the journalist’s
guide to
teaching
leadership and
management
skills and
values

news leadership
at the head of the class
second edition
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the journalist’s guide to teaching leadership and management skills and values

second edition

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Today, more than ever, journalism needs leaders at every level. In times of change, people look to leaders to inspire and guide them. Leaders help people move out of their comfort zones into new learning, new achievements. Evolving technology and the changing habits of news consumers demand creative and collaborative responses from newsrooms.

Leaders turn change into challenge, challenge into opportunity. Are you a leader?

- Are you the kind of person whose vision and wisdom inspires others?
- Do you help people do their best work in changing times?
- Do you help people grow their skills in a way that makes them eager to reach even higher?
- Are you gifted at solving problems and resolving conflicts?
- Is the work more rewarding when you’re on the job?
- Are you always ready to learn more?

If you can say “yes” to all—or even some—of those questions, chances are you are indeed a leader. Congratulations! And one more thing:
Are you ready to help teach others about leadership and management?

Yes? Then read on.

The Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF) has long provided training for newsroom managers through workshops and publications. This book takes that training to another level. It helps leaders become teachers.

*News Leadership at the Head of the Class* is designed to help those who want to coach and teach others to become better at leading and managing. You might do this at a convention, a workshop, or right in your own organization. You may be someone designated as a “trainer” in your organization, someone who regularly teaches others. But we’re assuming you’re more likely to be a newsroom manager who wants to build your teaching skills.

**RTNDF understands the need for training leaders and managers. Training? What Training?**

Before you became a newsroom manager, you probably had a reputation for superior newsroom skills. You produced top-notch newscasts, kept the trains running on time on the assignment desk, or knew how to report or photograph a remarkable story.

People who are good at doing journalism often are asked to lead it. But when you step into the role, you discover you need an entirely new set of skills:

- You now supervise what you used to “just do.”
- You evaluate people who may have been your co-workers.
- You change formats or schedules you may have developed in your past duties.
- You solve problems and settle conflicts.
- You are responsible for managing a budget, though math is not your strong suit.
- You collaborate—or should—with other departments.
- You must know all forms of law—from contract to labor to libel.
- You connect with viewers, who often question your judgment.
- You model the ethics and values you want your team to stand for.
- You build and nurture the culture of your organization.
- You are expected to have a vision for the future of your team and a plan to get them there.

And every day you deal with those who produce the daily miracle...
that is your news. You motivate, inspire, coach, correct, challenge and comfort your people. Sometimes you anger or disappoint them. Through it all, you hope they choose to give their best effort to journalism every day. Who taught you the massive set of skills needed to accomplish all this?

Chances are you didn’t receive much, if any, formal training. A 2002 study sponsored by the Knight Foundation\(^1\) determined that news organizations spend about half as much as other industries on training. It further noted a lack of training is journalists’ number one source of job dissatisfaction.

Chances are you learned by trial and error. Your trials may have been very trying. Your errors were painful to you and to others. Isn’t there a better way to move into management?

RTNDF thinks there is. That’s why, with a grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation, RTNDF set out to help newsroom managers receive the training they lack. RTNDF didn’t simply make assumptions about what news directors want—it conducted research among news directors and general managers. Here’s an excerpt from an RTNDA Communicator article about the effort:

*We asked them what topics they’d like RTNDF to offer in its broadcast leadership and management training. The group’s top five choices:

  - Communicating effectively to staff
  - Coaching employees for high performance
  - Developing and adapting a leadership style
  - Developing systems
  - Knowing legal issues in human resources.*

Close behind were time management, recruitment, managing difficult people, evaluations and reviews, writing and storytelling coaching, creativity, conducting meetings, resolving conflict and building newsroom cultures.\(^2\)

Guided by that information, RTNDF developed leadership learning tracks at its annual convention, along with regional workshops aimed at serving news directors’ leadership and management challenges and interests.

Participants evaluated each program. This helped RTNDF and the

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2. RTNDA Communicator, February, 2003
McCormick Tribune Foundation learn even more about what news managers want from training sessions and how to fine tune programs to make them more effective.

The participants said they value sessions that are practical, engaging and interactive. They want credible content and compelling presentations. That’s a tall order. Many of the presenters in RTNDF leadership seminars are full-time news managers with good experiences to share but no training in the art of teaching adults in public forums. This book was written to help them—and anyone who wants to teach leadership. *Leadership at the Head of the Class* is designed to:

- Introduce news managers to concepts from leadership and management research
- Direct news managers to additional resources for their continued learning
- Help news managers become powerful teachers.

We hope you enjoy the learning journey—and use your knowledge to help others succeed.
An RTNDF leadership workshop evaluation form noted this about the presenter: “Clone Jill Geisler.” We did the next best thing. We commissioned her to write this book.

Jill heads the leadership and management group of The Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, a school for mid-career journalists. Poynter is her second career.

In her first, Jill Geisler was a television news reporter, photographer, producer and anchor. In 1978, she became the first woman to serve as news director at a major market network affiliate station in the United States. She spent 25 years at WITI-TV in Milwaukee, crafting an award-winning newsroom culture that valued enterprise, ethical decision-making and exceptional storytelling.

Poynter invited her to join its faculty in 1998, and a year later she was named head of the Institute’s leadership programs. She loved guiding a newsroom, and now she loves helping journalism’s managers become true leaders.

Today, she conducts seminars for broadcast and print journalists, consults in newsrooms around the world, coaches, managers and writes extensively about journalism leadership issues. She developed Poynter’s online “Leading Lines” column, which reaches thousands of subscribers weekly. Jill is a frequent presenter at RTNDA and RTNDF events and known for the credibility, creativity, humanity and humor she brings to her teaching.

Jill was the University of Wisconsin’s “Outstanding Journalism Graduate” in 1972. In 2004, she earned a master’s degree in leadership and liberal studies from Duquesne University, true to her belief that leaders are lifelong learners.
Welcome to Teaching Leadership!

You are a skilled journalist. You want to become a skilled newsroom leadership and management issues teacher. This book is designed to make that happen.

We begin with a brief introduction to leadership teaching by discussing two important concepts:

- The difference between management and leadership
- The personal nature of leadership.

Teaching is personal, too. That’s why the first half of this book: **You, the Teacher**, will focus on your role as an educator. You will learn about:

- The needs and interests of adult learners
- Teaching tips
- Teaching techniques
- Teaching tools.

Following the teaching section, **Leadership and Management: Teaching Topics and Resources** features an array of leadership topics of interest to today’s newsrooms. Each topic is summarized and includes plenty of reference and resource materials.

The **Appendix of Leadership Teaching Handouts** contains materials you are welcome to use in your teaching. So let’s get started.

rtndf news leadership at the head of the class
Who is a Manager? Who is a Leader?

Much has been written about management and leadership, and often the descriptions of managers pale in comparison to those of leaders. Managers seem to emerge as taskmasters more focused on the work than the workers. Leaders seem elevated to a higher plane.

Writing in the Harvard Business Review, business professor John Kotter posited that:

• Managers cope with complexity, leaders cope with change.
• Managers plan and budget, leaders set a direction.
• Managers organize and staff, leaders align people.
• Managers control and problem solve, leaders motivate people.

Another noted leadership scholar, Warren Bennis, sees great differences between the two. In his book, Learning to Lead, he says:

• The manager administers; the leader innovates.
• The manager maintains; the leader develops.
• The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.
• The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
• The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
• The manager is the classic good soldier; the leader is his or her own person.
• The manager does things right; the leader does the right things.

Does that mean managers aren’t doing laudable work? Hardly! Perhaps their roles and responsibilities sound less lofty, but we can’t underestimate the value of effective managers in any organization. That's maddeningly clear when we work for inept managers, when equipment isn’t maintained, when work schedules are a guessing game, when budgets are a mess or a mystery, when standards change with the wind, or when systems are about “just getting it done”—but not consistently or well.

Good managers know how to make a newsroom operate efficiently. Their strong management skills remove obstacles to good work. That's important —every day.

But leaders do something more. They guide and inspire us—as individuals and as part of a team. They raise our ambitions. They
find ways to motivate us as individuals and as teams. They influence us in ways that make us feel confident, competent and committed. We trust them—every day.

**It’s easy to know you’re a manager: your boss gives you the job and the title.**

But leadership, that’s something different.

**You know you are a leader when people choose to follow you. Leadership is a status you earn from one follower at a time.**

Leadership is Personal

When you become a manager, you soon realize that the majority of your time is spent dealing with people, not just product. That can come as a shock to those who thought life as a manager would simply mean being a “doer” who has more power to get tasks accomplished.

**Now your role is to help others do their best work.** If, as a manager, you don’t see yourself as a “people-person,” your challenge will be steep. If you wish to develop as both a manager and a leader, you need to understand how deeply personal leadership is.

As a leadership teacher, I often ask journalists to describe leaders who had a significant positive impact on their lives. I hear about men and women—teachers, coaches, bosses, relatives and mentors. I hear about quiet speakers and shouters, the highly and the barely educated, the intense and the laid-back. Their differences are vast, but there are always a few common threads among them. What I hear most often is:

- They were people of integrity.
- They were people of high purpose and skill in their field.
- They were people who took a special interest in “me.”

That last line - the special interest in me—is the essence of leadership. Leadership, at its core, is about relationships. It is about the connections you make with others. By connections, I don’t mean just giving someone a good day’s pay for a good day’s work. That’s a transaction, not a connection. I’m talking
about what the historian and leadership scholar James MacGregor Burns describes as *transforming*, or transformational leadership, which he believes raises both the leader and follower to higher levels of motivation and morality.

Transformational leadership is a tall order. Another leadership scholar, Bruce Avolio, in his book, *Full Leadership Development*, says transformational leadership is built on “the four I’s”:

- Idealized influence
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualized consideration.

This means that, as a leader, there are things about you that followers find worth emulating. You teach, inspire and motivate. People identify with the values you communicate and demonstrate. They feel better just being on your team. And they feel, as individuals, you have their best interests at heart. That is why they are open to your coaching and guidance. They see you as knowledgeable and trustworthy.

This is why managers’ training must cover a broad range of competencies, from the very down-to-earth daily duties like hiring, scheduling, planning and budgeting to the higher-level interpersonal skills of coaching, motivating, team-building, conflict resolution and developing organizational cultures. That training can be the difference between success and failure in this highly personal skill we call leadership.

As a leader in journalism, you can step up to assist in the training of others. To do so, you need to do a little learning—about teaching.

**You, the Teacher**

Presenting a program at a conference or workshop—or even developing a workshop in your own organization can be a little intimidating. After all, you face one of the world’s toughest audiences: journalists. You know journalists want truth and demand proof. They question authority and resist spin. And you stand before them, armed with alleged expertise, seeking to influence their thinking. Where is that antiperspirant?

Relax. Remember, you know journalism and journalists, too. So just think about the questions that go through your mind when you size up a speaker:
• Does this person have a good story to tell?
• Can this person present in a way that keeps my interest?
• Does this person have facts to back up his/her assertions?
• Is this person talking down to me—or talking to me?
• Does this person have a clue about my work, my world?
• Can this person teach me something I can put to use right away?

Your job is to deliver a “yes” to all of these questions.

Craft Your Story

The subject you teach will be drawn from your personal experience as well as your leadership and management study. Real-life newsroom experiences are some of the best teaching devices we have—provided the experience can be generalized to others in the room. So what’s your story? A good story form:

• Establishes the scenario
• Reveals the problem or challenge
• Helps people feel the danger or discomfort presented by the problem
• Explores options for solving it
• Reflects on the values involved in the situation
• Shares the resolution
• Shares lessons learned
• Inspires others to think and act.

Craft Your Storytelling Ability

Leadership scholar Howard Gardner, in his book, Leading Minds, writes, “Leaders achieve their effectiveness chiefly through the stories they relate...In addition to communicating stories, leaders embody those stories.” He says our stories may be traditional or innovative (a new twist on an old story), or visionary (creating a new story).

So, as you consider crafting stories for your teaching, have a clear purpose for them. For example: We changed our approach to election coverage for the better, and what we learned can benefit newsrooms of all sizes—but it only works with a team effort. Or: Our newsroom attracts and keeps great producers —and our experience is built on five key factors you might adapt for your newsroom.

I suggest you use terms like “adapt” or “try” as opposed to “copy” or “do” as your story moves into the advice area. Every newsroom is different. In using terms like “adapt,” you are acknowledging that
the managers listening to you might need some parts of your solution but not others. Better yet, it promotes critical rather than cookie-cutter thinking. It shows respect for what they know about their team that you don’t.

**Do Your Homework**

Much of what is taught in workshops is shared wisdom born of experience. But at the same time, people appreciate more than just war stories and opinions. Take the time to read up on your topic.

Let’s say you are asked to teach about handling conflicts, building a team or motivating people. You may have some wonderful first-person accounts to share, some stunning success or fabulous failure tales. Use them. But enrich your teaching with a little research.

You easily can go online and do a search for literature on your topic. You can hit the library or archives of business publications like the *Harvard Business Review* or *Fast Company*. You can check resources like the RTNDF website (www.rtndf.org), Poynter Online (www.poynter.org) or Northwestern University’s Media Management Center (www.mediamanagementcenter.org). Remember, you are dealing with journalists—they expect you to back up your assertions with some sourcing and they will recoil if they think you are simply laying some glib “management-speak” or “flavor of the day” concept on them.

**Talk to Me, Not Down to Me**

As a speaker, you walk a careful line—on the one side is “confidence” and on the other, “arrogance.” If an audience senses arrogance, you lose them. Even if you are telling the story of how your newsroom won a national award, stay humble. Shine the spotlight on your team, not just its leader.

“We” is a far more powerful teaching term than “I”—unless you are telling the saga of a big blunder. Don’t underestimate the power of teaching about your worst moments. As a leadership teacher, I have found a treasure trove of material in teaching from my mistakes.

When you are willing to use your own errors as examples and focus on what you learned from them, people are likely to appreciate your candor. Make sure you don’t appear cavalier about the mistakes, and at the same time, don’t cast yourself as an incompetent goof. Honestly share the pain your mistakes may have caused you or others, the shame or embarrassment you can
still feel today, and the wisdom that grew from all of it. Your audience members may be more willing to examine their own weaknesses because you have made it safe for them to do so. Their teacher is impressive and imperfect—and still stands at the head of the class!

**Connect to Your Audience**

Speak a common language with your audience. Managers face many similar issues, it is true. But to be an effective teacher, you and your material must be relevant to the current experience of as many people as possible in the group.

If you are teaching at a workshop, start with the assumption that you don’t know the technology everyone uses, the nuances of their companies, their communities or their employees. Make your examples and case studies relevant to as broad a spectrum of people as possible. Think about the needs of visual journalists as well as word folks, print as well as broadcast people, big market organizations and small, plus unionized as well as non-union newsrooms.

Don’t be tempted to digress into market or station-specific anecdotes that are so “inside baseball” that they have little value. Learn as much as you can about your audience, preferably in advance or on the spot if need be—and always be prepared to tailor your content so it resonates with everyone’s reality.

**Make It Useful**

It is impossible to overemphasize this: adult learners don’t want lessons they can tuck away for someday in the future. They want information they can use—now. So always think about how your teaching can be applied. Help your audience understand how they might try it out back home. What would it cost? What are the risks? Who could be involved?

You may have a good reason to take participants to places they’ve never been. Go ahead and explain how you deployed a crew to cover the South Asian tsunami and what you learned from it. Other leaders in the room may have lacked the budget but not the desire. Your obligation is to make the lessons in your story useful to them. What you learned about travel or trauma or planning and communication with crews can be applied to other stories their newsrooms cover. Just remember, it’s about them, not you. When you connect with your audience, you’re not talking down, you are a friendly tour guide.
Look the Part
All eyes are on you. It’s not vanity to give a little thought to what you wear. When it comes to apparel, I give the same advice to trainers I do to anchors. Dress so your clothing doesn’t interfere with your message.

If the audience is distracted by your duds (“What black tie dinner is he headed to after this gig?” or “Gee, maybe she came straight here from the gym?”), they may be less apt to give full attention to your teaching.

For a panel discussion at a professional convention or conference, “business casual” may be preferable. At some workshops and retreats, participants are encouraged to dress as though they are on vacation. When that’s the case, I suggest you, too, dress comfortably and casually, but one cut above the crowd. The goal is to demonstrate respect for the event and present an aura of authority, while blending with the tone of the day. Don’t hesitate to ask the event organizers about the suggested dress code.

Get With the Program
The most successful presenters recognize they are part of a whole. They take a look at other aspects of the program they’re involved in. They are attentive to:

• The overall theme of the conference or workshops. What’s the mission? What common threads run through the program?
• Team play. If you are teaching with a team of others, pay attention to what they’re offering. You could learn something—and can relate your teaching to theirs.
• Civility. You may disagree with a prior speaker or fellow teacher. You can be challenging as well as civil in your response. Reasonable people can disagree, adding light and not just heat to the room.
• Responsibility. Program planners are counting on you. Save them from worry. Arrive in plenty of time for your session. If someone is teaching in the same room after you, make a graceful exit. This may mean inviting people who want to talk with you to follow you out to the hallway. Some of your best teaching happens after the session is over, when people come to you for advice.
Teaching Adult Learners

When we were kids, we dutifully took our seats in class as the teacher decided what we were to learn, why and how. Adults don’t expect to be treated that way. Adults have different needs and learning styles than children. There’s even a word for the art and science of teaching adults—**andragogy**, championed by an educator named Malcolm Knowles.

Here are some of andragogy’s core assumptions about adult learners that apply to your RTNDF teaching:

- They want to know why they need to learn something.
- They want some control of the learning process.
- They want to incorporate prior life experiences into their learning.
- They value learning that helps them solve problems.
- They want subjects that relate to their lives (work, personal or both).
- They enjoy discovering things for themselves rather than being told what they should know.

Think of it this way: adults learn best when they perceive there is a gap between where they are and where they want to be. Note that the operative word is *they*. It is they who decide whether they indeed have a gap to close. You can’t force them to believe it. But you can help them identify it by skillfully laying out what you hope to teach them and how it will benefit them.

As we stand before a room full of men and women who have come to our presentation, we know they have high expectations. Here are some tips to help you succeed:

**Consider Yourself a Facilitator**

You may have loved your sixth grade English teacher, but that’s not who you want to be. You are not an instructor who expects the class to read, memorize and repeat back information, and then tests and grades the group. You are a facilitator, the person who helps people discover ideas. As a facilitator, you lay out concepts, connect thoughts, encourage conversation and ask good questions that lead people to think critically and creatively. Then you reinforce their emerging “ahas!”
Avoid Lecturing
A lecture is one-way communication. Don’t do it. Lecturing assumes you are the expert and the others are empty vessels. Unless you are the world’s most entertaining monologist, you cannot keep adults engaged for any length of time with only the sound of your voice. Learning suffers.

I believe we tend to underestimate the length of our anecdotes and lessons, so keep a little mental alarm clock that goes off frequently, saying “time to let them talk, too...time to let them talk, too.”

State Your Goals and the Problem You’re Tackling
Since adults want to know why they need your wisdom, tell them from the onset what you expect the session to achieve.

Example: “Every newsroom has reporters who want to be better writers. Our job is to help them. You might be a great writer but not quite know how to transfer your skills to others. You might know good writing when you read it but not precisely how to help others understand what goes into the process. In today’s session, I’ll share 10 tools that will make you a better writing coach —tools you and others in your newsroom can put to use tomorrow.”

Now, of course, you have to live up to the promise!

Keep It Real
Adult learners know when people are trying to impress them with jargon. Don’t, for example, drop a word like “andragogy” into your presentation unless you have a mighty compelling purpose for sharing it. Lacing lofty or technical language into your teaching will only build distance between you and the audience. If you use a specialized term that you know the audience may not be familiar with, explain its importance and relevance.

