

# Summary of the Principles of Healthy Leader Development

The ConneXions Model uses 18 core principles in six groups. Effective leader development will be:

## 1. HOLISTIC

**The church needs healthy leaders.** The healthy Christian leader will be strong in the five areas of Christ, Community, Character, Calling and Competencies. Therefore, an effective process of leader development will include and integrate all five focuses.

## 2. SPIRITUAL

**Ultimately, God is the One who builds leaders.** Therefore, ConneXions strives to allow the Holy Spirit to always have His way. We must never allow our agenda to prevent Him from accomplishing His. In addition, since God uses everything in life to change us, the ConneXions process helps the emerging leader (a) understand the *past* work of God in his life, (b) respond to God's *present* dealings, and (c) prepare for the *future* work of God in his life and ministry.

**Prayer must saturate leader development.** Jesus consistently prayed for, with and over His emerging leaders. Moreover, Jesus revealed the Father to His disciples; they saw God, heard His voice and touched Him (1 John 1:1-3)! The primary characteristic of an effective Christian leader is that he knows God and that he lives and ministers out of his inward union with Christ. And our primary responsibility in building new leaders is to lead them to know God – we must teach them to pray!

## 3. RELATIONAL

**Healthy leaders are built in community.** Therefore, the entire local church community must take responsibility for and actively participate in building leaders. By moving from the disconnected “factory” approach to the “family,” we will achieve:

- Flexibility.
- Multiplication.
- Self-support.
- Holistic development.
- Security in restricted countries.
- The right people receive training.
- Ongoing, lifelong leader development.
- Effective evaluation.

**Leaders build leaders.** By themselves, teachers and courses don't build leaders. It takes a leader to impart the vision, passion, courage and strategic perspectives of leadership. Therefore, we should not seek the perfect “package” that will work “all-by-itself.” Packages don't build leaders; leaders build leaders. The very best package will only be a tool in the hands of a mature and qualified leader.

Additionally, we should expect each leader to take the tool and use it differently. The tool must not rule.

**Leaders who build leaders should themselves be involved in the daily responsibilities of leadership.** They should not teach in an artificial environment removed from the real world. Jesus and Paul (e.g., Acts 19:9-11) both conducted extensive and fruitful personal ministries while concurrently building new leaders. This practice maintains integrity and reality, brings credibility and empathy, and dramatically increases effectiveness.

**Leaders are built a few at a time.** Since leaders personally build leaders, one leader can build only a few other leaders – if he wants to do it properly.

Jesus built only a few main leaders to head His entire church that would change the world! Paul and other biblical leaders pursued leader development the same way. The idea of *personally* and *quickly* raising up “thousands of leaders” is not a biblical one. The biblical model is this: “the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2). In other words, build a few good leaders, who each will build a few good leaders, who each will do the same, and so on. In a relatively short time, we will have the multiplication of leaders we need. The difference is: they will be good leaders.

**We must build the right ones!** Our process focuses on a few, so they must be the right ones.

## 4. EXPERIENTIAL

**Leaders learn by doing.** Jesus built leaders “on the job” where they dealt with real problems and opportunities and faced real consequences.

Therefore, we must integrate “classroom” instruction time with practical “in the field” “hands on” ministry. One tragedy of the traditional approach to Christian leader development is that we remove emerging leaders from their normal context of life and ministry and put them in an artificial environment (for years at a time), the nature of which they will never again be in for the rest of their lives, and then we teach them things, much of which they may never use!

**Challenging assignments stretch and mature the emerging leader.** These assignments need to be a little bit above their present perceived capacity. Not too far above or else they will fail, be discouraged and give up; but not below or equal. The assignments must stretch them.

**Leaders are built through fire.** Like steel is made hard in the fire, like gold is purified in the furnace, like coal is formed under pressure into diamonds, leaders are built through fire. It is far better to put the emerging leader under pressure *before* he is given significant responsibility and authority than to wait until the time when failure under pressure will destroy both the leader and those with him. Therefore, ConneXions intentionally, but carefully and responsibly, puts the emerging leader under pressure to squeeze deep heart issues to the surface where they can

be revealed and resolved – in the context of supportive, accountable community.

## 5. INSTRUCTIONAL

**The Word of God is the foundation and the means for building healthy leaders.** The teaching of the Word of God was central in Jesus' method of building leaders, and it must be in ours. For the Word to be properly taught:

- There must be both the teaching of the Word and personal relationship with the leader (2Tim. 3:10-17).
- There must be engagement. Teaching is not necessarily learning. Teaching involves what you *know*; learning involves what you actually *do*. Nothing has been effectively taught until the behavior has changed.
- The best teaching will often be an interactive dialogue between learner and teacher; not an endless monologue to which the learner passively listens. Lecturing is rarely the best way for learning to occur. Listening is not learning. Learning requires activity.
- We must teach the Word and not merely about the Word.
- Our teaching must be anointed by the Holy Spirit.
- Our teaching should be practical, relevant and appropriate for the emerging leaders we're building.

**Engagement brings change.** Emerging leaders must be engaged in the process. They cannot be passive recipients; people are not mere "buckets" to be filled up with the right information. We must design learning experiences that will transform lives and build leaders who can think and act.

## 6. INTENTIONAL

**Responsibility for learning and growing is shared by the emerging leader and the church community.** Leader development is not something you do "to" someone or "for" someone.

Fundamentally, building leaders involves *providing opportunities* for growth: opportunities for learning, experiences, responsibilities, relationships, observing, suffering, etc. These opportunities will not automatically produce growth and there is no guarantee that specific individuals will take advantage of them, but if we do not intentionally provide opportunities there will be little growth.

**Building leaders takes time.** It takes a lifetime to build a mature and seasoned leader. Thus, our goal in short-term training is not to achieve final and complete maturity, but to lay a sound and comprehensive *foundation* in the emerging leader's life. Moreover, our goal is to help him become a lifelong learner who will properly build on the foundation for the rest of his life.

**People grow in different ways and their callings are different.**

Therefore, we must use a variety of learning experiences to assist emerging leaders' transformation, and their learning goals should reflect their unique callings.

**Both team and individual learning contexts must be provided.** The most effective leader has learned to integrate the discipline required for working in teams with the discipline of individual initiative.

Therefore, our design must balance individual and team contexts for learning.

**Effective leader development is a complex, experiential collage.** Leader development is not a simple procedure of moving through a series of predictable and successive points. Leader development is a complex and multifaceted, experiential *collage* of diverse people, relationships, influences, assignments, tasks, responsibilities, duties, deadlines, opportunities, pressures, crises, blessings, sufferings, rejections, successes, mistakes, etc., that all work together to build the emerging leader. Therefore, ConneXions is a fiery immersion in real-life, real-time experiences, reflecting the complicated and fundamentally difficult nature of Christian leadership, bringing deep heart issues to the surface to be dealt with, and compelling the emerging leader to look utterly to God for success.

Leader development will look different from nation to nation, from culture to culture, from situation to situation, from time to time; but these biblical principles will be effective anywhere.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For our complete models, please see: *Healthy Leaders: SpiritBuilt Leadership #2* and *Building Leaders: SpiritBuilt Leadership #4* by Malcolm Webber.

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