged employees stay longer and out-produce those who are unengaged. The 70% who are on the fence between engaged & unengaged are waiting for you to give them a reason to be engaged!

Being clear and grooming your direct reports to create a culture of clarity opens up the following states of effectiveness:

- *Discovery* – New ways to think about old problems
- *Exploration* – A willingness to take risks
- *Awareness* – The launch pad of Emotional Intelligence
- *Purpose* – An anchor for what matters, resulting in traction and leverage
- *Development* – Creating self-generating behavior
- *Meaning-Making* – Greater awareness about assumptions and meaning

Questions for Clarity

The key to clarity is to get as specific as possible. Keep asking questions until there are no more layers to uncover:

- What is important?
- What is one thing you could shift that would change "everything?"
- What really matters?
- What's required for success?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What needs to happen over the next 3-6 months in order for you to consider this a success?
- How will you know you are successful?
- How will you know your team is on the right track?

- What evidence will show you are successful?

Be sure you uncover what is really important or you run the risk of working on something that doesn't matter.

Go to your Appendix in your Blueprint Workbook and you'll find additional questions for creating clarity.

Outcomes of Clarity

- **Sense of Self:** In essence, clarity allows a person to get a stronger sense of self, resulting in transformative, deep learning. The more people are aware of themselves, the less they are held in the grip of reaction – they have the freedom to consciously choose their actions. They become a strategic player instead of a pawn in life.
- **Reveals Governing Variables:** What are the beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and ways of thinking that govern a person's actions?
- **Alignment with Values:** What feeds this person's soul? Are their actions aligned with those things? What needs to be in place in order for them to feel professionally and personally fulfilled?
- **Motivation:** What is most likely to lead a person to wanting to achieve their professional best? Help them discover what really, *really* matters to them!

Indicators of Clarity

When you have successfully brought about clarity, you may hear something like:

"I never thought about it like this before!" or "I can't believe how successful I've been in spite of myself."

When people get totally clear on what they want, they will either:

1. Lock into the conversation and want to further process these ideas with you.
2. Want to immediately leave and execute their plan.

On a more subtle level, you may see a change in the person's energy level. When things become clear they get a rush of energy, or they relax. They typically unplug from their limiting emotions and resistance and open up to a new way of performing.

In my work I have found that 98% of people are not clear about what they are trying to create personally and professionally in any given moment. Imagine the power you are giving them if you help them find that clarity.

What's ahead for Session 8

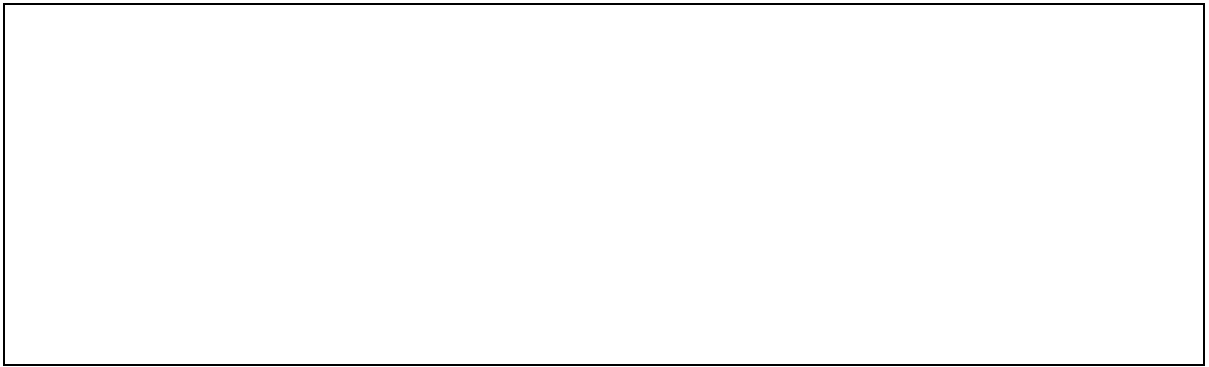
Get ready to learn about **The Ins & Outs of Commitment**. In the next session we are going to reveal how to create fierce commitment from your team on getting right results!

Exercises

1. How clear are YOUR personal and professional goals? What needs to be tightened up so that your goals are perfectly clear? The number one driver of a work climate is clarity. If you don't know where you're going, any road will do!

2. If we were to meet in one year, what will need to have happened for you to say this was your most successful year yet and the future looks even brighter?

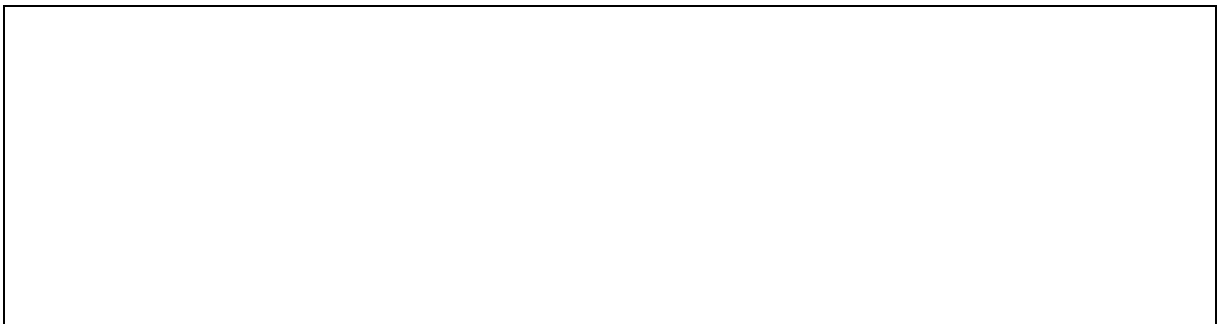
3. What are your visions, missions and expectations for yourself and your team?



4. 80% of people are not clear about what they are trying to create or what they want. One small shift in clarity can change EVERYTHING! What could you shift that would change everything?



5. Why bother doing any of this? What will these changes mean to you?



Session 7: Get Clear - Notes

The three most important things I learned from Session 7 are:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

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

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Key Terms (See Glossary)

- **Clarity**

Extra Notes...