Keep It Practical
Look for real-world scenarios to illustrate your points. Connect what you are sharing with the current challenges of the audience. If you are a person who likes to think in terms of concepts and the big picture, always take things back to the ground level in your teaching. How can things be explained in day-in-the-life-of-a-newsroom terms?
Involve the Learners
Develop presentations that provide interaction between you and the group. Remember—their voices are as important as yours. They don’t want to be passive learners. Adults learn best when they hit upon ideas, get energized and see possibilities. It happens because of the teaching plan you have developed and the way you execute it. (You also must learn to modify it in response to opportunities or problems that pop up during your session.)

As you see, being a facilitator for learning takes more skill than straight lecturing!

Reaching and Respecting All Learners
Teachers must understand the rich diversity that can exist even in a small group. To be effective, you need to teach in ways that reach each individual. My study and work involving the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator® has helped me understand how different people process and communicate information. Here’s what I have learned:

**Extroverts** are not necessarily showing off or trying to be the life of the party. They are people who think by talking out loud. They form their ideas even as they hear them. Hearing their ideas come to life often leads them to elaborate. Hearing other people talk stimulates them to talk in response. They learn best by talking or even teaching something to others. Your challenge as a teacher:

- Note who your extroverts are early in your teaching; they are usually the first people in the room to speak up.
- Make optimal use of them to get conversations started or when you are looking for volunteers to take part in an exercise.
- Give extroverts their voice, but keep them from dominating all conversations.
- Develop tactful ways to edit extroverts. Remember, they don’t necessarily know they are being long-winded. They are excited about what they are hearing themselves say! So, you may have to slide in while they’re talking: “Peter, we hear you clearly: assignment editors have the toughest job in the newsroom. I’m eager to build on that...let me get Diane’s voice in the mix.”
• When many others in the room want to chime in, start playing traffic cop. Keep tabs on who has had sufficient "air time" and who hasn’t.

• Cite an order in which you’ll call on people who are volunteering to speak.

As you look at a sea of hands in the air, you may say: “Okay, let’s hear from some voices we haven’t heard yet” or “I’m going to go to you, Kathleen, then Brian…and Bob, since you had a great comment before, I’m hoping you’ll defer to Erica so we can make sure we hear her thoughts.”

Introverts are not necessarily shy or lacking in confidence. They are people who like to bake an idea in their brains before displaying it in public. This means they are thinking and processing while others are talking. They learn best by thinking, reading, and reflecting. Introverts may not appreciate being called on to “perform” without feeling sufficiently prepared. But they often have plenty to say when they are ready. Your challenge as a teacher:

• Note who your introverts are early in your teaching; they listen while others speak. They chime in later in the proceedings.

• Lay out an idea or question with a warning that you’re going to ask people for feedback on it in a bit. Introverts appreciate the early warning so they can collect their thoughts.

• Don’t neglect introverts or assume that by trying to draw them out you are offending them. Just watch to see when they are ready.

• Consider conferring with introverts about whether they would like to take part in fishbowl or role-play exercises. You can do this during breaks, for example. When I teach the portion of a Myers-Briggs workshop that deals with introverts and extroverts, I always consult privately with a few people in the group who have a strong preference for introversion. I ask their permission to do a Q&A with them about life as an introvert. When I do this, I have found the introverts to be both willing and eloquent speakers.

• If you plan an exercise where individuals or groups are to present a skit or demonstration, give them a chance to choose the order in which they will appear. This lets people have greater control and comfort.
It Isn’t Always About Personality Type
We are diverse in many other ways, and teachers need to remember some other things that influence the communication dynamics in a room.

• **Culture counts**
  Some of your participants may come from family backgrounds that emphasized turn taking. They may wait their turn to speak or be recognized. You need to make certain they aren’t bulldozed by folks who simply blurt.

  Others may have been brought up in homes where people talked over each other and considered interrupting to be simply robust give-and-take. You may have to offer friendly guidelines about letting people finish a thought before the next speaker chimes in.

  Other participants may have been raised to be respectful to authority figures. You may have to emphatically invite people to challenge your ideas and then respond graciously when they do.

• **Gender matters**
  Watch your language. Are your pronouns mostly masculine, as in “a good leader takes care of his team”? If so, you may alienate the women in the room. Ditto for piling on sports or war metaphors for leadership situations. Be more creative than that! (Some seminar participants from ESPN once told me they used cooking metaphors in their conversations because everything they talk about is sports!)

  When doing exercises that involve note taking, don’t routinely give the task to women, who might feel they are being relegated to support roles. Conversely, don’t consistently cast men as the heavies in your role-plays or anecdotes or use the term “bad guys” to describe misbehaving folks of both genders.

• **Diversity matters**
  Everyone in the room brings something unique to the party. As a teacher, your role is to make it comfortable for folks to offer their personal perspectives where they see fit. That may involve race and ethnicity, age, gender, sexual preference, religion or other life experiences. Talking across or about difference isn’t always easy, but it can lead to extraordinarily valuable learning.
If you are able to determine seating in the room, try your best to give people a chance to sit near someone different from them in some way. Remember, in a learning community, everyone is a potential teacher.

Always take care to keep people from being stereotyped or marginalized, as in “So Noreen, what’s the woman’s perspective on all this?” The question presumes Noreen’s viewpoint must be different because she is a woman—and that she speaks for the totality of her gender.

As a leader, you do a great service when you encourage both candor and care as people tell their differing personal stories to illustrate issues you are teaching.

**Honor contrarians**
Interactive teaching isn’t about having a chorus to shout “amen” to your sermon. It is about encouraging healthy questions and challenges as you teach. Tell the group at the onset you will honor contrarians—good voices that say “But what about other alternatives” or “Have you considered this possible outcome?”

You can help people build their critical thinking skills by inviting them to voice concerns or demand proof for the positions you espouse. Don’t look at such questioning as an assault on your integrity or an invitation to debate them to death. Look for merit in their positions, acknowledge their good points, stand corrected or amended, tactfully disagree or indicate that reasonable people may sometimes agree to disagree. At the same time, recognize the difference between a contrarian and a crank.

**Handle cranks**
It doesn’t happen often, but every now and then a person responds to you in a genuinely ugly way. It happened to me during the very beginning of a workshop at a TV station when one very angry employee just blurted out what a waste of time this was. He just wanted people to do their (expletive deleted) jobs. I stood firm, telling him I respected his feelings but rejected his logic, and I would prove how what we were learning could address his concerns.

During the next break I went directly to him and asked what was troubling him. He apologized and shared his frustrations about the newsroom that he feared were being ignored. I asked him to trust that we would work on those very issues. I
invited him to help me. He accepted. We got back on track after the break with his full participation. He started out as a bully, but sometimes you can conquer cranks by getting closer to them rather than distancing yourself.

When that fails, or when they are interfering with the learning of the group, you need to cut off the cranky conversation. You may even calmly excuse the person from the program unless he/she is willing to abide by your rules of engagement. All eyes in the room are watching how you navigate this kind of tricky situation on their behalf. After all, you are teaching leadership.

The Learning Environment

As a teacher, one of your primary concerns is to provide the best possible learning environment for your students. You may be teaching at a convention center, a college, a hotel or even a meeting room or studio at a television station. How do you make sure you have the optimal atmosphere for teaching and learning?

Confer with the conference planners in advance about room setup. Here are some things to keep in mind:

**Think in Terms of Building a Learning Community**
This is particularly important for workshop settings where people may be together for hours or even days. Remember you are a facilitator, someone who “hosts” the learning. In a best-case scenario, participants learn from one another as well as you. So make every effort to help them connect with one another in maximum comfort.

**“Classroom” seating—rows of tables and chairs or chairs alone—is the least desirable room setup**
People in this seating arrangement spend their time looking at the backs of other peoples’ heads. It locks them into their places. People in the middle of rows can feel hemmed in.

You may have no other choice than classroom seating if your group is too large for any other room configuration. When faced with an unavoidable classroom setting, remember it falls to you to compensate for the lack of community in the room. That can include anything from walking the aisles as you present to pairing people up for activities during your presentation.
When possible, arrange the group so people can see each other
A U-shaped table, for example, allows participants to make eye contact with others in the room. It allows you to walk into the “U” to get closer to each participant as you present.

Cabaret seating—tables of people arranged around the room—also can be an effective setup. This grouping lends itself to work in teams. Be careful, however, to make certain people at tables still have a good line of sight to the speaker and opportunities to connect with people at other tables as well.

Keep close to the participants; reduce barriers
Avoid room setups that put barriers between you and the group, such as an unnecessary desk, podium or table. Use these only if there is a good teaching reason to have them. Otherwise, set yourself as close to the participants as you can be comfortably. If you walk into the center of a U-shaped table, remember not to keep your back to some folks for too long.

Speaking of reducing barriers, be vigilant—make certain your teaching space is accessible and hospitable to people with disabilities.

Use name placards and badges; make it personal
Double-sided placards, known as “table tents” help people identify each other. Name badges ensure they are identifiable wherever they wander. If you are building community, you don’t want people to feel they are only faces in the crowd and strangers to each other. Ask your conference planner to provide all possible identification. If possible, get a list of participants in advance of the seminar. As facilitator, you should get to know as many names as possible.

Move people around
For longer workshops, especially multi-day ones, move people to fresh locations. This encourages people to make more connections with others in the program. If you don’t move them, they are likely to stay where they were placed from the start. The facilitator must make a conscious effort to mix things up—and don’t hesitate to tell people why you do it. Otherwise, they may think you have some kind of hidden agenda behind the musical chairs. I often enlist a volunteer from the group to help me move the table tents around in preparation for a new session. That’s a guaranteed way to remove any mystery about the seating selections!
Don’t leave physical plant issues to chance or to the last minute

It helps to keep a checklist of what you commonly need in your teaching space. Let your conference contact know about your needs for:

- Audio/visual support—tape or DVD players, monitors, microphones
- Computer tech support—PC, Mac, projection equipment
- Table setup for participants
- Table for your computer
- Table for your handouts
- Access to last-minute copying
- Access to drinking water and bathrooms
- Access to light switches
- Access to something very important: snacks.

Don’t laugh at that last point. I sincerely believe that any workshop is improved by the presence of chocolate. Okay, you may prefer something a bit healthier for your learners’ grazing—perhaps raisins, nuts, granola bars, hard candy or mints (never a bad idea in a close-knit group). The germ-conscious will appreciate it if your treats are individually wrapped.

Know where to find help

I have taught in spaces that were too cold, too hot, had too few chairs to go around, were plagued with A/V challenges and noise that washed in from adjacent rooms. Assume that things WILL go wrong. As you prepare for teaching, make sure you know in advance to whom you can turn for on-site help. Your goal is to be able to keep your program moving forward, while someone else solves the problems.

At the same time, keep your sense of humor and perspective. Don’t let your frustration distract you or let stress undermine your teaching. Look for creative ways to work around your challenges. Laugh at the absurd. Did I mention all eyes are on you, and you are teaching leadership?

Teaching Methods

We’ve already noted the importance of interactivity in your teaching. Let’s walk through some types of presentations that offer varying degrees of opportunity for interaction with participants.
Panel Discussion

My mental model of panels is “Four Wise Owls on a Branch.” Panels are a common format at conventions. Organizers contact a number of people with experience or ideas on a topic to share their knowledge. But things too often end there. Four panelists show up, make a statement or two, and then respond to questions.

This isn’t the optimal environment for adult learners. Most of their participation is passive, with the exception of a few questions. But those questions may be relevant to only some in the audience, leaving the rest semi-satisfied. As teachers, we want to give them more. What can you do?

If you are asked to be a panelist, do all you can to keep things lively. Make audience engagement a priority.

- Try to convene with fellow panelists in advance. Your fellow panelists are as busy as you are, but even one conference call can help everyone toss in ideas.

- Don’t be afraid to let your fellow panelists know you’d like to avoid the “wise owls on the branch” approach.

- Think about video, audio, props or demonstrations to liven up the panel.

- Find out what your fellow panelists are planning to cover to ensure you are not duplicating each other.

- Open the floor to questions early, or pre-solicit them in writing from the crowd.

- Do not assume each panel member must deliver an opening statement or answer every question asked.

Don’t be afraid to get creative! When I was asked to serve on an RTNDA convention panel on the topic of feedback and its importance to employees, I worked out a plan with the moderator. We contacted each panel member’s workplace to learn for what each was highly regarded - what people really loved about them as leaders. I prepared a one-page feedback summary for each and sealed it in an envelope. At the session, I distributed the envelopes to each panel member. They read their surprise feedback aloud. Imagine their faces as they read detailed and sincere praise.

The audience was in on a “live” demonstration of the power of
specific, positive feedback. It led to a great conversation with the many people in the room about how to make feedback work in their own organizations. We turned what could have been a typical table of talking heads into a “teaching moment.”

Co-Presentation
In this format, you co-lead a session with a partner. This format works if you know your partner well and preplan your roles and responsibilities. I have done co-presentations in which my partner and I shared aspects of one particular topic. I also have done them in which we each complete a topic and hand off to the other.

The smooth handoff should take its cue from good co-anchor teams you know. Presenters always are aware of what their partners plan to do next. Just as co-anchors can keep an audience’s attention with changes of voice and pace, co-presenters can do the same. Keep in mind, however, two people lecturing can be as mind-numbing as one. Co-presenters need to plan for interaction with the audience, using some of the methods described in the following pages.

Co-presenters should always consider themselves each other’s “eyes and ears.” While one is presenting, the other can scan the room to make certain people can hear well or are comfortable. Co-presenters may distribute handouts, run tapes or carry microphones into the crowd for questions.

Remember, people in the audience watch co-presenters not only for their content but for their relationship.

• Are they supporting one another?
• Are they ignoring one another’s teaching?
• Worst of all, are they competing?

Make certain you are seen as a great team.

Solo Presentation
It’s just you and the group. As you think of your relationship to the learners - how do you see it?

• Teacher and kids?
• Guru and disciples?
• Sheep and wolves?

Your vision of yourself and the group shapes your effectiveness.
Who are you in this process? What is your relationship to the learners? Consider these options:

- Player-coach with team
- Veteran among the troops
- Host among guests
- Student achiever among fellow learners
- School-of-hard-knocks graduate among up-and-comers.

The framing you do helps you set the right tone in your learning community. A solo presenter is most effective when interacting with the group rather than lecturing. In a reasonably sized group, you can accomplish this right away by turning the spotlight on your participants.

You may have group members introduce themselves, or you may ask them to answer a specific question related to your topic. Pay close attention to what they say. Good presenters find ways to weave the words and thoughts of the group back into their presentation. The opening gambit shouldn’t be a formality but rather an opportunity to connect.

Let’s move on to other methods presenters may use in their teaching, whether team or solo.

**Free-Writing Assignments**

Asking people to write down their thoughts can be an effective teaching method. I strongly encourage it. In my seminars, I sometimes ask participants to write a paragraph about a leader in their lives. We use these paragraphs to draw out stories from the group and pinpoint attributes of their leaders.

In other management sessions, you might ask them to write about their top challenges at work, list their daily tasks in order of importance, or even just describe a great day at work. It depends on the focus of your session and what information drawn from your participants can help you lead participants to some discoveries.

In writing coaching sessions, I often ask participants to free-write about a topic such as their first car or their first kiss. I look for easy, fun topics that let people write from life experiences, and I only ask for a few paragraphs. We use the stories to practice our coaching.

Free-writing exercises can open the door to some good two-person discussions.
• After participants write, pair each with a second person to share what they have written.

• Pairs build connections and interaction—people talk with each other instead of just focusing on you, the speaker. This also helps build the “learning community.”

• Pairs allow the teacher to help people focus on their listening skills. You can tell participants in advance that you are going to ask “what they heard” from their partner.

• When partners tell each others’ stories, everyone is involved, introverts have had a warm up, and people who may lack confidence in what they have written have a partner who can be their coach and advocate.

Some things to keep in mind if you use writing assignments:

• Have a clear purpose for the exercise and share it with the group. Example: “To help us dig deeper into good leadership, I’d like you to do a little bit of writing about a leader who had a significant positive impact on your life. Please include not only personal qualities—but also behaviors. We’re going to be looking at leadership in action.”

• Make certain you have a clear idea of where you want the writing exercise to lead the group. Is it a foundation for your discussion? Are you looking at what’s similar among participant responses? What’s different? What’s missing? Are you going to ask them about the writing process itself and how they approached it? Unfortunately, I have seen presenters ask people to write and then leave the participants wondering what it all was supposed to mean. They wrote, shared and then the presenter moved on to a different idea. Not good. Always have a plan for how the writing ties to whatever follows it.

• Be aware that some people experience writing anxiety, especially if narrative writing is not a routine part of their newsroom work (photographers, operations managers, assignment desk staff). Put everyone at ease by emphasizing you are not giving out grades, it is not a competition, and your interest is purely in their ideas. (Even if you are doing free-writing in seminars about coaching writing, you can put the group at ease by stressing it is a noncompetitive exercise.)
• Provide paper and pens. This may seem obvious, but it is important if you are going to ask a group to write. If it is a big group at a convention, and you're just a drop-in presenter, ask organizers to provide writing materials. If they can't, then try to have some extra pens and paper on hand for the needy.

Quizzes, Questionnaires or Self-Diagnostics
You may wish to distribute materials to the group to help identify their knowledge, opinions or approaches to a topic. You may develop quizzes or questionnaires yourself or use materials you have collected elsewhere. (Always keep copyright issues in mind, however. Are you on sound legal footing if you use the materials? Even if copyright isn’t an issue, always credit your source.)

I have developed some questionnaires that have proved helpful in seminars and that people have taken back to their organizations for future use.

• **Twenty Questions About Your Boss** (see page 122) examines what an individual really knows about the boss’s goals, expectations, values and pressures. We use this in sessions on “managing up.” Participants fill out the document, compare answers with one another, and then join in a group discussion about how this knowledge or lack of it, has an impact on their performance. You are welcome to use this document in your teaching and as example of the kind of materials you can develop for your programs.

• **Got Influence?** (see page 95) is designed to help workshop participants, both managers and non-managers, look inward. The self-evaluation asks them to rank themselves across measures of expertise, integrity and empathy. These are key elements to developing influence in the organization. Because such evaluations are highly personal, I do not invite participants to read their results out loud or with others. I do, however, ask them to think about how their newsroom colleagues would answer the same questions about them.

There are other quizzes or questionnaires you can develop for your teaching.

• Let’s say you are working on a team-building session, focusing on producers and anchors. You could conduct an informal survey of producers on what it takes to form a “great anchor/producer partnership.”
You could then invite the group you are teaching to list what they think the “top three” responses are and compare their responses to your survey results. While your survey is admittedly not scientific, you can build its credibility by making certain you have a sizeable pool of respondents.

- Perhaps your seminar deals with convergence issues, and your goal is to help newsrooms become more knowledgeable about the web’s potential. You might produce a list of terms commonly used by the online side, things like “page views” or “RSS feeds.” You might add questions about the traffic on some of the country’s top TV station sites or about online news users in the United States.

In this or any quiz, your goal may be to have the group recognize it has a lot to learn. Just remember you want to raise their awareness without making them feel stupid. Don’t make any questionnaire so difficult that people simply dismiss it as unfair or impossible. You may want to have people work in teams to answer the questions. Offer fun prizes for the team that has the best answers.

There are more formal, scientifically sound self-diagnostics used in leadership teaching, such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator. The MBTI® identifies personality preferences among normal individuals and is a very helpful tool to help us understand healthy differences. Be aware that access to this psychological instrument is limited to people who have completed qualifying courses in its use. Having taken this training, I understand the caution. Accreditation makes certain we don’t turn psychological instruments into parlor games or use them unethically to stereotype rather than inform.

If you are teaching in your own organization, your human resources department may have someone on staff who is certified to use the MBTI® or knows of other worthy self-diagnostics. One that is helpful in identifying conflict resolution styles is called the Thomas-Killman Conflict Mode Indicator. It does not require certification to use, but like other worthy licensed products, it comes with a price tag.

Some important points about the use of quizzes and questionnaires, especially those you develop yourself:

- Test them out on friendly volunteers before using them in a formal session. Get feedback on whether they are informative, helpful and credible to the user.
• Keep copies of your quizzes on file. If they make a good impression, people will ask you for copies to use with their own work groups.

