



Bridges

A bi-monthly newsletter from Meridian Consulting, Inc.

Building Bridges to Success

May/June 2006

In This Issue:

- **Featured Article:** *The Persuadable Mind*
 - **Book/Article Review:** *Primal Leadership*
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Quote: *Daniel Goleman, Primal Leadership*

"Negative emotions, especially anger, anxiety or a sense of futility, powerfully disrupt work, hijacking attention from the task at hand."

Featured Topic: *The Persuadable Mind*

In raising children, it's always tempting to use the "because I said so" argument. Have you run across people like that in your workplace? People who say things like, "Why can't everyone just do it my way, without the need to debate, explain or build consensus"?

Rhonda is such a person. She works as a project manager and she has posed this question in her mind many times. Despite the fact that her company openly values collaboration, she thinks the concept is overrated. You may know someone like Rhonda, she is smart, ambitious and technically competent, but can be difficult to work with. She is internally focused and does not care to understand others' points of view and has little patience with their input, and she lets you know it. She mistakenly believes that in getting her way, she is demonstrating "achievement through winning."

"People start with a low level of self-insight and therefore tend to use others as instruments of their own need fulfillment."

Otto Laske, [Stages](#)

Rhonda is the antithesis of the interdependent employee that organizations are looking for these days. In fact, as organizations become faster and flatter, success is defined by the ability to integrate the diverse talents and strengths of the entire workforce.

At the corporate or enterprise level this means *collaboration*.
At the individual level, it takes a *Persuadable Mind*.

This mindset requires insight and emotional maturity to effectively integrate the vast diversity that exists around you. The Rhonda's of the world will struggle as contributors in a collaborative environment because of the "my way or the highway" mentality. Due to the complexity of modern organizations, the bar for success keeps being raised. Success now depends on your ability to thrive in an environment of interdependence and the capacity to model that for others. A *Persuadable Mind* is a key to that success:

- An ongoing sense of **Inquiry** about things and people.
- **Empathy** for the needs of others.
- **Self-Confidence** that comes with the knowledge of who they are.
- A high level of **Tolerance** for ambiguity and the differences that exist between people.

However, no one springs forth fully formed, mature and interdependent. It is a predictable journey that goes through a progression of stages:

- **Awareness**. You are uniquely suited to be who you are and others are equally unique in their own ways. Awareness is the ability to recognize that those differences exist, that they are normal, and that the diversity of these individuals always adds value to the whole.
- **Self-Awareness** is the ability to objectively acknowledge and assess your individual talents, strengths and limitations.
- **Self-Management** is the final phase of the journey and is the embodiment of your emotional maturity, which is demonstrated by managing yourself in situationally appropriate ways, especially in times of stress.

As you move along the path of this highly personal journey, you will be more and more at ease in demonstrating the behaviors and characteristics of a *Persuadable Mind*. The irony of the *Persuadable Mind* is this, the more you become open to the influence of others, the more influential you become in your work and personal relationships.

"The most reasonable people don't have to get their way in a discussion. They just need to be heard, and know that their input was considered and responded to."

Patrick Lencioni, [The Five Dysfunctions of a Team](#)

Collaboration doesn't mean that you give up what makes you unique, but that you truly learn to appreciate the differences in others. An individual with a *Persuadable Mind* is one who has the ability to accept and find value in the strengths and talents that we **each** possess. The *Persuadable Mind* is the tipping point that allows us to fully integrate the vast array of talents and strengths that combine to form modern organizations. Individuals with a *Persuadable Mind* are able to transition from "my way" to "our way."

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**Book Review: [Primal Leadership, Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence](#) by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee**

This book is about the importance of emotions in the workplace, especially in leaders. The authors argue that:

*Throughout history and in cultures everywhere, the leader in any human group has been the one to whom others look for assurance and clarity when facing uncertainty or threat, or when there's a job to be done.*

*The leader acts as the group's emotional guide.*

Not only do the authors make a strong case for the powerful influence of emotions, they also note that positive emotion in leaders is a strong indicator of job satisfaction and performance; and, it is one of the most significant indicators of effective leadership.

On the other hand, when leaders are incapable of or uncomfortable with their own emotions, they tend to be less understanding or have little empathy for the emotions of others. The authors call this *dissonant* leadership and when there is dissonance, collective distress will become the group's preoccupation, people will “feel” unbalanced and will perform poorly.

Goleman and his co-authors emphasize the importance of developing what they term “resonant leadership.” Focusing on the four domains of Emotional Intelligence (EI): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The book explores what contributes to and detracts from “resonant” leadership, and how the development of these four EI competencies creates different leadership styles.

No matter what the style, they found that when leaders can speak authentically from their feelings and act in accord with their own values, they create resonance. Case studies demonstrate how this sense of “resonance” can leave people feeling uplifted and inspired even in a difficult moment. As the authors note, *“A primal leadership dictum is that resonance amplifies and prolongs the emotional impact of leadership.”*

The authors’ basic message is this, leaders do best when they stay emotionally connected to the realities of their business and to their teams’ personal goals and needs. Emotions are the glue that holds people together and allows people to feel and act committed to the organization.

A good read for a thoughtful exploration of your primal leadership.

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## **Featured Service: *Coaching Services***

*Great leaders move us, ignite passion and inspire the best in us, creating a reservoir of positivity that unleashes the best in people.*

This statement is hardly groundbreaking, yet it’s easier said than done. Great leaders aren’t born, they each started the journey with a single step.

Are you looking to unleash the best in yourself and in others? Coaching is an excellent investment to see things in new ways, translate those insights into action, and overcome obstacles that cloud your horizon and limit your vision.

Coaching can help you achieve results faster and easier than doing it by yourself. Are you ready to reap the benefits?

- Gain clarity & purpose to stay focused
- Develop leadership presence
- Shape and articulate a vision that creates resonance for yourself and others
- Build confidence and credibility
- Create a legacy
- Build powerful interdependent relationships that are key to professional success

*“Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.”* **John F. Kennedy**

If you are looking for results that make a difference, contact Angela C. Gonzalez today for a **complimentary** coaching session.

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