• Make certain your instruments are used for information and fun, never to stereotype or embarrass people. Don’t put people in a position to publicly share their results if doing so makes them look or feel like a loser.

**Live Demonstrations**
Show-and-tell can add interesting dimensions to your teaching. I’ve seen terrific examples.

• Award-winning reporter/photojournalist team Boyd Huppert and Jonathan Malat of KARE-TV captivate a room by showing in real-time how they communicate with each other while doing an interview. They give a volunteer a set of Lincoln Logs and ask the person to build something. Boyd asks questions of the builder while Jonathan moves around for shots. You see every move the two make, every question they ask or re-ask, and the way the reporting team looks out for each other’s needs. You also see the video as it is recorded. They debrief the exercise with everyone in the room. Their goal is to show step-by-step how reporter/photographer partnerships make better stories.

• Storyteller extraordinaire John Larson of NBC News walks through a workshop crowd and asks for a volunteer to be interviewed. He begins asking questions. Within minutes, he’s talking with the person about passions and challenges, and a story emerges. In the example I witnessed, we watched a woman who was simply a face in the crowd reveal her daughter had been an athlete and then developed a health problem. Now she was about to compete again. John asked the mother about her hope for her daughter. People in the room were completely caught up. John explained he was simply in search of the woman’s “quest.” He believes a quest is the heart of most good stories, and such stories are all around us if we look. He proved it by finding one on the spot.

• Creative leader Brian Bracco, news vice-president of Hearst-Argyle stations, teaches participants in leadership and producing workshops how to juggle. He talks about that particular skill as a metaphor for handling the many
tasks they face at work. But he also makes the juggling lesson something more. Inevitably, some learners struggle as others juggle. And just as predictably, folks start to coach each other. Bracco catches them in this act of teamwork and encourages them to be the same effective coaches in their newsrooms.

Demonstrations can be spontaneous.

• At a workshop about anchors and credibility in Denmark, a young news anchor asked me how to deal with a problem. She felt she had less authority when she worked from the field instead of the anchor desk in the studio. I saw an opportunity to demonstrate my theory that true command comes from comfort.

I stepped down from the low stage where I had been standing and strode into the middle of the room’s circular tables. As I walked toward her, I began discussing my theory. While speaking, I plopped down on the floor and kept on talking. I explained I didn’t need the stage to give me authority. The authority came from what I knew and how I carried myself, even as I sat there on the carpet at her feet.

Remember, for teachers as well as anchors, true command comes from comfort.

**Role-Play**

Role-play allows people to practice what you preach. In the safe environment of your classroom, people can try out new ideas and approaches in various scenarios. Example:

• You are leading a session on difficult conversations. You lay out information on how to prepare for the talk and your advice on how to conduct it. Having fully developed those ideas, you then tell the group you would like to role-play a case. You might say, “Let’s practice some of this. I’d like us to do a role-play using two people. I need a couple of good sports to help me out. Who’s up for helping demonstrate a difficult conversation in the safety of this room?”

Be gracious to the volunteers. Thank them and promise you won’t embarrass them.

Role-play works best when people are very clear about their roles, and when those who are watching are equally clear on the roles.
Brief your volunteers about the person each is playing, what they need to know about that person, and what that person’s goals are in the role-play. Sample preparation of both roles:

- **Person 1—News Director:** You are Jane, a news director who needs to talk to a meteorologist about arriving late to the set too often. Joe is a good weather person and usually a team player. But under stress, he can be defensive and blame others. You have done your homework and documented five times in the last two weeks that the control room has had to page him to the set. His lateness caused him to grab the wrong mic last night, and you had audio problems in the show. You want him to stop the delays.

- **Person 2—Meteorologist:** You are Joe, the meteorologist. You take pride in your work. You have a list of issues you are unhappy about: equipment needing repair in your office, an open position in the weather department that has gone unfilled too long, and a producer you think makes fun of you during newscasts. And yes, you lose track of time before shows and realize it when they page you. You rush to the set whenever you hear the page and haven’t missed the start of the weathercast. You aren’t proud of being paged and know it upsets some people—but who’s perfect around here?

Begin the role play, and let it continue for a comfortable amount of time, but don’t let it drag on too long. Be especially attentive to best practices and things the participants have done that illustrate the goals you discussed in your introductory teaching.

Debrief with the participants and the whole class after each role-play:

- **Always begin with “what worked.”** People are always ready to criticize. You must model good coaching by starting with the positive. There are always things that went right. Talk about them before shifting to the negative.

- **After you have focused on the strengths of the presentation,** use good coaching language in discussing other aspects. Instead of “What didn’t they do well?” try “What could we suggest to make it even more effective?” Remember, people took a risk by performing in front of the group. Don’t make them regret it by pounding them into a pulp. Frame criticism constructively.

You may want to follow up by asking other people to take a crack at the same conversation. Sometimes you may just substitute a
fresh volunteer “news director.” Or, you may recast both parts. What if your role-players really don’t perform well, and the whole exercise seems to be falling apart before your eyes?

- If for some reason your volunteer news directors don’t seem to be able to achieve the success at difficult conversations you have been trying to teach, then jump in and play the part yourself.

- Jump only after others have tried, or if they ask you for help.

- Do it to show—not show off.

- Do it to demonstrate the kind of skills you want them to develop.

- Make sure you invite the group for feedback on your performance. It helps you experience what it feels like to be on the receiving end of a critique.

Reverse role-play
Give people a chance to walk in the other person’s shoes. Reverse their roles. It can work in the role-play we just described:

- Ask the two parties to reverse the parts they are playing. This is especially helpful when you are dealing with manager/subordinate relationships. Sometimes, managers have thought like managers for so long that they need to be reminded of the needs and concerns they had when they were on the front lines. Putting them into the employees’ role helps them revisit that perspective.

Reverse role-play also works well when you are coaching a person through a conflict with another. Example:

- You have asked people in your group to think of an unresolved conflict they want to address. Ask them to try their best to get inside the head of the troublesome person and play his or her part in a role-play. Some participants use this opportunity to do a caricature of their nemesis, so you need to coach them into doing the most honest representation they can. This provides an opportunity to think like “the other” and perhaps find ways to better communicate with that person.

Whenever you are doing role-plays, remember to seek out eager volunteers. Some people are uncomfortable performing before a
group, and you will do them and the group a disservice if you force them into the spotlight.

**Spot role-play**

Sometimes you haven’t planned for a role-play, but the opportunity arises. For example, you may be discussing how to deal with viewer complaints. A person in the crowd raises her hand and offers some advice: “I always call people who leave angry messages, because I feel they never expect to hear from us, and we can make a difference with the personal touch.” You clearly have a willing speaker with a good story—so you suggest a “spot” role-play:

- You ask this person if she would mind doing a quick role-play. You play the angry viewer, and let the participant demonstrate how she conducts the call. You have a wonderful teaching moment for the group.

Spot role-plays work best when a person has already initiated a “how I do it” comment, or if a person is asking you a question that could be answered well with role-play. For example:

- A news director asks: “What do I do with a producer who sometimes blows up at me in front of everyone in the newsroom? Do I respond right there or take it out of the room? And how do I get this to stop?”

You have some options here.

First, ask a few more questions so everyone knows more about the producer’s overall contributions to the newsroom as well as this problem. Encourage people in the room to ask questions about the situation as well.

Some are likely to jump in with their opinions or advice. If you hear someone offer advice that reflects the teaching you’ve been doing on how to handle difficult people, invite that person to help with the role-play. Before starting, discuss the goals you have for the next time this situation arises. Then:

- Have the news director play the part of the problem producer, with the audience volunteer playing the part of the news director. Ask them to role-play the difficult conversation.

Or, if no one in the group seems to be a good candidate for the role-play, you can play one part:
• Have the news director play the part of the producer, and you demonstrate how to respond to him.

Finally, you can switch the roles. Now that the news director has had a chance to play the problem producer, encourage him to now play himself. You or a volunteer can play the producer this time. Now the news director has had a chance to play both roles and practice how to handle things in the future.

Spot role-plays can liven up a presentation. Still, don’t suggest one unless you are confident the issue merits the extra focus, and people really want to play. How can you be confident? Look for:

• People who have been eagerly engaged in your teaching and/or the specific topic.
• People who have been chiming in with good ideas, but have not been overly dominating of conversations.
• People you know from prior experience are good performers.

**Fishbowls**

Fishbowl exercises are like live television. You assemble some volunteers to work on a topic in real time before the group. Example:

• You have been teaching in the area of leadership and ethical decision-making. You have talked about the values that guide journalists and processes for making sound decisions. You then recruit four volunteers. You tell them they are a reporter, a photographer, a producer and an assignment editor. They are the only people on duty on a Sunday morning when a call comes in stating a bomb will go off in an hour at a nearby church. You ask them to spend the next five minutes doing whatever they would do in their newsroom roles, while the rest of the group observes. After five minutes, you debrief the scene with the group.

Ask the viewers what worked, and what coaching suggestions they would have for the folks in the fishbowl. Ask the fishbowl team what they learned from the experience. You then draw threads from what was observed to the teaching points you want to emphasize.

**Readers Theater**

Sometimes participants are the best presenters of your information. That’s why, when I’m teaching a session on listening
skills, I recruit volunteers to serve as my *Introducing the Ten Lousy Listeners* (see page 119). I present each with a name placard and a copy of a short script. They read over their parts, and then each in turn reads aloud. Example:

- **The Multitasker**—“Sure I’m listening. While I type. While I scan my screen. While I take just this one call. While I open this letter and page through these message slips. Now, what were you saying?

I find that my 10 readers do a wonderful job of delivering their parts, while the rest of the group gets a good laugh. We follow with a discussion of each of the 10 problem listeners, the negative impact they have, and how they can improve. The group shares tips that have worked for them. I add advice to the mix.

Why not give your participants a break from your voice whenever it’s possible? Sometimes you have distributed handouts with specific definitions you want to emphasize. Sure, you could read them out loud, but always consider delegating to other willing candidates.

Another tip: if you have news anchors in your group, invite them to assist with reading. They’re good at it and quite accustomed to performing. It helps, however, to give them a heads-up that you’re going to call on them. No need to make them read cold copy if they don’t have to.

**Case Studies**

Good teachers are always on the lookout for real-life stories that can lend themselves to good deconstruction and discussion. It may be an ethical challenge, a success or a failure that befell an organization. It could be a situation from the presenter’s experience. It also could be a hypothetical but plausible scenario developed by the teacher.

With case studies, the facts can be rolled out bit by bit. Participants in the discussion can be asked what they would do in the situation, based on what they know. The presenter can then layer additional facts into the mix, to complicate the issue and challenge the group to think more deeply.

At the end of case studies, a debrief can help people re-examine how they approached the situation.

- What skills did they call on?
- What values were in play?
- Were they willing to shift their thinking in the light of new information?
• How easy is it to get “dug in” to a position once they stake it out?

It pays to keep files of good case studies to draw on for your teaching. Always keep in mind when using these that you, as teacher, know all the facts because you are the only fully briefed person in the room. Be mindful at every stage of the case’s unfolding how perceptions can differ.

You also can solicit case studies from participants in your program. If you ask people to prepare case studies in advance as part of pre-workshop homework, remember you have an obligation to use that work.

I have been involved in some seminars where we asked participants to do advance homework by writing about a case study from their newsroom. During the seminar session, we got so engrossed in discussing some cases that we missed others. In post-seminar evaluations, participants chided us for assigning them work and never using it. Worse, it kept us from getting to the issues that were troubling them.

So please, learn from my mistakes. If you assign homework, make sure you put it to good use in your seminar.

Games
Games are fun and interactive, and when they work, are a good way to deliver a teaching message. I have seen them used in teaching creative thinking and brainstorming sessions, and I use a few in my Myers-Briggs teaching.

Some presenters use games as icebreakers for small groups: Example:

• Give people a list of things like “birthday, place of birth, number of children, pets, college, hobby”—then turn the group loose for 15 minutes to interview each other and see how many common interests they share with people. It is fast paced and gets people up, moving and chatting. You can devise any type of list you like and debrief the group about what they learned. You also can ask them how well they know these things about people in their own organizations!

I’m somewhat cautious about the use of games, though, since they really have to make a point to be effective. Even *The Big*
Book of Business Games by John Newsome and Edward Scannell, offers this advice:

“Have an objective. Some persons jump into it...but lack a well thought-out, clearly articulated idea of what they hope to accomplish with it...As a result, many of them use a game only (and inappropriately) because it was available, handy, or looked interesting.”

Other points from the authors:

• Make sure your game’s message is clear and you discuss the “lessons learned” from the activity. Otherwise people may remember the game but not its purpose.

• Pretest any game you use to make certain it works as you intend.

• Always have a “Plan B” ready in case someone in your group just played the game at work last week or tells you that game playing seems to be a waste of time!

Let me be clear that despite the caveats about the challenges inherent in game playing, you shouldn’t fear fun. Make certain your learning community has laughter in its culture. You need not be a stand-up comedian to make that happen, just be mindful of the importance of encouraging healthy doses of humor in your interactions with the group.

Team Breakouts
I wish I could remember the person who shared the trainer’s mantra with me so I could give appropriate credit. The message was this: “When all else fails, have them turn to each other and discuss.”

I hope you never need that advice because of a failure. But there is great value in planning to break your group into small teams to discuss issues, compare responses or solve problems. Team breakouts create interactivity. I always enjoy hearing the “buzz” that starts in the room when I stop talking and turn things over to teams: Example:

• When I teach sessions on motivation, I ask participants to reflect on a story or project that they just couldn’t wait to work on, something they felt great about during and after the process.
• I then ask them to share their story with others in their small group, explaining what it was about the assignment and work process that made them so dedicated to it.

• I ask people to listen carefully to each other and report some of the elements that drove their motivation. I sometimes ask for one volunteer in each group to serve as the reporter for all.

• I list the “motivators” on a flip chart.

• We look at the list and begin to look for themes and threads that run through the responses.

• After this discussion, I use their themes and stories as real-life proof of some of the theories and research into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that I then share in depth.

• I then ask the groups to talk with each other once again about how they might put some of what we’ve just shared and learned to work in their newsrooms, and once again I ask the teams to report to the full group.

I encourage team breakouts in sessions. They can:

• Build on what you have been teaching
• Surface ideas from the group
• Encourage community
• Keep things relevant to the participants’ worlds
• Provide opportunities for the group to teach each other
• Give the group a break from your voice!

I hope after reading about these various teaching methods, you can see how they can make learning far more interesting, relevant and fun for your group. Interaction is the key. I think it is particularly important for teaching journalists. Why?

Consider the broadcast newsroom. Does anyone in that room ever sit quietly, uninterrupted for more than a few minutes? Nope. Newsrooms are in constant motion and conversation. There’s always incoming information, quick changes of topic and quicker decisions to make. The mass of daily deadlines energizes people. Breaking news pumps the adrenaline even higher.

Now, transport our broadcast journalists from the newsroom to a classroom.
There's no scanner symphony in the background. No computer screens to scan. No bank of monitors showing us what the other classrooms in the market are doing right now.

Place your journalists in nice neat rows of never-comfortable chairs. Put a long table in front of them that hems them in. Now, ask them to listen to a solitary voice lecture to them for an hour. Oh, and you are the lecturer. I rest my case for interactive learning.

Teaching Tools

Let’s pack a tool kit for your teaching. I suggest you select teaching aids that:

- Liven up your presentation
- Illustrate points creatively
- Capture ideas and keep them for reference
- Reinforce words with visuals or sound
- Provoke thought and discussion
- Clarify your message and make it memorable
- Make learning fun, not work.

Here is a guide to some useful tools and tips on their use.

Flip Charts

I consider these low-tech tools an indispensable part of my teaching. I use them to collect and display ideas that surface from the group. I use them to reveal material I have prepared in advance or to reinforce important points as I teach, noting them on the chart. The walls of my workshops often are covered with chart pages as we build ideas together.

I’m a lousy artist, so I invested in The Big Book of Flip Charts by Robert William Lucas. The book offers ideas for exercises and some template drawings you can copy. It also provides this valuable test to check the effectiveness of charted messages and visuals, asking:

- Are they clear?
- Are they concise?
- Are they simple?
- Are they graphic?

I’ll offer some additional advice:

- Always let your host organization know you will want a flip chart—or even two—and a fresh set of colored markers.
Sounds simple—but some organizations need to order them in advance from conference centers and hotels. If you don’t ask, you won’t have one waiting for you. Ask for tape or pins to post sheets to wall surfaces, and hope you get a positive response. Not all conference rooms allow posting. Tape can strip paint or wallpaper from some surfaces, making you highly unpopular with the landlord.

- Flip charts work only when people can see them. They aren’t good for huge groups. Even in small groups, check sight lines in the room to make sure everyone has a clear view. Text on each page should be large enough for people to read easily.

- Use a variety of colored pens to keep your pages interesting. Use colors for emphasis, creativity or just to give people visual relief. I have even incorporated colored pens into my teaching. In a conflict resolution session, I held out a variety of pens and asked participants what color I should use to write the word “Conflict” on the pad—and why they chose that color. (Red was a big vote getter—but not the only choice.) It made for a very interesting conversation and a colorful chart.

- When using colors, keep in mind that according to Prevent Blindness America, 8 percent of men and under 1 percent of women have color vision deficiency, or what we commonly call color blindness. The most common deficiency is the inability to distinguish red from green. This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t use those colors, but just know that the two colors may look the same to some eyes.

- Learn smooth flip chart moves. This means knowing how to write on the pad while never really breaking contact with your audience. Don’t stop talking in order to scribble. Don’t turn completely away from your audience while writing. Your back is not fascinating. And don’t cover up what you’ve just written by standing in front of it.

- If you simply can’t master the moves or have illegible handwriting, delegate the writing to a helper. This is one of the advantages of team-teaching, but even as a solo speaker you can invite a volunteer to help you chart responses on the pad. Just remember that the person who is writing is no longer able to participate easily in the group’s discussions, so you may want to recruit a series of volunteers.
• The material on flip charts can turn into great material for handouts. Your group may develop lists of advice, things they value or top frustrations. You can take that flip chart page with a list of “What News Directors Look for in Executive Producers” or a page of “Things I Wish I Knew When I First Became a Manager” and turn it into a handout for the group. It also can become material for your future writing or teaching.

**Video**

I hardly need to tell broadcasters video is a great teaching tool. As a teacher, approach it with the eye of a skilled editor.

• Does it deliver a clear, coherent message?
• Will it draw people into the topic?
• Is it concise?
• Is it entertaining?

Many of the best tapes you’ll use will come from newsrooms—especially your own. Stories, interviews, breaking news coverage, special programs—any of these may have relevance to the leadership topics you teach.

You also can look for non-news video to illustrate your teaching concepts. Examples:

• News director Katherine Green of WTTG-TV put together a tape of excerpts from her favorite sports movies to illustrate a wide variety of leadership styles. She knew not everyone in the room had seen all the movies, so before each clip, she asked for a volunteer to do a quick setup of the film’s plot. She picked up the story, described a particular style we were about to see, and rolled the tape. The clips were quick, and each one connected perfectly to her teaching points.

• Princell Hair, CNN’s senior vice-president of programming and development, once presented a session at an anchor leadership seminar on the topic of anchor/producer relationships. He interviewed a number of producers on tape. They talked about the habits of the best and worst anchors they’d known. It impressed the group. (Especially the horror stories!)

• I have used scenes from “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” to illustrate conflict resolution styles and approaches. I have also used scenes from “Remember the Titans” to depict visionary leadership, team-building and coaching. “Animal House” has a wonderful scene at the movie’s big finish.
Delta House’s miscreant “Stork” overpowers a drum major, hijacks a marching band, and leads it down an alley, smack into a wall. As the trombones crunch, I remind folks of the dangers of following without ever questioning.

Tips for using video effectively:

- Start collecting. Watch your news, prime time entertainment and theatrical movies with a new set of eyes—those of an educator on the lookout for teaching moments. Save tapes. Trust me, you’ll appreciate this when you are asked to teach in your area of expertise, and you don’t have to start hunting for video!

- This is tough to hear...but some of the news stories that thrilled us in real time don’t always have the same magic when shown later, in a different context. Make sure the newsroom videos you believe are examples of “best practices” stand the test of time and distance. (Anyone who has worked on contest entries knows this routine very well.)

- Less is more. Keep video clips concise. You may love your documentary or a blockbuster movie, but confine the presentation to only those scenes that illustrate your message. Again, use your editing skills to find a great end point.

- Plan ahead. Know the equipment available to play and display video at your teaching site. Check for format compatibility. Bring a backup copy of whatever you plan to display. This applies whether we’re talking about tapes or DVDs.

One last and important piece of advice: Never build the majority of your presentation around video. A power or equipment failure wipes you out. Know exactly how you would make your points even if your video source disappeared.

**PowerPoint** Think carefully before you use PowerPoint. This ubiquitous presentation tool has plenty of potential—both positive and negative. First, let’s tackle the negatives.

My colleague Kenny Irby, who heads Poynter’s Visual Journalism programs, says “PowerPoint should augment teaching. Rarely does it successfully drive presentations.” Seth Godin, author of the e-book, *Really Bad PowerPoint and How to Avoid It*, is more blunt: “Almost every PowerPoint presentation sucks rotten eggs.”
What's the problem? The technology is so user friendly that many people have embraced it without thinking about how to use it effectively. The unfortunate results:

- Some use PowerPoint as a big-screen TelePrompTer® — essentially reading to their audience, slide after slide, instead of interacting with the group.
- Some fill it with way too much text — more than the group wants, needs or finds interesting.
- Some are completely locked into their preset presentation. They can’t spontaneously shift gears — no matter how important the emerging thought or question — because they have to follow the order of their slides!
- Some lose the attention of the audience when they try to shift gears — because while they are speaking, the audience has its collective eyeballs locked on that last slide still beaming from the screen.
- Some forget the importance of thinking visually. They don’t understand that images on PowerPoint can be more compelling than words.
- Some lack design skill and color sense, creating displays that are hard on the eyes.

Maybe that’s why Vint Cerf, known as one of the fathers of the Internet, once quipped, “Power corrupts. And PowerPoint corrupts absolutely.” Or why Google’s Peter Norvig has entertained legions of folks with his online PowerPoint parody of the Gettysburg Address (www norvig com/Gettysburg/index.htm). The spoof turns “Fourscore and seven years ago” into a graph and reduces presidential eloquence into management-speak and bullet points.

Now that I’ve frightened you, let me clarify: I’m not saying you shouldn’t use PowerPoint. I just want you to use it well.

Here are some PowerPoint tips:

- Know why you want to use it. How will a slide show be better than a “you” show?
• When you have something that can be appreciated and understood best by displaying it, consider using PowerPoint as part of your presentation—not as your full program.

• Think of PowerPoint as a way to display highly visual and important information. Pictures. Interesting websites. Before-and-after comparison images. Easy-to-read charts that tell a story better than your words alone.

• Keep your onscreen text short and to the point—and very logical.

• Make certain what you are saying supports what people are seeing. When there’s a conflict, visuals win over words.

• Don’t just display bits of information—pull things together as you would a story.

• Know how to use “default” slides when you want to temporarily break away from your PowerPoint to interact with the audience. Default slides may be plain, or a single image, or the title of your presentation: something very simple and frankly, uninteresting. This ensures that the audience focuses on you instead of the screen.

• Don’t fall in love with special effects. Every movement should have a meaning. A simple “reveal” of bullet points is just fine. Having sentences or images fly in with accompanying sound effects can be downright annoying.

Even the colors you use carry meaning. Consider using cooler shades like blue and green for backgrounds which suggest peace rather than hotter reds and yellows which suggest danger. Additionally, be consistent in your color scheme, typefaces and accents throughout the presentation.

Next slide, please.

**Props**
Kermit the Frog hangs around my seminars for newly promoted managers. He doesn’t say much. Doesn’t have to. People know his message: “It isn’t easy being green.” Sometimes, as the week goes on and the group gains confidence in their leadership abilities, Kermit dons a pair of cool shades. Maybe even a silk bow tie. We don’t make a big fuss over him. He’s just—how
should I say this without offending him?—a prop.
Props are tools we use to:

- Break the ice
- Symbolize ideas
- Launch a conversation
- Illustrate a point
- Provide inspiration
- Add playfulness to learning.

Please don’t shy away from play in your teaching. Consider it a genuine compliment if people tell you that you make learning fun. Props can help.

- At Poynter, we have a display of crazy hats collected by our past president, Jim Naughton, a stickler for fun. Seminar participants often borrow those chapeaus for skits and role-plays. Picture a news director in a wizard hat, Viking helmet or bejeweled crown, practicing the art of coaching. Silly? You bet. What’s wrong with people being silly by choice? That’s the secret. The teacher doesn’t force it on anyone—just creates an environment where fun can flourish.

- When I talk about the downside to the “command and control” leadership style, I use a tough-looking doll named “Lieutenant Extreme.” He’s a scary guy, complete with a lethal weapon. I purchased the lieutenant at my favorite leadership prop boutique: the Dollar Store.

Props can do more than add fun:

- A few years back, as the winning bidder at an RTNDF auction, I took home a silver serving dish that belonged to Edward R. Murrow. I brought it to a reporting seminar. We simply passed it around the group—a symbol of enduring standards of quality in our profession.

- My colleague Roy Peter Clark plays piano during writing seminars to demonstrate connections between musical and writing concepts.

Just think in terms of “props with a purpose.” How do your props help enrich learning or the learning environment? Go ahead; get creative.
Handouts

There’s always a little paperwork to do when teaching at a seminar. Participants really appreciate handout materials. Your handouts can be:

- A recap of your teaching
- A “top ten” type list of advice
- Copies of quizzes or self-diagnostics you used in the session
- Supplemental reading: essays or columns related to your topic
- A “read more about it” list of resources.

Some of the folks in your session are taking them for future reference. Others may be collecting materials for use in their newsrooms. Organizations often expect that when they invest in someone’s training, that person will spread the learning around back home.

This puts some pressure on you. Can your handouts “stand alone”? That is, will they be meaningful to people who weren’t there when you did all that great teaching on the topic?

My advice: As you develop handouts, assume the reader never attended your workshop. Will your handout help a journalist you’ve never met?

When do you distribute handouts?

- Some handouts are integrated right into your teaching. Those are the quizzes, read-alongs or discussion points.

- Distribute everything else AFTER the session. Otherwise, folks will start poring over the related essays or the reading lists while you are teaching. They’re not rude, just curious. But you’ve lost them.

Some final tips about handouts:

- You can develop decent-looking handouts in basic programs like Microsoft Word. If you lack confidence in your page-layout skills, ask your friendly graphics department, a newsroom colleague or even your children for advice. Our kids are far more computer literate than we are.

- Keep electronic copies of your handouts in a computer file (with backup of course). You may get requests for them
months after a session—and will be able to email them with ease. You’ll also have them to reuse or adapt for future use.

- Give credit to the author on the handout. That would be YOU. You deserve it.

**Microphones**
I love this quote from Edward R. Murrow: “Just because your voice reaches halfway around the world doesn’t mean you are wiser than when it reached only to the end of the bar.”

But how wise a teacher will you be if your voice doesn’t reach to the end the classroom? I’m not a fan of voice amplification in a small seminar space. But big rooms demand it. That’s why microphones should be considered part of your tool kit.

**Best case: Wireless microphone.** It lets you roam the room with your hands free.

**Downside:** In a big room, you will still need to mic the audience for questions. Since you aren’t carrying a hand mic, you’ll need a helper with one. The other option is a fixed microphone stand in the audience area. But that requires questioners to travel to the mic, which can discourage some from speaking up.

**Second best case: Hand microphone.** You commit one hand to the mic, so it limits your dexterity. You must set the mic aside to handle a computer or tape machine or distribute handouts.

**The only upside:** You can reach out to mic people with questions. But in a large room, that’s a lot of running around. Recruit a helper with a second mic.

Talk with host organizations about microphones long before your teaching date. Some groups have to rent them or book an AV person to run sound. They will appreciate the advance notice.

We’ve packed your tool kit. Now it’s time for a pep talk. Read on.
Aim High: Standards Matter

This book was written for the many good news managers called upon to teach and train at conferences, workshops or in their own workplace. As an organization dedicated to excellence, RTNDA and its foundation, RTNDF, encourage you to demonstrate the highest possible standards in your teaching.

What resources do you draw on when teaching a leadership or management session? You’re not a social scientist or business professor, you’re a working journalist. But that hardly disqualifies you from helping others learn. You can use:

- Your professional experiences, both your successes and failures.
- Written materials developed in your own organization, such as breaking news manuals, codes of ethics, guidelines for coverage or new employee orientation booklets.
- Case studies and tapes you have collected from your newsroom and others.
- Prior training you have received as a manager.
- Great advice or mentoring you received from others.
- Ideas you have collected at professional conferences.
- Tips, advice and solutions shared in trade publications.

But if you truly want to be a respected leadership and management teacher, you need more:

- A commitment to continuing education. Teachers are forever learners.
- Familiarity with academic literature and theories related to topics you teach. Remember: journalists expect you to source your ideas.
- Willingness to do research to undergird the personal opinions or experiences you share.
- Access to support information for your teaching.

These are the standards RTNDF sets for trainers and coaches in its leadership workshops and it has paid off in practical, interactive learning. Don’t let the high standards intimidate you. You have arrived at the chapter in this book that helps you aim high—and succeed.

What follows is a guide to some important leadership and management theory, advice and resources. The guide will introduce you to concepts that can enrich your teaching, and direct you to additional reading materials to build your knowledge.
These are works I became familiar with as I developed leadership programs for The Poynter Institute. I identified some through my master’s degree studies in leadership and others are from my personal collection of leadership and management literature that has outgrown my shelves! I always look for well-researched and practical writings—theory and practice that journalists will respect.

I encourage you to refer to this guide whenever you are called on to teach and to begin collecting a library of your own. Enjoy!
Leadership Theory

As you study leadership, you find there have been—and still are—many theories about leaders. In the 1840s, Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle advanced his “Great Man” concept, a hero-worship approach that suggested some individuals were uniquely gifted to be leaders. Scholars began to investigate the intrinsic characteristics of leaders. In the early 1900s, it was fashionable to talk about trait theory. It focused on the personal qualities that might be unique to leaders.

In time, researchers challenged trait theory. So many qualities had been identified that the list lost its meaning. Further, qualities differed from leader to leader, so no particular trait combination could be identified as the gold standard.

Other scholars looked at functional leadership—the expertise of a leader as it related to the management of particular tasks. Others wrote about bureaucratic leadership, the combination of organization structure, process, systems and control in the leader’s domain. These concepts were the conversations in the developing business schools of the time.

An American engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor, expanded the concepts of what was then called functional management by studying efficiency in organizations and developing his “principles of scientific management” for leaders. This type of thinking, big in the 1940s, represented the leader as commander and controller of the work, workers and organization.
After World War II, attention shifted to the human side of leadership. New theories such as style, contingency and situational leadership emerged. These theories looked at the interrelationship of leader, follower, task and the situations in which leadership or management was being exercised. Path-goal theory, which focused on the leader’s ability to motivate employees, developed in the 1970s. At the same time, a genuine human-relations approach to leadership called Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) was introduced. Its focus was how a leader interacted with each individual on a team. What did the leader and the follower bring to the best relationships, and how might high-quality LMX lead to better outcomes for the workers and the organization?

A breakthrough theory, transformational leadership, was advanced in 1978 by James McGregor Burns in his book, *Leadership*. This Pulitzer Prize winning political scientist brought the topic of values into the leadership conversation as he analyzed the actions and values of leaders throughout history. In his more recent *Transforming Leadership*, Burns wrote: “The transformational dynamic that mutually empowers leaders and followers involves, as we have seen, wants and needs, motivation and creativity, conflict and power. But at its heart lie values.” The theory of transformational leadership has spawned more than 400 doctoral dissertations on the topic according to the Academy of Leadership that bears Burns’ name at the University of Maryland.

Other contemporary leadership thinkers have had impact. Robert K. Greenleaf, a retired executive from AT&T, advanced a philosophy of servant leadership.

It emphasizes shared power in organizations, leadership with a sense of purpose, and building a sense of community. It is the opposite of the old command and control model of leadership. It’s more spiritual, self-effacing approach may not be embraced by those who value a more hierarchical model, but many individuals in leadership roles have found it inspiring. It has found particular favor in nonprofit, educational and religious groups.

Warren Bennis, of the University of Southern California, is a prolific and influential writer on leadership. In his book, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, he and co-author Burt Nanus list these key abilities for leaders:

- Set direction during turbulent times
- Manage change while still providing exceptional customer service and quality
- Attract resources and forge new alliances to accommodate new constituencies
- Harness diversity on a global scale
- Inspire a sense of optimism, enthusiasm and commitment among followers
- Be a leader of leaders, especially knowledge workers.

There are other theories and many other scholars in leadership offering rich material to learn and teach.

**Geisler's Advice**
The field of leadership study has been influenced by social scientists, psychologists and business professors. It is also a field in which just about anyone can weigh in with an opinion, whether substantiated or not. You should be selective about the sources you use for your learning and teaching.

You need not rely solely on the work of academic researchers. Worthwhile leadership materials have been developed by practitioners—professionals who share wisdom they have collected from their experience and observation. But don’t be too quick to use cute or clever “trend of the day” leadership tomes as your chief resource. Be choosy. Ask yourself:

- Who is the author? What is that person’s education, experience and affiliation?
- What is the chief message of the article or book?
- How does it compare to the work of others who have written on the topic?
- What sources does the author reference?
- What, if any, research backs up the information? If it is original, what was the methodology?
- Does this material have relevance to today’s newsrooms?
- Would these ideas and this advice stand up to scrutiny by healthy, skeptical journalists?

Because good teachers are constant learners, I’m sharing leadership reference materials that can be of use and interest to you and inform your teaching. I have most of these in my own library and therefore can recommend them to you.

**Additional Leadership Theory Resources**
*The Leader’s Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages* by J. Thomas Wren (1995) is an excellent compendium of writings from the best, most
interesting minds in leadership, from Aristotle to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Harvard’s John Kotter, whose essay “What Leaders Really Do,” is a classic primer on leadership and management. A good, wide-ranging resource filled with short essays and valuable lessons.

**Leadership: Theory and Practice** by Peter G. Northouse (2004) is a walking tour through the field of leadership theory, but there’s more. It contains the history, pros and cons of various theories, plus case studies and self-diagnostics for readers to use. Scholarly, extremely well researched and written in a very down-to-earth style.

**The Guru Guide: The Best Ideas of the Top Management Thinkers** by Joseph and Jimmie Boyett (2nd Edition-2000) is like a Cliff’s Notes® for leadership thinking. The authors deconstruct the ideas of contemporary scholars and writers. They compare and even critique them in a very breezy fashion. A good book if you want to see synthesized versions of leadership books before investing in them.

**Bad Leadership: What It Is, How It Happens, Why It Matters** by Barbara Kellerman (2004) gives the reader great lessons in leadership theory, along with a look at real-life case studies of leaders who failed. Kellerman, of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, shares her taxonomy of bad leadership with these categories of the bad, worse and worst: incompetent, rigid, intemperate, callous, corrupt, insular and evil. You can learn about leadership at its best, thanks to Kellerman’s focus on the stinkers.

### Management Practices

We have already talked a good deal about the roles of managers and leaders and the importance of quality management practices. If you want to help people with their management responsibilities: hiring, training, evaluating, promoting and even firing, I heartily recommend the work of Gallup researchers Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. Their book, **First Break All the Rules** (1998), provides some of the best researched-based advice around. They include 12 questions of vital importance to top employees. To keep them, managers should be sure these employees can answer “yes” to the following:
1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. Do my opinions seem to count at work?
8. Does the mission of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, has someone talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

I often cite these Gallup questions in my teaching and always point out that managers play a direct role in at least 11 of the 12. Managers may not be able to guarantee employees will find a best friend at work, but they can certainly build a work environment of trust and teamwork where friendships can flourish!

The book *First Break All the Rules* also makes a key teaching point: people don’t leave organizations; they leave managers. There will always be people who move on to dream jobs in destination markets, but they may spend more time and contribute more to your newsroom because of how well their immediate supervisor performs. That puts a lot of pressure on supervisors and is the reason why leadership and management training is so important for them.

Marcus Buckingham has left the Gallup organization and is now a consultant. His latest book, *The One Thing You Need to Know: About Great Managing, Great Leading and Sustained Individual Success* (2005), builds on his previous work.

In *One Thing*, he challenges managers to find what’s unique about each person and then capitalize on it.

He says that average managers play “checkers” while great managers play “chess.” The checkers manager assumes all the playing pieces are the same—interchangeable, and all move the
same way. The great managers are chess players, seeing each individual piece on the board, what it does, how it moves and how to strategically deploy it. And no, he’s not calling workers “pawns.” He’s arguing that too many managers undervalue their people by failing to understand the nuances of their personalities, their strengths and their methods of learning.

As for great leaders, Buckingham believes they rally people by speaking in ways that touch universal chords for all no matter what their differences. And yes, great managers also can be great leaders.

Additional Management Practices Resources

**Ready, Set, Lead!** produced by the *RTNDF News Leadership Project* through the support of the McCormick Tribune Foundation is an easy-to-read reference designed from the busy news manager’s perspective. Many local news directors are thrust into management positions with little or no formal leadership training. In today’s newsroom with daily challenges including limited resources, personnel pressures and tight deadlines this book offers advice on: newsroom leadership, managing up (and sideways), creating a positive culture, recruiting and retaining, time management, conducting feedback and evaluations and resolving conflict.

*Leadership: A Communication Perspective* by Michael Z. Hackman and Craig E. Johnson (4th Edition-2004) is another book that provides overviews of many theories and practices of good leadership but frames it well for organization managers. They believe, “Leadership competence is the product of communications competence,” and since they are communications professors, they do a good job of helping managers express themselves as leaders. This textbook contains very good case studies and exercises that not only will help you teach from a base of knowledge, they can inspire some exercises and self-diagnostics you might develop for your sessions.

*The Peon Book* by Dave Haynes (2004) is a quick, funny read by a man who lays out his qualifications as: “I am a worker, a scrub, a subordinate. I hold no distinguished title. I don’t have a special business card. My office is a cube.” The book’s advice comes in chapters such as “Get Trustworthy, Get Real, Get Personal, Get in the Trenches, Get Feedback” and is derived from the author’s real-world experiences, not research. Managers get a tour of the world through the eyes of people they manage. There’s good material for teaching
here that actually echoes some of the advice we hear from academics but frames it in a far funnier fashion.

**Becoming a Manager: How New Managers Master the Challenges of Leadership** by Linda A. Hill (2003) is a Harvard Business School professor’s look at the lives and learning of a group of new managers during the first year of their new roles. The managers she follows are not in journalism, but their experiences parallel those of rookie newsroom managers. As Hill writes: “...their initial framework was of the manager as the formal authority and stressed their agenda-setting responsibilities in financial and business matters. They generally overlooked the other aspects of their new role: getting things done through people or other network-building responsibilities.” The book offers good advice on the skills and training needed for new managers in any industry.

**I’m Your Leader—What Have I Done for You Lately?** (see page 82) is an article I wrote in 2000 for The Poynter Report magazine that organizations have used in management and leadership teaching. It is a series of questions leaders should ask themselves about their behaviors and beliefs. You are welcome to use it—or its questions—in your teaching.

**Leadership Styles**

This topic is one of the staples of leadership training. Seminar participants are curious about leadership styles. First, they wonder if they have a defined style and how effective it is. Next, they want to know what their options for other styles might be. Situational leadership theory (SLT), as developed by Kenneth H. Blanchard and Paul Hersey, uses four styles: delegating, supporting, coaching and directing.

In SLT, leaders are encouraged to consider the task at hand, combined with the level of willingness and aptitude of the employee, to determine which style to adopt. You can read more about these styles in the little (112 pages) book, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness Through Situational Leadership*, written by Blanchard with Patricia and Drea Zigarmi (1999). But don’t rely on this alone. I think situational theory is limited and doesn’t take us far enough.

leadership styles that I often use in teaching. These nuanced styles have evolved from Goleman’s work in the field of emotional intelligence. Goleman writes of the need for “resonant leadership” that is effective because it rings true and clear with the needs, goals and values of the followers and the circumstances in which they work together. The styles are: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and commanding. Primal Leadership describes and evaluates each type of leadership. I encourage you to read this book as I think it contains great advice for leaders and is a rich resource for teachers and coaches. I have developed a one-page handout from the book synthesizing Goleman’s thoughts on each style to use in teaching. (see page 120.)

Additional Leadership Styles Resources

Understanding and Changing Your Management Style by psychologist, professor and business consultant Robert Benfari (1999) is a gold mine for managers and teachers. I often recommend this book when managers tell me their organization offers no training, and they want to work on self-improvement. Benfari helps us understand how our management style is influenced by our personality type, our needs, our approaches to power and conflict, our values and how we deal with stress. The book offers self-diagnostics on each area. After helping us figure out what we do and believe as managers and why, the book shows us how we can change for the better.

The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers Into Great Leaders by John H. Zenger and Joseph Folkman (2002) is another book that draws on research to nail down some competencies and qualities that make a difference for managers. I suggest you check this book out at the library and skip to two worthy chapters.

Chapter 7 explains the five fatal flaws that lead to failure in leadership:

- Inability to learn from mistakes
- Lack of core interpersonal skills and competencies
- Lack of openness to new or different ideas
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of initiative.

Chapter 10 details “What Individuals Do to Become Great Leaders” and among the 25 activities are:
• Develop and display high personal character
• Develop new skills; enroll in developmental experiences
• Find a coach
• Increase the scope of your assignment
• Seek ways to give and receive productive feedback and learn to absorb it in an emotionally healthy way
• Become a teacher/trainer.

I knew you’d like that last one!

**Your Management Style: How Do You See It? How Do They?** (see page 90) is an essay I developed about the styles I observe among the news managers I work with in newsrooms and in leadership seminars:

• The commandant
• The parent
• The team captain
• The coach
• The expert
• The buddy
• The remote controller.

The handout describes the hallmarks and the strengths and weaknesses of style.

**The Power Grid of Leadership** (see page 89) is a quick look at the different types of power that managers use and the relative effectiveness of each. I wrote this handout to help people identify the type they use most, and why they need to call upon different types of power in different circumstances.

**Building and Busting Newsroom Trust: A Top Ten List** (see page 93) is a list of ten things staffers say about bosses they truly trust. The list is a good self-test. Would people say those ten things about you?

**Emotional Intelligence**

I find this term frightens some people. The very thought of teaching about emotions in the context of work seems somehow New Age or touchy-feely to some. But it is without question one of the most important areas of study for leaders. If leadership is personal, if leadership effectiveness is built person-by-person, if leaders are to build cultures and motivate people, they need superior emotional intelligence.
Since the folks who recoil from the term “emotional intelligence” are the ones who probably most need to learn about it, I simply reframe the conversation. I call the session “Manage Yourself, Lead Others.” And then I introduce the concepts as its pioneer researchers, psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey, describe it in a January 2004 *Harvard Business Review* article: “the ability to accurately perceive your own and others’ emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage your own and others’ emotions.”

I then share what Daniel Goleman and his co-authors of *Primal Leadership* refer to as the four dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management.

We break those down into real-life newsroom issues. I can tell you from experience with hundreds of newsroom managers that when they stumble, it is far more likely to be in the area of interpersonal than journalistic skills. My research has determined that we are far better at managing products than people. I encourage you to build your knowledge of emotional intelligence, and you will see how often it relates to many other subjects you teach.

**Additional Emotional Intelligence Resources**

*Manage Yourself, Lead Others* (see page 86) is an article I wrote to take emotional intelligence into the everyday life of news managers. It includes a series of questions people can use as self-diagnostics, thus raising their self-awareness. You can use these questions in teaching sessions to generate discussions or develop exercises to demonstrate good and poor examples of people skills.

*The Emotionally Intelligent Manager: How to Develop and Use the Four Key Emotional Skills of Leadership* by David R. Caruso and Peter Salovey (2004) is a good self-help book for managers seeking to work on their people skills. It includes self-diagnostics to help people understand more about how their emotions affect them and how they can learn to manage them.

I have already recommended for its interweaving of emotional intelligence and leadership styles. *Working* is a good text for both managers and non-managers. Its lessons would be good for people who aren’t in managerial positions but nonetheless need to work on their interpersonal skills. It hones in on the importance of emotional intelligence in team and collaborative work.

_The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book_ by Travis Bradberry, Jean Greves and Patrick Lenconi (2005) is a quick and comprehensive look at how to improve your emotional intelligence. It contains a useful self-test that can help you assess current strengths and challenges. It is the book that a team of co-workers might read as a group and then compare notes, set goals and coach one another.

_How Full Is Your Bucket?_ by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton (2004) is a book I recommend to managers struggling with their emotional intelligence—those seen by their employees as relentlessly negative. Clifton was chairman of Gallup, Inc., and a psychologist whose colleagues cite him as the “grandfather of positive psychology.” He wrote this book as he was dying of cancer. His quest—to get people to focus on what is right about people and organizations as a way of raising quality of work and life.

**Ethics, Diversity and Values**

I can’t imagine teaching leadership without incorporating ethics, diversity and values. Certainly these subjects have been the core of RTNDF projects and for good reason: excellence in journalism cannot exist without them.

Excellence in leadership cannot exist without them, either. When it comes to leadership study and teaching, it is important to look at these topics with a special lens: how do leaders build organizations where ethics, diversity and values are part of the organizational culture? It is not enough for leaders to know how to make decisions, or to personally have a strong set of values, or to embrace diversity in coverage, hiring and promotions. They have to help others rise to the same level of knowledge and commitment and turn it into an organizational way of life.

Writing in the _Harvard Business Review_ in 1994, business professor Lynn Sharp Paine described the difference between organizations with “compliance-based” and “integrity-based”
approaches to ethics. Compliance is about making the rules or laws known, then preventing, detecting and punishing violations. Integrity is about a respect for rules and laws, combined with a managerial responsibility for ethical conduct. Values are integrated into the day-to-day operations.

Paine’s article “Managing for Organizational Integrity” cites hallmarks of effective integrity strategy in organizations:

- The guiding values and commitments make sense and are clearly communicated.

- Company leaders are personally committed, credible and willing to take action on the values they espouse.

- The espoused values are integrated into the normal channels of management decision-making and are reflected in the organization’s critical activities: the development of plans, the setting of goals, the search for opportunities, the allocation of resources, the gathering and communication of information, the measurement of performance, and the promotion and advancement of personnel.

- The company’s systems and structures support and reinforce its values.

- Managers throughout the company have the decision-making skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to make ethically sound decisions on a day-to-day basis.

As you can see, simply having a code of ethics or a sign on the wall stating the station is an equal opportunity employer isn’t enough. People watch the behavior of leaders. Do they walk their talk?

Employees are keenly aware of how their organization’s day-to-day decision-making and systems either promote or defeat the values their leaders say they stand for.

Additional Ethics, Diversity and Values Resources

**Newsroom Ethics: Decision-Making for Quality Coverage** was written for RTNDF by Bob Steele and Al Tompkins from The Poynter Institute. The workbook contains guidelines to help newsrooms make difficult decisions on deadline and emphasizes the involvement of the entire staff, not just managers, in the process of ethical decision-making. It includes a DVD with television and radio case studies of
actual news stories that RTNDF uses in their News Decision-Making Workshops. This resource is available through RTNDF’s website: www.rtndf.org.

*Elements of Journalism* by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001) is an excellent resource for leaders. It reminds us of the values that underpin journalism. In these days of cable news shout-fests, bloggers and bias claims, the book’s discussion of the “journalism of verification” versus the “journalism of assertion” is particularly valuable. The book delves into business pressures that can challenge journalism values. It makes a strong case for the importance of diversity at all levels in news organizations. I think this book helps leaders put language to the values they want to communicate to staff.

*Leaders and “The Ethics Walk”* (see page 105) is an article I wrote for journalism leaders, urging them to stop thinking they should automatically be the ones who make the tough ethical decisions in the newsroom. It advocates getting people in the habit of doing “The Ethics Walk,” as we called it in my newsroom. The “Walk” simply meant calling people together for a conversation about an ethical challenge or question, bringing as many good minds together as possible to share in a process they all understand well.

*Diversity Tool Kit* produced by RTNDF is an instructional guide and DVD outlining the economic benefits of operating a diverse newsroom. It was developed as a resource for newsrooms wanting to increase the diversity of their staff and news content. The Diversity Tool Kit includes tips on recruiting, promoting and retaining people of color in management positions as well as interviews with minority executives in top broadcasting positions.

*What Does Diversity Look Like?* (see page 111) is an article written by Keith Woods, Poynter’s dean, about levels of success in news organizations when it comes to diversity. Minority managers in the McCormick Fellows program offered insights from their media experiences, and the group developed the “McCormick Scale,” five stages of a news organization’s development:

- **Awareness:** The company recognizes the depth and breadth of the diversity challenge it faces.
- **Course correction:** Historic disparities are addressed. The company ends practices that sabotage diversity efforts.
• **Doing diversity**: The work of inclusion begins in earnest.
• **Ingraining values**: The value of diversity is understood by all, reflected in the workplace and a benefit to the bottom line.
• **“A state of being”**: The ills of bias and discrimination have been put to rout.

The scale and more ideas from the McCormick Fellows are available in a report called “Leading the Way: Making Diversity Real.” You can download the report from the website of the National Association of Minority Media Executives: www.namme.org.

**The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity** by Arlene Notoro Morgan, Keith Woods and Alice Irene Pifer (2006) is a gold mine for newsrooms that want to see examples of excellent journalism. The book, which includes a DVD, is built on the work of the “Let’s Do It Better!” workshop at the Columbia School of Journalism, where stories of substance and significance are identified and analyzed for just what it was that made them so effective. The book even has its own website with teaching guidance at www.theauthenticvoice.org/.

**Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity** by Ella L. J. Edmonson Bell and Stella M. Nkomo (2001) is an in-depth look at the lives of women who are leaders in organizations. Many of these women were the first women in management in their companies. The authors, who are business professors, conducted research into the upbringing, communities, education, mentors and work experiences that shaped the lives of black and white women on their way to the top. Some of their findings:

• To the statement “I feel accepted and a member of my company’s team,”—the answer “Yes” was selected by 81 percent of white women but only 51 percent of blacks.

• White women were not as prepared by their upbringing to face sexism as black women had been prepared by their families to experience racism.

• Black women want deeply to be themselves and to express their cultural identity. But they can’t carry all the burdens of social change in an organization alone. “When black women end up as the conscience of their company,
championing the cause of others who feel oppressed or excluded, their own needs can suffer.”

There is important information in this book for leaders who want to build better working conditions for everyone in their organization.

Motivation

Teaching about motivation isn’t as simple as reading from the book, *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*, by Bob Nelson (1994). Make no mistake, the book offers plenty of creative ways to celebrate success and demonstrate appreciation in tangible ways. I know that you as a teacher can elicit a healthy number of reward anecdotes from participants in a workshop. They will tell stories of awards, celebrations and great surprises for their good people. Participants will appreciate the idea exchange, but they will be unsatisfied if you stop there.

Why? Because they are looking for ways to keep the many people they manage motivated each and every day. I hear it so often in my work with newsroom leaders. How do I get people to aim higher and then succeed? They want help motivating their people to:

- Be more enterprising
- Take initiative
- Coach others
- Exercise critical thinking
- Look forward to coming to work
- Capture some of the energy and collaboration that surfaces during breaking news and carry it over into daily newsgathering.

To help them, you need to understand the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

**Extrinsic** rewards are delivered to us by others in exchange for appropriate performance. They may include pay, perks, promotion and public recognition. Each of these rewards has value, no doubt.

**Intrinsic** rewards, however, are internal to each person—engagement in the work, pride in performance, a sense of doing something worthwhile. Each of us has a different recipe for what motivates us. Behavioral scientists have offered several visions.
In the 1940s, psychologist Abraham Maslow developed his hierarchy of needs. (Often depicted in a pyramid shape, with the first at the bottom and the others stacked sequentially to the top.) He believed we move through these needs in stages. When one is fulfilled, we move up to the next.

**First:** Physiologica—the basics: food, water, sleep, health

**Next:** Safety—security, stability, order

**Next:** Social—relationships, friendships, love, community

**Next:** Esteem—respect from others; self-respect

**Ultimate:** Self-actualization—reaching one's potential, self-fulfillment.

Interestingly, though, when the lower-level needs are met, they cease to motivate us. We aren’t as inclined to work for food when we’ve just eaten. That's why the focus is on the higher-order needs and how they are fulfilled in the workplace.

A contemporary of Maslow's, Frederick Herzberg, offered a “two-factor” theory of motivators and demotivators. He believed some things are simply “hygiene factors,” things that make a difference when we don’t have them. In other words, lacking them is a demotivator, things like decent salary or working conditions. But once we get them, they aren’t motivators. They are things we believe we deserve.

To check the accuracy of that one, talk to any journalist whose organization moved into a new facility. Inevitably, they’ll tell you about the “things will be better when we get into the new building” jokes that go on long after the move. The slick new building didn’t lead to any greater employee motivation than the dumpy old one did! That's because taking away a demotivator (ugly workspace) doesn’t create a motivator in its place.

Herzberg posited that real motivators are:

- Achievement
- Recognition
- The work itself
- Responsibility
- Personal growth.

I think Herzberg’s hygiene factor theory is truly important for leaders to keep in mind. It can help you understand why, when you begged, borrowed and nearly stole to get a better computer for a reporter, the reporter didn’t suddenly become more motivated or even immensely grateful to you. The absence of a decent machine was a demotivator—a hygiene factor—but the
presence of the new computer wasn’t a motivator. It was something the reporter thought was a basic need to be met—and you finally delivered it!

Another motivation researcher, psychologist David McClelland, identified three primary motivational needs of individuals:

**Achievement:** to excel, to feel a sense of personal accomplishment. These individuals thrive on feedback about the progress of their work.

**Affiliation:** to enjoy harmonious relationships and personal interaction.

**Power:** either personal, through which they direct the actions of others to raise their own status or socialized, through which they organize the work of others for the mutual benefit of all.

McClelland believed each of us has some mix of the above. The trick for managers is finding out the “combination” that motivates individuals and to manage them accordingly.

**Additional Motivation Resources**

*Intrinsic Motivation at Work: Building Energy and Commitment* by Kenneth W. Thomas (2002) is definitely worth your time and money. Thomas is a professor of management, and his message in this book is clear: to manage today’s workers, you must understand intrinsic motivation.

He breaks it down into four key factors:

- **Choice:** delegated authority, trust, security, clear purpose, information
- **Competence:** knowledge, positive feedback, skill recognition, challenge, high standards
- **Meaningfulness:** non-cynical climate, clearly identified passions, exciting vision, relevant task purposes
- **Progress:** collaborative climate, milestones, celebrations, access to customers, measurement of improvement.

Should we then assume that extrinsic motivators, like rewards, don’t matter? No, but Thomas argues that they are not enough. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivators should support each other. Thomas writes:
“It is helpful to think of the relationship in terms of foreground and background. Extrinsic rewards come into the foreground when workers are short on funds or benefits, when issues of unfairness arise, and when workers face major choices. They fade into the background the rest of the time, and intrinsic rewards take the foreground in day-to-day work.”

**Work Satisfaction Survey** (see page 107): I developed this handout for sessions on motivation. I ask participants to fill it out and compare their responses with another person in the room. We discover the differences and similarities among a group of people with similar jobs. It works well with work teams as well, and provides managers with a rare opportunity to learn exactly what motivates individual staffers.

**Give to Get Leadership: The Secret of the Hidden Paycheck** by Richard C. Huseman and Merwyn Hayes (2002) takes a very pragmatic approach to motivation. These PhD business consultants lay out the business landscape: downsizing, cutbacks, salary disparities between CEOs and workers, and point out how tough it can be for managers to motivate employees against such odds. But they believe leaders, through the relationships they build with employees, can provide a “hidden paycheck” of feedback and opportunities. They stress the importance of finding the right “psychological currency” for each employee, and most important of all, building trust.

**Poynter’s Work-Life Balance Survey:** One important area affecting motivation and morale is work-life balance. In February 2005, Poynter released the results of a survey of journalists regarding work-life balance. The responses of 750 journalists revealed that many are struggling to find balance; a substantial number feel they can’t keep up with their work although they put in extra hours and take work home with them. Many are not taking vacations to which they are entitled. Those most likely to leave journalism because of this are young journalists, racial and ethnic minorities and women. The full report is available online: poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=78725.

The survey also revealed that supervisors play a key role in journalists’ work-life balance. Only half the respondents described their supervisors as supportive. They praised them for things some might consider simple: being aware of family issues, telling people who have worked long hours to
go home, and making accommodations when staffers have legitimate needs. They know their staff as people, not just producers. They recognize that staff cutbacks and the concept of “doing more with less” can take a real toll on morale and motivation. They get schedules out on time. They expect people to work like mad on the big stories but work at a healthier pace the rest of the time. They may be happy workaholics themselves, but they don’t judge their people by the same standard.

Including a conversation on the manager’s role in work-life balance can add value to your teaching on motivation. I developed a handout called “Ten Keys to Motivation and Morale: The Manager’s Role in Work-Life Balance” that is included in the Appendix.

**Work-Life Harmony Survey** (see page 109). Hearst-Argyle Television News Vice-President Candy Altman and I developed this quiz as part of a session we presented at an RTNDA convention, and have used with journalists since. We recognize that balance is often elusive, but we can find better ways to keep our work and personal lives in harmony, and keep motivated at work.

**Coaching**

Newsroom managers spend a great deal of time fixing the work of others. They do it because fixes are fast. They correct errors, fill holes and strengthen weaknesses in a staffer’s work. But there’s a downside. While the work improves, the worker may not. That’s why it is important to help managers become coaches instead of fixers. Coaching returns responsibility for the work to the employee.

At the onset, coaching takes longer than fixing. But when it works, the manager isn’t wasting time fixing every day. So it’s an investment with a great potential payoff.

Coaches work one-on-one with staffers. They get to know what the person does well and how that person approaches his or her work. By asking good questions, the coach learns about staffers’ work process, assumptions, knowledge base and fears. The coaching process at its best is a continuing effort. Together, the coach and employee work on growing specifically targeted skills or problems. They look for improvement—or note the lack of it.
Coaching can help a staffer grow, but it also can help determine whether the person and the job are a good fit. The same questions that help employees identify their strengths also can lead them to conclude they are not capable of doing the work. I mention this because I fear some people see coaching as some warm and fuzzy endeavor. I think they underestimate its power.

Paul Pohlman helps managers see the value of coaching and the skills it demands at The Poynter Institute. He points out that coaches, whether talking about today’s story or tomorrow’s career goals with an employee, are engaging in a personal relationship. Here’s Paul’s list of coaching skills:

- **Listening**: The ability to hear the problem descriptively without evaluating or prejudging.

- **Empathy**: The ability to identify with other points of view and communicate that understanding.

- **Flexibility**: The ability to adjust to the environment, terminology and work habits of the other.

- **Confidence**: The ability to communicate realistically high expectations and encourage the other’s potential for learning from experience.

- **Awareness**: The ability to diagnose accurately what is really going on, and be aware of one’s own values and habits so they don’t get in the way.

- **Mutuality**: The ability to communicate shared interest in the problem and the willingness to share in its resolution.

- **Experimentation**: The ability to demonstrate a spirit of exploration and deferred judgment in relation to possible solutions.

- **Timing**: The ability to ask questions and to offer information and suggestions at the moment the other is ready to hear.

- **Congruence**: The ability to send messages that represent one’s genuine feelings or judgments.

- **Probing**: The ability to ask questions that clarify or extend the other’s thinking.
• **Synthesizing:** The ability to see relationships among various pieces of information and to discover patterns.

Coaching may seem time and labor intensive at first, but when it succeeds, it pays real dividends. Managers build relationships with staff, the work is improved, and employees feel a sense of progress. And managers spend less time fixing!

Remember that while coaching helps create quality storytelling, you also can have coaching conversations about any challenge or aspiration. And anyone—manager or not—can be a coach.

**Additional Coaching Resources**

*Coaching Writers: Editors and Reporters Working Together Across Media Platforms* by Roy Peter Clark and Don Fry (2003) is an updated version of a classic text on writing coaching by two Poynter pioneers in the area. The book is great for a teacher because it includes ideas for coaching conversations and practice. It also offers the opportunity to build a writing coaching vocabulary. Clark and Fry put names to various elements of stories. It provides a kind of shorthand language for everyone in the coaching process and ultimately can spread to everyone in a newsroom!

*Aim for the Heart* by Al Tompkins (2002) is designed specifically for broadcast newsrooms. While written for reporters and producers, it is a great resource for coaches. The book describes best practices in visual storytelling, giving coaches a great toolbox of ideas and language to use in helping staffers understand what distinguishes average work from excellence.

*The Manager as Coach: Tools for Teaching* (see page 97) is an article I wrote that can be used as a handout in coaching workshops. It provides specifics on the things effective coaches do.

*The Writing Coach in the Broadcast Newsroom* (see page 99) contains specific coaching skills I had to learn as someone who is a “recovering fixer.” If I could do it, I know others can, too!

*How to Be a Star at Work* by business professor Robert E. Kelley (1999) wasn’t written for coaches. But it is a rich resource for coaches to use while guiding people to
higher performance. This book helps you help employees identify things they can do to increase their competence and effectiveness in the workplace. Kelley’s research identifies the behaviors of employees who soar above others. So, if your employee is motivated by achievement, Kelley’s list of strategies of star performers is worth knowing about:

- Initiative
- Networking
- Self-management
- Perspective
- Followership
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Organizational savvy
- Show-and-tell.

Imagine how helpful it can be as a coach to be able to discuss these topics with a staffer, using Kelley’s precise descriptions of the behaviors that lead to success.

I summarized Kelley’s descriptions of each of the strategies in a handout, *Strategies of Top Performers* (see page 103) that you may want to use in your teaching. Remember, this is a summary of the author’s work. If you excerpt in any way, please make certain to credit Kelley.

**Conflict Resolution**

If you want to be in high demand as a management trainer, develop a great session on “difficult conversations,” “dealing with difficult employees,” or “managing conflict.”

These are topics every manager faces, many dread and too many avoid.

If you have a reputation for successfully handling tough conversations, then by all means teach from your experiences. That chat with the staffer whose body odor was perfuming the newsroom, the talk with the promising photographer who missed too many deadlines, the conversation with the reporter whose dream of anchoring wouldn’t come true this time around. If they ended satisfactorily for both of you, then by all means teach from them. If your skills grew from weak to strong over time and experience, by all means share how you developed your competence.
Think about how you conduct those everyday difficult conversations. How do you:

- Prepare
  - Become clear on your goal
  - Find the right time and place
  - Open the discussion
  - Express your goal clearly
  - Make sure the person feels listened to
  - Make sure the person gets your message
  - Make sure the employee leaves with dignity intact
  - Make sure you follow up.

If you notice, the bullet points I provided could actually form the outline of your teaching. You can edit that list with thoughts of your own to develop a handout. Use your tips as a checklist if you decide to do a role-play with your group.

There are other difficult conversations that aren’t so everyday. Firings, serious disciplinary actions, layoffs or out-of-control employees are things you deal with from time to time. Including those stories in your teaching inventory is worthwhile. Just keep in mind that the worse the situation, the more we remember it. But teaching the absolute worst-case scenarios may not help everyone in the room deal with the less dramatic but continually vexing conflicts they must manage each day.

Experience is a wonderful resource for conflict resolution teaching. But since we are dealing with the psychology of human emotion and behavior, it helps to back up your experience with support material from people who have made conflict resolution their special field of study.

Additional Conflict Resolution Resources

*Ready, Set, Lead!* produced by the RTNDF News Leadership Project through the support of the McCormick Tribune Foundation is an easy-to-read reference designed from the busy news manager’s perspective. It provides help when you encounter problems, as well as practical advice and tips from fellow news leaders. Many local news directors are thrust into management positions with little or no formal leadership training. In today’s newsroom with daily challenges including limited resources, personnel pressures and tight deadlines this book offers advice on resolving conflict.
Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills by Neil H. Katz and John W. Lawyer (1992) is an excellent resource. It is used as a textbook in graduate courses on conflict resolution for good reason. By the time you finish it, you will have a wealth of well-researched ideas and opportunities to practice skills. You will learn about different styles of conflict management, with a self-diagnostic that lets individuals identify their own style, its strengths and weaknesses.

Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and William Ury (1991) is a business classic drawn from the work of the Harvard Negotiation Project. While the book is framed around negotiation, it is filled with sound advice for conflict resolution. Its main message:

- Don’t bargain over positions. They are only the start of the conversation.
- Focus on interests behind the positions by asking good questions.
- Once you know interests, you can identify options.
- Options are the key to solutions.

This process can be your best friend when managers intervene in conflicts among employees as well as when they are a party to a conflict themselves. You can read this paperback in just a few hours, and it will provide invaluable teaching material for you—and make you a better leader.

Other books derived from the Harvard Negotiation Project that are worth a look:

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most by Douglas Stone and three co-authors (2001) takes lessons from Getting to Yes and adds specific advice for sitting down and having those conversations you dread at work and in life. A fast but powerful read, keep it as a handbook. You’ll refer to it for work and teaching!

Getting It Done: How to Lead When You’re Not in Charge (1998) by Roger Fisher and Alan Sharp could be seen as a conflict prevention book. It offers sound advice to people about how to build influence and bridges in organizations. It provides insights into how even the best-intentioned people can fail when trying to impose their will on others.
The Power of Positive Criticism (2000) by psychologist Hendrie Weisinger offers specific, useful tips for times you simply have to criticize others. In addition to guiding your overall approach to criticism, Weisinger adds chapters on how to handle criticism when it’s a peer, a customer or even your boss. He also includes a “Criticism Inventory” worksheet you could use to help people identify their criticism challenges.

The Coward’s Guide to Conflict by Tim Ursiny (2003) is a friendly, human book with helpful advice and material you can adapt for teaching. Ursiny offers his personal top ten list of fears that lead to conflict avoidance. Fear of:

- Harm
- Rejection
- Loss of relationship
- Anger
- Being seen as selfish
- Saying the wrong thing
- Failing
- Hurting someone else
- Getting what you want
- Intimacy.

He then offers an exercise that invites people to rate the strength of each fear and how realistic it is to them. Think about how nicely this could adapt to your teaching. You could invite your group to build its own list of top fears and use Ursiny’s exercise to analyze them. The book offers other exercises you can adapt for your teaching.

The Difficult Conversation: It’s Not Supposed to Be Easy and Tips for Difficult Conversations (see page 116 and 118) are a column and tip sheet developed Scott Libin from Poynter. In Scott’s time as a news director, he had many experiences with difficult conversations and developed some good advice for others. His essay and tip sheet are ready-made materials for a workshop.

What Kind of Conflict Manager Are You? (see page 113) is a column I wrote that provides a tour of some of the key points of conflict resolution teaching. It looks at different conflict resolution styles, their strengths and shortcomings. It refers readers to good literature that could help them improve their skills.
Difficult Conversations for Managers: Walking the Tightrope is an online course offering of NewsU. I developed this course for managers who might never be able to get to a workshop, but can simply log on to www.newsu.org and take the class. The course includes a self-diagnostic of your style, a tightrope walk that takes you through preparation, execution and follow-up to difficult conversations. There are even video examples of good and not-so-good approaches.

Leading and Managing Change

This is a great opportunity to teach from personal experiences. What news manager hasn’t had to guide a newsroom through some form of change? You could ask your participants to list two or three significant change initiatives they have dealt with in the past two years, and from their responses, chart a master list. No doubt it will include shifts in technology, talent, systems, staffing, leadership or ownership. It also might include convergence, adding or eliminating newscasts, or forming duopolies. From this undoubtedly long list, you can teach people the best practices for leading and managing change.

We know that change, even change to a clearly better course, is unsettling to some. In fact, I think journalists often see change as inherently negative. They spend their reporting lives looking for inconsistencies. (“The candidate said this but did that.”) They question why something that was thought to be good in the past is not valued today. I suspect some journalists endure change with the same five-step process that scholar Elizabeth Kubler-Ross attributes to the terminally ill: denial; anger; bargaining; depression and acceptance.

Make no mistake, some of the changes journalists have experienced in recent years (cutbacks, layoffs, increased workloads, ethical challenges) have caused palpable pain that should not be treated lightly. We need to talk about that in our teaching and make certain newsroom leaders are sensitive to helping people as they cope with real problems caused by change beyond their control.

But not all change is negative. We need to help leaders understand a process for implementing constructive change. The best approach I have found comes from Harvard’s John Kotter. He is a veteran researcher and writer on the subject of change. In his book (with co-author Dan Cohen), The Heart of Change (2002), he shares an eight-step process for leaders:
• Increase urgency (around the need for change)
• Build the guiding team
• Get the vision right
• Communicate for buy-in
• Empower action
• Create short-term wins
• Don’t let up
• Make change stick.

What I really like about *Heart of Change* is its message that too many managers forget the emotions inherent in change. The authors say the old business school model was to get employees to “analyze-think-change”—but the most successful change happens when they “see-feel-change.” That means they personally see and feel the need for change through practical examples rather than simply being bombarded with data. Seeing leads to feeling, feeling leads to change. Hence, the “heart” in the title and the message of the book.

The book’s lessons use real-world examples that serve news managers as well as corporate CEOs. The authors are especially generous, by the way. They have set up a website: www.theheartofchange.com that offers more insights into each of the eight steps. You can actually print out a page for each of the steps—a very nice gift for you, the teacher.

Because so much other literature on change is directed at top-level executives shifting business strategies, it isn’t always germane to the news director/staff relationship. That is why I encourage you to build teaching sessions on the lessons you have learned while handling the kind of change that affects today’s newsrooms.

Be sure to follow Kotter’s advice and teach about the human side of change. How did you handle:

• Communication: Who took care of everything from rumor control to public announcements?
• Training: If your change was technological, how did you bring people up to speed?
• Collaboration: How did you build connections with new partners?
• Morale: How did you manage the anxieties or exhilarations of change?
• Opportunity: What good outcomes did you aim for or discover along the way?
As I have advised before, tell your success stories, but also share what you learned from your mistakes. Let people know how all those experiences changed you—into a wiser leader.

Additional Change Management Resources:

**Change Management: The People Side of Change**
by Jeffrey M. Hiatt and Timothy J. Creasey (2003) uses the ADKAR change management model. ADKAR represents the process for individual change—through five steps: Awareness (of the need to change), Desire (to participate and support change), Knowledge (about how to change), Ability (to implement new skills and behaviors) and Reinforcement (to keep change in place). The book reminds us that each person in an organization goes through those steps at a different pace. It explains the role of the manager in helping people make that journey.

**Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools and Techniques of Organizational Change**
by Esther Cameron and Mike Green (2004) is an overview of the best thinking to date on making organizational, team and individual change work. It also pinpoints the leader’s role in change. I like this book because, while it may go deeper into the science of organizational development than most managers care to delve, its advice is sound and useful.

**Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths and Total Nonsense: Profiting from Evidence-Based Management**
by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton (2006) is a powerful management myth-buster. The authors are noted Stanford University business professors. They take on conventional business wisdom about strategic management and change. The chapter on change offers great advice for those who want to make it happen—and fast.

Your Next Steps

These are only a few of the possible topics you might teach at a workshop, a convention session or in your own newsroom. I hope the theories and resources provide a solid foundation for your teaching. I encourage you to build on them with lessons from your own studies and your professional experience.
As a journalist, you have no doubt been asked why you chose this vocation. The answers come easily. Journalists play a vital role in a democracy. At our best, we make a positive difference in people’s lives. We shine light into dark places. We make the world a little smaller, a little smarter.

I once told a group of grade school children that I love being a journalist for a very simple reason: I get to learn something and teach something every day. What a gift that is when we use it for good.

Never stop learning and teaching. Journalism needs your leadership—at the head of the class.
appendix of leadership teaching handouts

The following pages contain materials that may be useful supplements to your teaching. We have referenced these handouts in various chapters of the book. The materials are copyrighted to the authors and they give permission for users of this publication, *RTNDF Leadership at the Head of the Class* to copy and distribute these materials for educational purposes.

I’m Your Leader—What Have I Done for Your Lately?
Manage Yourself, Lead Others
The Power Grid of Leadership
Your Management Style: How do You See It?
   How do they See It?
Building and Busting Newsroom Trust: A Top Ten List
Got Influence?
The Manager as Coach: Tools for Teaching
The Writing Coach in the Broadcast Newsroom
Ten Keys to Morale and Motivation
Strategies of Top Performers
Leaders and “The Ethics Walk”
Work Satisfaction Survey
Work-Life Harmony Quiz
What Does Diversity Look Like?
What Kind of Conflict Manager Are You?
The Difficult Conversation
Tips for the Difficult Conversation
Introducing the Ten Lousy Listeners
Goleman’s Leadership Styles
Twenty Questions About Your Boss

rtndf news leadership at the head of the class
I’m Your Leader — What Have I Done for you Lately

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Call it the “Threshold Test.”

It is a head and heart check triggered as employees arrive at their workplace and approach the door. How do they feel crossing the threshold into their world of work? Some are pleased, proud, curious or eager. Some are angry, fearful, discouraged or simply numb.

As a manager, you may assume that those in the latter group are your low-achieving, low-potential employees. Why else would the threshold test produce such negative results? The answer may be tough for you to take. The answer may be you.

You, the manager, are the single most significant influence on the outcome of the threshold test. Not pay scales. Not corporate mandates. Not change. For two Gallup Organization researchers, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, that is the focal point of their 1999 book, First, Break All the Rules. Drawing on surveys of thousands of employees, they concluded:

“The talented employee may join a company because of its charismatic leaders, its generous benefits, and its world-class training programs, but how long that employee stays and how productive he is while he is there is determined by his relationship with his immediate supervisor.”

Frightening, isn’t it? Who wants to bear the burden of every direct report’s displeasure or departure? Don’t organizations, especially journalism organizations, understand and even expect that many of their best and brightest will invariably move up or out? And aren’t journalism’s leaders always going to be faced with managing talented but difficult people who seem nearly impossible to satisfy?

Yes, to both questions. But that answer is far too simple. It may account for the inevitable loss of some employees. But how long good people remain in your employ, and how well they contribute during their tenure, is directly connected to your performance as their manager.

Now, move on to a tougher question. How would those who work for you answer if you asked the following: “What have I done for you lately?” You could expect some individual variations in the answers. But depending on your managerial strengths and weaknesses, you might hear some remarkable consistency in the compliments or complaints.

Certain competencies, skills and behaviors are the hallmarks of top managers, even though their styles and personalities may be vastly different. Consider these questions and how your employees would respond:

1. **Have I shared the big picture and painted you into it?**

   Those at the top need to present a vision for their team that is clear and compelling. This
can’t be corny sloganeering or a simplistic mandate that says, “We will be number one.” Leaders express their vision in ways that make employees proud of their efforts. Warren Bennis, founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, says, “Leaders keep reminding people of what’s important. They manage the dream by keeping the passion quotient high.”

Journalism’s leaders must be extraordinarily strong in communicating a vision; they are, after all, speaking to employees who make their living by resisting spin and seeking truth. It takes a lot to inspire them. But even as they are trained to be skeptics, journalists, at their core, are idealists. They want leaders with vision. They follow those who creatively and honestly articulate it.

2. Have I clearly defined what is expected of you?
Job descriptions are just a beginning. Yet for many employees, such descriptions become the only guide for gauging their own performance. The best managers define not only an employee’s duties; they clarify the kinds of outcomes those duties should produce. Clarifying outcomes gives both manager and employee a measuring stick that is understood, not assumed.

For example, some managers tell reporters: “I’d like you to be more enterprising.” Nice goal but not clear. Try: “I’d like to see three stories each week you generated from community contacts.” Instead of, “We want you to be more responsive to our readers,” try: “Please answer every email, however briefly, and copy me on the reply.” From those clear expectations you can move on to discuss the steps needed to make it happen. You can see and share the outcomes.

3. Have I given you frequent, specific praise?
Every so often, you hear someone say, “I had a great boss. She told me to do good work and then just left me alone to do it.” Sorry. There’s more to that story. Research shows that top performing employees thrive on meaningful and continuing feedback. Sincere, specific praise also enables a manager to restate the organization’s definition of quality. For example: “John, we’ve been talking about improving our reporting on under-covered communities, and your story on voter registration in Hmong families is exactly what we’ve been hoping to achieve.” That goes a lot farther than, “Loved the story, John. Right on target.” Trust this: Newsrooms contain significantly larger numbers of employees who want to be thought of as wonderful, as compared to those who think they already are.

4. Have I held everyone accountable for quality?
For every manager who worries about looking like a tyrant when it comes to maintaining standards, there are many more employees who believe their colleagues aren’t being held accountable for substandard work. High-performing employees, in particular, want to know that all the members of their team are giving their best.

For the manager, that means you’ve made performance outcomes clear for everyone. You’ve made consequences for performance shortfalls clear as well. You provide coaching to help underachievers have their best shot at success. But you do not do it at the expense of the time you should be spending encouraging, growing and even learning from your highest performers.
5. **Have I set a tone of optimism?**
Whether you know it or not, a spotlight follows managers around the workplace. Your tone, your temperament, your movements are all center stage, like an interpretative dancer's. Your audience of employees continuously reads meaning into the dance.

What messages do you send? Are good things happening here? Are we solid in the face of adversity? Is what we do important to our consumers? Does our leader believe in this team? How you carry yourself, look people in the eye, keep your door open or closed, speak of the future instead of the past, can make a difference in whether your followers think they are headed in the right direction. Leaders have a variety of styles. But the strongest among them set a tone that is pervasively positive.

6. **Have I set a tone of creativity?**
There is a difference between setting important standards and demanding total conformity. Good managers know the difference. They hire people with talent and high standards and turn them loose to be creative. High-performing employees aren't satisfied with carrying out assigned tasks successfully; they want to be the birth parent of new ideas.

Managers who give them that license are likely to be rewarded with both delightful innovations and dopey failures. Can you accept failures as graciously as you accept great ideas? Ask any high performer about a fabulous failure, and you will hear two stories: the first is about “how I went astray,” and the other is invariably about “the boss who loved me anyway.”

7. **Have I set a tone of integrity?**
Do your people know what you stand for? Are your journalistic ethics strong? Do you keep your word? Do you have enough self-knowledge to detect when your emotions are clouding your judgment and get back on the reasoning track? Do you value diversity? Do you seek out opinions different from your own? Are your employees comfortable telling you that something you’ve done has caused a problem? Do you apologize when you make a mistake, publicly as well as privately?

8. **Do I listen?**
Most of us don’t. Oh, we hear what the other person is saying. But even as their words are coming out, we are already preparing a response. There’s another kind of attention that some call “deep” or “active” listening. It is a skill you can learn with patience and practice. Don’t confuse it with nodding your head and giving the impression you are interested.

Deep listening involves putting that turbocharged answer machine in your brain on “pause.” Invite the speaker to tell you more by asking questions in an encouraging way. Repeat what you heard. Now here’s the harder part. Listen with empathy. Social scientist Daniel Yankelovich, in his book, *The Magic of Dialogue*, says meaningful communication can’t take place without it:

“The gift of empathy—the ability to think someone else's thoughts and feel someone else's feelings, is indispensable to dialogue. There can be discussion without participants responding empathetically to one another, but then it is discussion, not dialogue.”
9. **Have I provided the tools you need?**

Are you an advocate for the tools your employees need to do their best work? This does not mean you are a failure if your news organization isn’t a state-of-the-art showplace. It means choosing equipment as though you used it yourself each day—empathetic shopping, if you will. You can encourage your employees to “manage up” their ideas about equipment selection, maintenance and usage to you, especially if you are not a tech-head.

Pay particular attention to the needs of those who work in areas where you’ve never toiled. People with attractive offices may seem oblivious to the needs of the boiler room. Don’t let that be your staff’s perception of you.

10. **Have I encouraged and modeled the value of learning?**

Never underestimate the value of learning as a reward for good employees. Just as high-performing employees get a thrill from developing new ideas, they also thrive on discovering them. Training opportunities are valuable perks.

Never assume your best employees are so good they don’t want to learn more. In fact, it is just the opposite. Your best are often eager for intellectual challenge. You can reward and retain them by providing meaningful learning opportunities. At the same time, you as a leader, also should be a learner. Show your employees you also desire to feed your mind. They’ll respect you for it.

Were you able to answer “yes” to the questions in these 10 key areas? If so, chances are good that many of your employees are scoring strong positives on that “Threshold Test.” They are smiling as they open the door to the workplace you lead—and not surprisingly, so are you.
Manage Yourself, Lead Others

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

As newsroom leaders, our job is to help others do their best work. Sure, it means setting high standards and holding people accountable if they miss the mark. But it is all the things we do in between those two significant activities that define the quality of our leadership.

How well do we inspire, motivate and coach? How do we help journalism and the journalists to be the best they can be? What kind of newsroom culture do we build, sustain or change? And to what degree do people choose to follow us? To follow us—not because it is in their job description, but because they genuinely want to.

To do the best job of leading others, we can begin by managing ourselves. It means setting high standards for our own behavior and holding ourselves accountable. It also means having—or learning—what are commonly known as “people skills.” Some call that combination of abilities “emotional intelligence.”

The term “emotional intelligence” can be off-putting to some who hear it as just management-speak or some touchy-feely, all—you-need-is-love approach to being a boss. But suspend your cynicism, and try considering emotional intelligence as managing yourself so you can lead others.

Think of emotional intelligence as its pioneer researchers, psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey, describe it: “the ability to accurately perceive your own and others’ emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage your own and others’ emotions.” (Harvard Business Review, January 2004.)

Or think of it as leadership scholars Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee break it down in their best-selling book, Primal Leadership. They list four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

So how might these skills translate into newsroom leadership? Think about the least effective managers you have known - or are suffering under today. Their journalism skills may be solid, but as managers, they often:

- Jump to wrong conclusions while others reason clearly
- Shift into crisis mode when others remain calm
- Fly off the handle when others keep their cool
- Expect people to deal with their frequent mood swings or outbursts
- Use hyperbolic language that ill-defines a situation
- Are oblivious to the feelings of others
- Are aware of feelings of others but unconcerned about them
- Fail to build alliances and partnerships across work groups
- Think they are behaving as a good leader should while doing all the above.
You may think “thank goodness that’s not I.” But remember, one of the key aspects of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. You may not be guilty of the worst of the worst behaviors, but do you really know whether or when you let your emotions short-circuit your reasoning? Do you really know whether you are seen as a relationship builder or a relationship killer? Do you really know whether people would choose to follow you if it weren’t written into their job descriptions?

At Poynter leadership seminars, managers find those things out by getting feedback from their newsrooms through what we call Personal Development Questionnaires. They hear about their strengths and weaknesses from people who report to them, from other managers and from their bosses. I have read thousands of these PDQ feedback forms; I even did a research project on them. I know that many managers are surprised by what they read. Some never knew how they were viewed by others, for better and for worse. Almost always, the surprises come in the area of “people skills.”

Here are some questions to ask yourself about your own emotional intelligence, and, if you have the courage, to ask others to answer about you.

**Self-awareness:**
- Do you have an honest handle on your own strengths and weaknesses, both in journalism and leadership?
- Are you able to read your own emotions? Are you clear about how you project them to others?
- Do you know if, how and when your emotions enhance or hijack your thinking and decision-making?

**Self-management:**
- Do you have the ability to control your emotions, or do they often get the better of you?
- Can you adapt to change, roll with punches, keep calm in a storm, and keep a sense of optimism even when others are down?
- Do you know if, why and how your words and actions inspire trust in others?

**Social awareness:**
- Do you have the ability to read the emotions of others?
- Do you react to the emotions of others in ways that make the situation better?
- Do you demonstrate genuine empathy—that is, a sense that you can see the world from someone else’s vantage point?
- Do your words and actions lead people to believe you are working in their best interest?

**Relationship management:**
- Do you provide feedback, guidance and inspiration to others?
- Do you share a vision that people can see and want to be part of?
- Do you build bonds, webs of relationships; foster teamwork, cooperation and collaboration with people?

As you answered those questions, and perhaps asked others to answer them for you, what did you learn? What do you need to work on? Let me assure you, it is worth the effort. Craft skills
alone won’t make you a respected leader. You need to work on a full range of skills, including emotional intelligence.

As evidence, consider the view of Harvard professor Linda Hill. She specializes in the study of new managers and the skills they need. She began her work in 1985 and published an updated version of her book, *Becoming a Manager*, in 2003. She writes:

“When I first started work on *Becoming a Manager*, I suspect it would have been very hard to get our MBAs to take Daniel Goleman’s work very seriously. Now, they walk around talking about their ‘EQ,’ and our alumni report to us that it is the ‘soft stuff’ that differentiates the winners from the losers.”

Newsrooms need winners at the helm—bosses who learn to manage themselves, so they can lead others.
The Power Grid of Leadership

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Poynter Leadership and Management Programs

A leader’s style may be directly connected to his or her understanding, appreciation, and use of various types of power. Leadership scholars cite these as bases of power:

**Legitimate Power:** Your “stripes.” This power emanates from your title and position in the organization. Caution: people may salute the uniform, but are they saluting the person? Are they following you because they have to or because they want to? New managers often learn that the title they thought would give them instant authority gives them simply responsibility. It is followers who ultimately determine a leader’s effectiveness.

**Coercive Power:** Your “stick.” This is your ability to sanction others for failure to comply. It may get results in the short-term and be effective to combat serious malfeasance, but rarely inspires individuals to follow you voluntarily in the long-term. Fear is a powerful but dangerous motivator that can hurt the leader as well as the follower.

**Reward Power:** Your “sweets.” This is your ability to give something of value for performance. The challenge for leaders is to understand what is of value to each follower, and when and how to deliver rewards in meaningful, sustainable and practical ways.

**Expert Power:** Your “smarts.” This is your specialized knowledge of some facet of your organization’s work. People turn to you for advice and guidance in this area. For some leaders it can be a trap. A gifted writer who becomes an editor may try to stay in the comfort zone of writing rather than learning the skills to coach writers and lead the team. Some managers may feel driven to be an expert in every facet of the business, rather than hiring others with complementary expertise.

**Referent Power:** Your “substance.” This is one of the most effective styles of power and it can serve people at any level of an organization. Referent power means people identify with you, they admire what you stand for and generally feel better when they are around you. You have a storehouse of what some scholars call “social capital.” People trust you to walk your talk. They choose to follow.

**Information Power:** Your “stuff.” In today’s world, and especially in newsrooms, those with access to the latest, best and most information have a high degree of power. This refers to both internal business information as well as the data that generates good journalism. Leaders who intentionally keep others in the dark are rarely seen as positive forces; those who constructively keep others “in the loop” grow referent power—and their position of leadership.

Sources: French and Raven (1959), Benfari (1999)
Your Management Style
How do You See it? How do They?

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Every manager has a style. It defines—for better or worse —your approach to leading others. Your style is born of your personality, values, personal and professional life experiences, mentors, role models and training (or lack of it).

No style is perfect. No style fits all occasions. It’s likely you have one primary approach to management, and you shift into other modes as events demand—and that’s fine. You may have some of the best characteristics of one or more management styles and none of the worst. If so, keep up the good work.

But here’s the important point: While you may have one vision of your management style, your staff may see things differently. It takes courage, but gather a few staff members together. Share this list. It describes various newsroom management styles I’ve observed and cataloged through my Poynter teaching. Check whether your perception of your management style is in sync with that of those who follow you.

The Commandant: Believes strongly in authority and chain of command. May or may not choose to collaborate with peers or staff. Is comfortable making decisions without input from others, since “the buck stops here.” Can be a strong defender of the news staff when it is under attack from critics outside the organization or budget cutters within. Usually good under pressure. Is strong on accountability, and may be blunt and terse when giving information or feedback to staff. Can generate fear among employees, who may make decisions based on “what the Commandant would want” instead of considering other options. May or may not have high standards or craft skills. If the Commandant has high standards and skills, employees may describe him/her as “passionate about journalism” and accept the Commandant’s lack of patience as the price of that passion. At the same time, other employees may feel intimidated and voiceless in the newsroom.

The Parent: Similar to the Commandant but believes in more of a “tough love” approach. May see subordinates as dependents in need of support, education and discipline. May share decision-making authority with employees as a means of teaching them, but usually keeps a strong hand in the process. May take a sincere interest in the personal as well as professional well-being of staff. Is likely to offer nurturing one-on-one advice. May be better at talking than listening, and may need to grow his/her listening skills. May deliver public performance critiques, believing such feedback benefits the newsroom’s collective growth. Feels an extraordinary amount of personal responsibility to the news staff and product. May spend especially long hours at work, watching over the “family.” May have difficulty managing time. A knock on the door from a staffer is proof the Parent is “needed” so the Parent sets aside other duties to respond. May feel deep pain over newsroom setbacks or errors, seeing them as a personal rather than systemic or organizational failure.
The Team Captain: Believes strongly in team building. Sees him/herself as the person who helps people grow as individuals but especially as members of a group. Encourages staff to work in partnership with one another. Praises individual performance but is likely to frame the praise in reference to its benefit to all. Likes to craft plans and have a strong hand in the assignment of duties to staffers, but is likely to listen to subordinates, especially sub-managers. Keeps a close eye on the process as well as the product; likes strategic planning. May have an overly optimistic vision of his/her team’s collaboration and cooperation without building in tangible benefits to all parties for their unselfishness or understanding. Disdains turf-protection and cliques, at least in the Team Captain’s own department. Interestingly, however, the Captain may be overly oriented toward his/her own work team and need to remember to make connections and collaborate with other departments in the organization.

The Coach: Like the Team Captain, the Coach wants to grow a strong team but takes a greater one-to-one approach with staff. Knows the goals, strengths and weaknesses of each staff member. Treats them as individuals. Devotes significant time to talking with staff. May be known as a “good listener.” Does not offer immediate answers to questions or solutions to problems, but asks questions as a way to help employees discover them. Sometimes frustrates staffers who simply want a fast, definitive answer and not a coaching session, or who feel the Coach needs to be more direct in outlining exactly what is expected of them. The Coach may be less willing than other leadership styles to cut underperformers, always looking for one more chance to reach them. May sometimes get less public credit for staff’s high performance because the Coach is leading the troops in a less visible, less dramatic fashion than other leaders. May need to manage his/her bosses in ways that let them know about the successes that grew from the Coach’s efforts.

The Expert: Believes fervently that his/her top value as a manager is rooted in the superior craft skills and knowledge he/she previously demonstrated as a staff member. Is often reluctant to let go of performing that craft work when promoted. May have time management problems because of this self-assigned workload. May disappoint staff members who hope for coaching from the Expert, rather than repeated demonstrations of his/her great work for them to emulate. For example, the Expert may rewrite copy rather than coach writers. Some Experts may, however, be good teachers who generously share wisdom. May be called on often for advice and judgment calls because his/her knowledge is so widely respected. May need to learn to coach others to come up with their own good answers rather than automatically providing them. May need to offer his/her opinion last in a meeting, discussion or debate, so as not to overly influence or stifle conversation.

The Buddy: Believes staff members and managers can and should be friends. Wants to be respected and liked. Disdains hierarchical distinctions. May enjoy socializing with staff, has easy-going work relationships and promotes informality in the workplace. May engender strong loyalty from those staff members who feel a bond with the Buddy, but at the same time, may be seen by other staffers as unprofessional and prone to “playing favorites.” May find it hard to provide negative feedback, and may be criticized by staff when he/she does so, for what appears to be the hypocrisy of a pal “pulling rank” on another. May step in and “do the work” as a show of solidarity with the troops, but may not do an effective job of delegating or developing systems. The Buddy manager may identify more closely with staff than with the leaders of the organization. May deliver company information by saying “the brass wants this” and not take ownership of management decisions, undercutting his/her effectiveness as a leader.
**The Remote Controller:** Believes his/her most important work is done in the office, often with the door closed, and in meetings with higher-level management in the organization. May communicate easily and well with his/her own supervisors and sub-managers. May prefer to communicate with direct reports by memo and email rather than face-to-face. This may be a function of the Remote Controller’s personality (introverted), sense of priorities or both. Although the Remote Controller may be uncomfortable having individual conversations with staffers, when pressed to do so, may have valuable discussions. May have strong ideas about quality and performance, and offers those in writing, both to staff and in company reports. Sees self as a strategist, spending time on “big picture” items such as planning, systems and budgets. Is likely to be well organized. May keep track of daily product and performance of employees but is likely to delegate that duty to others.

Did you see yourself in some, any or all of these managers? Which is your primary style? Secondary? Where did you see glimpses of yourself in some types? Are you pleased? What did your staff see?

If you or they are not happy with answers to these questions, are you prepared to adapt your style to become a more effective leader? Are you willing to ask your staff for more feedback on how to lead them more effectively? Where can you take steps immediately? What changes might need a long-term approach? What people inside and outside your organization can you enlist for support?

Remember, good leaders have more than professional knowledge. They have self-knowledge. They look inward to examine their strengths and weaknesses, and they listen to outside input on how they can grow. They take the thirst for knowledge and love of learning that led them to journalism, and they apply it to their role as leaders in this vocation’s best service.
Building and Busting Newsroom Trust: a Top Ten List

From PoynterOnline by Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs

They are the three little words that make all the difference in a working relationship: “I trust you.”

Trust is a key aspect of leadership, which, as I have written before, differs from management. Put simply, people are required to follow a manager; they choose to follow a leader.

Trust fuels the choice.

Trust is the expectation, in the face of risk, that the other person will do the right thing for us. When we trust another person, we:

- Reduce our doubts,
- Let down our defenses,
- Invest our talents,
- Commit our time,
- Reveal our hopes and concerns,
- See possibilities and believe in them and
- Feel safer, more comfortable, knowing someone’s “got our back.”

So, how do we go about building trust as newsroom managers and aspiring leaders?

I like the trust model that Robert Bruce Shaw articulates in his book, “Trust in the Balance.” He says trust is built on:

- Achieving results,
- Acting with integrity and
- Demonstrating concern.

We trust people who know their stuff and deliver consistent, quality work. We trust people who walk their talk and have a true moral compass. We trust people who make us feel we matter, not just as producers — but as people.

The trick is this: Leaders don’t build trust by mastering only part of that equation. They need to demonstrate all three elements of it: expertise, ethics and empathy.

Journalism’s managers have nonstop opportunities to gain or lose the trust of their staffs. Because I see reams of feedback on individual leaders through my work, I have a great window into how trust is gained and lost in the newsroom.

Here, then, are my top ten newsroom trust-builders — and trust-busters:

1. **Expertise.** My boss is a good journalist. I can see it in our daily interactions. My boss doesn’t waste time trying to impress me with how good he used to be at my job before
getting promoted. Today he achieves by helping others, like me, succeed.

2. **Information.** My boss keeps me in the loop — not just about things that directly affect me, but about things that interest me, too. She tries to disseminate news about changes — bad or good — as quickly as possible. I am never surprised or embarrassed by being late to learn about something of significance.

3. **Feedback.** My boss lets me know where I stand. I don’t have to guess, or live with “if you don’t hear from me, assume you’re doing a good job” as a way of newsroom life. I get sincere, specific praise for good work and constructive criticism when I miss the mark. My boss doesn’t surprise me at annual evaluation time with some complaint or concern that I could have addressed — if only I’d known about it.

4. **Giving credit and taking blame.** My boss lets her bosses know who really did the good work, and makes a point to look out for the folks who too often are forgotten when praise is handed out. She remembers whose original idea got a good project or story off the ground, and credits that person. She steps up and shoulders the blame when the team stumbles, and never lets good folks take the fall for her when she messes up.

5. **Advocacy.** My boss goes to bat for my stories, projects, ideas, hopes, dreams and concerns. He “manages up” to his bosses strategically about me. I feel he acts as my agent, and is good at it.

6. **Letting go.** If I outgrow my current role, my boss helps me move to the next level, even if it inconveniences her temporarily. She understands when it is time for me to move on, in or out of the company, and doesn’t stand in the way of my success.

7. **Keeping confidences.** If I confide in my boss about an important issue, I believe he will honor the confidence. I won’t find out that the newsroom has learned about my personal issues through a grapevine with roots in the boss’s office. (Note: Trustworthy bosses also help people understand when they shouldn’t be asked to keep a secret — when managers are duty-bound to act on information about activities that are illegal, unethical, dishonest or dangerous.)

8. **Walk the talk.** My boss does the old “practice what you preach” routine. He’s honest and ethical. He doesn’t hold himself to a lower standard than others. He doesn’t demonstrate bias for or against people or ideas. He’s the same person when his boss is around as when he’s just mixing with the team.

9. **Trash talk.** My boss doesn’t disrespect my colleagues around me when they’re not within earshot. I don’t have to wonder why he’s bad-mouthing instead of dealing with them. I don’t have to wonder whether he trashes me when I’m not around.

10. **Follow-up.** My boss doesn’t forget me. She follows up on my requests, messages and ideas. I don’t feel as though after we talk, I’m off her radar unless I come back and remind her. She stays on top of things.

If they gave out “trust scores” based on these top 10 attributes, how would you do? Why not take a trust-building step with your staff? Show them the list — and see what happens. Will they trust you enough to tell you the truth?
Got Influence?

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Grade Yourself on the Influence Inventory

It’s easy to spot the managers in an organization; they have titles and formal power. But leaders emerge at all levels. Leaders may or may not have formal power, but they always have influence. Influence, like trust, grows from a person’s expertise, integrity and empathy.

Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most positive, how would you grade yourself on each question?

1. How do colleagues assess my work performance? Am I seen as a top performer? _____

2. Am I a “go-to” person? Do people turn to me when the task has a high degree of difficulty? _____

3. Do people view me as ethical? Am I known for honesty and openness? _____

4. Do people know what I stand for? If they know, do they believe I walk my talk? _____

5. Do people see me as empathetic? Do they think I have their best interests at heart? _____

6. Am I known as a good listener, one who doesn’t jump to conclusions before hearing people out? _____

7. Am I cool under pressure? Am I effective and professional when passions are high and/or deadlines are tight? _____

8. Am I known as generous with my time and ideas, even in areas outside my immediate work duties? _____

9. Do people feel comfortable confiding in me or asking me to coach or mentor them? _____

10. Do people feel better about the work when I’m on the team? _____
**Scoring:** If you gave yourself an overall score of 40-50, *and your colleagues would give you a similar score*, then you are very likely seen as a leader, a person of influence in your organization.

The key to this, however, is a “balanced scorecard”—a high grade for every question. If an individual is seen as lacking in any one area: expertise, integrity or empathy, that person’s influence and leadership is significantly diminished. Those qualities in combination grow and sustain a leader’s influence.
Think about the best teachers in your life. Who were they? Your list may include traditional schoolmasters, but it may also draw from other areas: family, clergy, athletic coaches, friends, work supervisors or military leaders. There was something each of your best teachers did that connected with your needs and interests. And chances are, those best teachers had styles that were not identical to one another. But what they had in common was the ability to reach you.

What is the secret to good teaching? The best teachers help us discover and then celebrate the discovery with us. That process takes longer than simply telling people to listen, take notes, memorize, then parrot back the words.

The secret is coaching. By its very nature, coaching is personal. And that is what makes it powerful. It is teaching tailored to the uniqueness of each student; a prescription, if you will, for their healthy growth.

Coaches are teachers who know their material well, and know their students equally well. They have an understanding of the student's current grasp of the subject. They know because they have asked questions. They have listened.

Managers have many responsibilities; coaching is among the most important. Coaching does not simply correct today's problem; it helps keep the problem from resurfacing. The employee not only understands the goal but can teach it to others. Coaching may take longer than correcting, which is a "quick fix," but it is longer-lasting. It builds a body of understanding, and if done well, helps build a workplace culture.

How does a manager shift from “corrections officer” to coach? It can be easier than you think. Here are some of the things coaches do:

1. **Coaches know their students.** They pay attention to their work and to them as human beings. They never make assumptions about the motives that drive the student's words or actions. They take time to learn the person's hopes, fears and history.

2. **Coaches check their egos at the door.** They resist trying to impress a student with their knowledge. Their satisfaction comes not from hearing someone say “how do you know so much?” but in seeing the student grow his or her skills. When coaching is done well, learners believe they personally have discovered ideas and answers, hence, they may never acknowledge the coach's contribution. And that should be just fine with the coach.

3. **Coaches ask questions.** What are we aiming for in this story? What did you see out there? What did you like most about the assignment? What's causing you concern? How
would you like to approach the problem? Who else might we include? Is there another way to look at this? What would happen if we turned things upside down?

4. **Coaches listen completely.** They resist the temptation to give instant advice or answers, even if they have them at the tip of their tongue. They give the student time to get a point out fully and only then work to develop a coaching conversation. They resist phone calls, door knocks and the errant material lying atop their desks. When coaching is underway, the most important gift a coach gives is complete attention.

5. **Coaches are positive.** They emphasize growth and goodness. They catch people doing things right and reward them with praise. Coaches are not insincere or flattering; they are genuine and specific in their praise. They give the student details about what is being praised and why. They do not shy away from honest feedback about things that need strengthening, but even critical feedback is framed in a non-threatening manner.

6. **Coaches look for “teaching moments.”** Coaches are always on the alert for opportunities to reinforce values and skills. These are “teaching moments.” They may happen in formal meetings or casual conversations, in bringing people together, in calling on a person to share the “how I did it” of a success story with others, through department-wide memos or personal notes. But when it comes to “teaching moments,” coaches are careful: they praise in public and criticize in private.

7. **Coaches inspire.** Don’t be frightened by that notion. You may not think of yourself as an inspirational figure, and your humility is laudable. But even the most humble leaders were known for their values. People around them knew what they stood for. What do you stand for? It can take courage to be inspirational, to overcome your own fears. You may fear public speaking, contradiction or failure. If so, then seek out a coach to help you achieve the goal of inspiring others by your words and deeds.

8. **Coaches are responsible risk-takers.** Coaches know the rules of the road so well they don’t fear an occasional detour. They celebrate creativity that respects values but tries things a different way. They reward innovation. They aren’t afraid to laugh at themselves or look foolish to help get an important point across. While helping others grow, they are always challenging themselves to do the same. They do not fear change or challenge. They do not hesitate to say “I’m sorry” when they make mistakes. And even the best coaches do.

Coaching, properly done, is immensely rewarding. The student or employee is excited about learning and has greater mastery of material and enhanced self-confidence. A workplace with a coaching culture can be a better place to work; more positive, more value and quality driven, more humane. There is no greater gift we can give to colleagues than the confidence we believe in them and they have earned it. That is the coach’s gift.
The Writing Coach in the Broadcast Newsroom

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Good newsrooms treasure good writing. Every employee in the shop understands the importance of the written word. Managers develop systems to grow good writers. Scripts are faithfully checked before broadcast. But who is checking the scripts? How are they doing it? Are they fixing copy—or are they doing something much more valuable: Are they coaching writers?

Let's take a common newsroom situation. A reporter has finished writing a package and is ready for a script-check. You are the coach. Here's what you need to do:

**Sit on your hands.**
Writers need to know you respect their ownership of a story. Resist the temptation to start writing an improved version. That's fixing—not coaching. (The only exception to this is a critical deadline situation. Even then, ask the writer for permission to lay your hands on the copy.)

**Ask the reporter to tell you about the story.**
This is the "content conversation." Listen to how the reporter relates the information. What was the first thing said? What tense was used? In what order were the facts laid out? When was a surprise revealed? What emotion was expressed and when? How did the story end?

**Read the story with a dual personality.**
Read the story as a person who knows all the facts (since you just heard them) and as a person who knows nothing more than what the text states.

**Ask the writer—and yourself—questions.**
Keep in mind that the writer may be feeling very nervous at this moment. Do your best to be positive as you ask about story elements that are missing, conflicting, confusing or superfluous. Remember to respect the writer's effort. But often a story that sounded good in the content conversation gets lost in the writing. What changed? Does the text you've read appear to be as strong as the story you've heard?

**Beware of “projected content.”**
Often writers know the facts of a story so well they presume those facts are in the copy when they aren't. This is when the coach's constructive questions (and mastery of dual-personality copy review) can help the writer see and correct gaps in a story.

**Apply ethical decision-making skills.**
Coaching conversations provide excellent opportunities to reinforce journalistic values. Talk about fairness, perspective, diversity and balance. Again, think in terms of questions: Are there other people we should hear from? Are we telling the story in context?
Remember the value of legitimate praise.
We all thrive on positive reinforcement. Coaches identify successes and point them out. Even when a story is in great need of repair, its writer may have done a good job of fact-gathering. Acknowledge that. Be specific and genuine when you praise.

Recognize the difference between “rescue” and “redecorating.”
“Rescues” are emergency measures, usually performed to correct factual errors. “Redecoration” is the art of making copy more attractive. It is the majority of what writing coaches do. “Redecorating” is best done when there is plenty of time for consultation and conversation. Don’t “redecorate” on deadline.

Check your ego.
When you “fix” stories by doing instant rewrites, there may be a thrill in showing off your skill. By coaching writers, you discover better ways to craft copy. People compliment the writer on a good story, rarely the coach. Your satisfaction comes from knowing the valuable role you play in the professional development of your colleagues and your newsroom.

Good newsrooms treasure good writing. Good writers treasure good coaches.
Ten Keys to Morale and Motivation

The News Manager’s Role in Work-Life Balance

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

1. **Aim high in your journalism.** Know enough about your journalists to help them do their best work. Know them as people, not just producers.

2. **You might love your job so much you could live in the newsroom.** Many wonderful journalists do. Just remember that your staff isn’t abandoning you—or journalism—when they leave at the end of their shifts.

3. **Journalists expect to work extraordinary hours on big stories—but.** They resent extra work that grows from management’s faulty systems, planning or communication around news of the day. Your failure to plan should not create their emergency.

4. **Journalists know that stress and overtime come with the job—but.** They resent enduring it because of chronic understaffing. Be an advocate for realistic resources. Managers have to “manage up” (communicate, not whine) to their bosses to keep them informed about real challenges.

5. **Distribute work equitably.** Don’t punish your most skilled staff by asking them to carry additional loads for chronic underachievers. That’s where your rigorous work of performance management comes in—and helps everyone.

6. **The manager’s praise defines the team’s priorities.** Never stop praising good work, sincerely and specifically. Just remember that people read things into your words. Your praise defines the expected “work ethic” of your group. Be specific about what standards you apply when evaluating the work ethic of your staff.

7. **Be your best when people face their worst challenges.** When your staffers tell stories of critical moments in their lives—illness, childbirth, divorce, bereavement, how will they describe your role in the saga? Hero? Uninterested bystander? Villain?

8. **Support people’s celebrations of life’s happiest rites and rituals.** Remember the importance of childbirth, adoption, nuptials, family and academic achievements. Acknowledge that recently acquired black belt, softball trophy or even the goofy vacation photo. People shouldn’t have to check the joys of their personal lives at the newsroom door.

9. **Don’t pit the single against the married, or the childless against the parents.** Work-life balance is important to all employees. Don’t assume that the young, single or childless on your staff aren’t as deserving of work-life consideration. Get to know
your staff so well that you can make decisions that are fair for all—and good for your organization.

10. **Create a climate where people look out for each other.** When people know what’s expected of them, when they feel people share the work, when they are cross-trained and can cover for each other, and when they believe you trust them—they will solve many of the scheduling issues that often end up on your desk. You can then spend less time managing the process and more time leading the people—and the journalism.
Strategies of Top Performers

Jill Geisler, Group Leader-Leadership and Management Programs - The Poynter Institute

Robert E. Kelley is a professor at Carnegie Mellon’s Graduate School of Industrial Administration. He has conducted extensive research on what separates top-performing employees in knowledge-based industries. In 1998, he reported on his research in the book *How to Be a Star at Work*. It outlines nine work strategies of top performers:

1. **Initiative:** It isn’t just starting early or doing little extra things. It means offering bold new ideas, doing so for the benefit of all, then following through. It involves risk-taking.

2. **Networking:** More than just being in on the gossip grapevine, it means making connections with the most knowledgeable people in the organization to tap into their wisdom, as well sharing one’s own with others.

3. **Self-Management:** Average workers see this as simply time management. Star performers review their own productivity, seek challenging work that leads to more growth, plan carefully, openly borrow from the best work and problem-solving behaviors of others, understand their own shortcomings and develop strategies to compensate for or correct them.

4. **Perspective:** Top performers look at their work from multiple viewpoints: those they serve, those who work for them, their bosses, and their competitors. They look at situations from a broader context than other workers do. They put things in context.

5. **Followership:** This does NOT mean sheep-like, passive submission to authority. Star performers demonstrate loyalty to the organization by exercising critical thinking, they express cooperatively and collaboratively. They research issues, seek advice, work within the system, offer criticisms and solutions aligned with organizational values, and are courageous in taking bold stands when principle requires it.

6. **Teamwork:** This can be tough for high-achievers, who often prefer to do the work single-handedly. Top performers share the load, get their hands dirty, contribute to positive group dynamics, know when to push, when to relax, and how to keep good humor in the mix.

7. **Leadership:** Top performers check their egos at the door. They rely on the influence born of their expertise and relationships rather than raw power or titles to get things done. They help build momentum toward solutions and goals.

8. **Organizational Savvy:** Don’t confuse this with schmoozing or sucking up. Top performers understand the competing interests in their organization. They know when to challenge and when to compromise. They are key players in conflict resolution and skillfully manage individual and group dynamics.
9. **Show-and-Tell:** Top performers “sculpt the message” for those who matter. They understand their audiences and speak in ways they can understand and appreciate. They are proactive in anticipating challenges and criticism. They know if communication and presentation skills are not their strong suit, and team up with others (colleagues or supervisors) to jointly develop presentations that hit the mark.

Kelley estimates that only 10 to 15 percent of the workforce are “star performers.” He also insists that stars are made, not born, and people can grow into stardom by mastering all nine strategies.
Do you consider yourself an ethical leader?  
Do your staffers ask your opinion whenever they have ethical questions or doubts?  
Are you always ready to issue a definitive decision?  
If you overhear an ethics debate in the newsroom, do you stop what you’re doing, stroll over and make the judgment call?  
If the answer to all those questions is YES, I have two words of advice for you:  

Aim higher. That’s right. Aim significantly higher.

You see, what I’ve just described is a benevolent ethical dictator. When it comes to the most important decisions in a newsroom, those that speak to the core of the newsroom’s values, all the power is vested in you. You may have earned it as a superior journalist, a deeply caring manager, even a student of ethical decision-making. But so long as you remain the sole keeper of the ethical flame in your village, you are missing a critical opportunity to grow a culture of ethical decision-making and to grow as a leader.

How do you build such a culture? You start by letting go of the “expert in ethics” role you’ve been playing. Instead, start to view yourself as the person who teaches the process of ethical decision-making to your team. Encourage your staff to do what I call “The Ethics Walk.”

The Ethics Walk takes place whenever there’s a question of ethics, values, taste or tone. It is shorthand for “let’s get as many good voices together as we can for a quick, thoughtful discussion.” In doing the Walk, your group draws on my Poynter colleague and ethics guru Bob Steele’s advice to:

- Get past your gut reactions (listening to your gut but not completely trusting it)
- Consider your organization’s policies and guidelines
- Move up to the realm of reflection and reasoning, in which you assess your journalistic purpose, gather more information, ask good questions, consider stakeholders, examine alternatives, explore tone and degree, assume accountability and listen to diverse voices.

You, as the leader, may play a part in any Ethics Walk, but it is a far different role than you’ve played in the past. During the Walk, you may listen more than talk, and when talking, ask questions rather than make statements. You draw out the quiet voices around the table, you keep the group focused, you build consensus.
You prepare for the Ethics Walk by:

- Holding ethics workshops for your staff
- Developing guidelines for sensitive coverage situations (hostage-taking, juvenile crime, hidden cameras, etc.)
- Sharing contemporary or classic case studies
- Discussing “what-if” scenarios now - not in the heat of news coverage
- Embedding ethics and values into every point of entry in your newsroom life: hiring interviews, story meetings, daily critiques, praise memos, personnel evaluations.

The day you believe your staff is proficient at the Ethics Walk is the day to congratulate yourself. You’ll know that day has arrived when you find yourself sitting in your office, hearing an ethics conversation just outside your door. You stay put. You don’t immediately leap up to join the fray. You just listen as they talk...and when they chart a course of action, you congratulate them on their process. You are proud of the outcome.

And you should be proud. In building that culture, you have achieved the highest level of leadership in ethical decision-making. Chances are your staff will continue to ask for your voice in the big decisions. Not because you’ve ordered them to ask. Not because they’re afraid to make a move without you.

They just happen to like the way you walk.
Work Satisfaction Survey

On a scale of 1-10 (one representing the least; ten the most) please note the amount of job satisfaction you derive from each of the following:

_______ 1. Developing expertise in my work.
_______ 2. Completing a task well and before deadline.
_______ 3. Feeling like I’m a problem solver.
_______ 4. Getting a new assignment in an area I haven’t yet mastered.
_______ 5. Learning; getting training related to my work.
_______ 7. Feeling that I have creative freedom at work.
_______ 8. Feeling a sense of social value to my work.
_______ 9. Feeling that I have a healthy work/life balance.
_______ 10. Feeling that my job is secure.
_______ 11. Beating the competition.
_______ 12. Getting regular feedback from my superior.
_______ 14. Getting public praise from my leaders.
_______ 15. Getting praise from my leaders privately.
_______ 16. Winning awards.
_______ 17. Getting economic rewards; raises, bonuses.
_______ 18. Working as part of a collaborative team.
_______ 19. Being held in high regard by my colleagues.
_______ 20. Having friendship and harmony among colleagues.
_______ 22. Having a positive relationship with my supervisor.
_______ 23. Leading a work group.
_______ 24. Being asked to coach other employees.
_______ 25. Feeling my opinions are valued; suggestions heeded.
_______ 26. Being “in the loop” about important news in the organization.
_______ 27. Liking my work space, the physical plant.
_______ 28. Having the right tools to do my job.
Take a look at the items which you gave the highest and lowest satisfaction scores.

**1-10** deal with your intrinsic (internal) sense of achievement at work as a motivator

**11-17** deal with extrinsic (external) motivators that lead you to a sense of achievement

**18-22** deal with your affiliations and sense of community at work as a motivator

**23-26** deal with your sense of power at work as a motivator

**27-28** deal with workplace environment as a motivator

Look again at your highest and lowest items.

Using them as a guide, write a paragraph of advice to your boss about how to bring out the best in you at work.
Work-Life Harmony Quiz

Developed by Candy Altman, Vice-President News, Hearst-Argyle Television and Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Please answer the following questions. Grade yourself from 0 to 5, with 5 as the most positive response.

**Work:**

1. I feel happy and fulfilled in my current job. _________
2. I am comfortable with the shift/schedule/hours I work. _________
3. I feel I set priorities and schedule my time well. _________
4. My bosses tell me I’m doing good work. _________
5. If I work long hours, it is noticed and appreciated; if hours get too long, I can turn to my boss for help. _________

**Self:**

1. I take good care of myself. _________
2. I get satisfaction from my work. _________
3. I have interests outside of work and I make time for them. _________
4. I make a point to re-charge my batteries in constructive ways. _________
5. If I am under stress, I find constructive ways to cope. _________

**Others:**

1. I feel good about the way I’m meeting my family responsibilities. _________
2. People close to me are supportive of the demands that come with my job. _________
3. I’m satisfied with the social life I lead outside work. _________
4. My work does not interfere with my important relationships. _________
5. Twenty years from now, I will look back and say I made great choices in balancing my work and personal commitments. _________
Work-Life Harmony Results:

60-75: **Congratulations!** You have found ways to keep your work and life in harmony. Think about the choices you make, the people who support you at work and home, make sure they know how grateful you are for the role they play.

45-59: **Modest applause**—You are doing fairly well. In what areas could you improve? Who, in addition to you, can help? Who has control? What should you do more of or less of?

30-44: **Sigh**—Time to make some changes. You deserve better. What’s getting in the way of your happiness, balance or harmony? What must change and how are you going to make it happen? Who can help?

Under 30: **Gasp**—Clearly, your situation is serious. Your life isn’t what you want it to be and you are hurting. Consider talking to your boss and your loved ones - and don’t hesitate to get help from an expert, too.
What Does Diversity Look Like?

Keith Woods, Dean of the Faculty, The Poynter Institute

What does a “diverse” news organization look like? What goes on in such a place?

For all the talk about diversity in the media, you’d be hard-pressed to find many news organizations with the big-picture plan that would answer those questions. For the longest time, our industry has been almost singularly focused on another question: How?

How do we get more stories about Latinos in the paper? How do we get more Asian faces on the six o’clock news? How can we hire more people of color? How do we colorize the list of contacts or stretch our coverage to the south side, the east side, or whatever side of town is code for under-covered? How can we include poor people, gays and lesbians, faith communities and the range of folks who haven’t historically measured up to journalism’s definition of valued news? These are important questions. Please keep asking them.

A while ago, a group of media leaders, nearly all of them people of color, took on more fundamental questions: What are the characteristics of a “diverse” news organization? Who are the people leading the way? What makes them effective? What stands in the way of success?

The group is part of the McCormick Tribune Fellowship, a seven-year-old program funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation with the aim of directing more thought and energy in the industry toward matters of diversity. For the past three years, the foundation, working through the National Association of Minority Media Executives, has surveyed the group and issued a report on the findings. They’ve hired me to write each of those reports.

The 2004 report is called “Leading the Way: Making Diversity Real.” In it, the fellows offer a means by which news organizations can plot out a course for companywide diversity that’s deeper than counting heads, more meaningful than coverage of a Cinco de Mayo parade, and reaches from the front office to the janitor’s office.

It’s called the “McCormick Scale,” and it describes five stages of a news organization’s development.

**Awareness:** The company recognizes the depth and breadth of the diversity challenge it faces.

**Course correction:** Historic disparities are addressed. The company ends practices that sabotage diversity efforts.

**Doing diversity:** The work of inclusion begins in earnest.

**Ingraining values:** The value of diversity is understood by all, reflected in the workplace, and a benefit to the bottom line.

**“A state of being”:** The ills of bias and discrimination have been put to rout.

The fellows put meat to that skeleton by talking about the things, big and small, that should be happening at each stage. What’s intriguing about this attempt to define diversity at a molecular level is that it reveals both the source of such a tool’s greatest potential and the reason this work can be so perplexing.
The potential is everywhere. Each stage of the scale is an invitation to not just measure a company’s progress but examine and debate its values.

The fifth stage—what a fellow called a “state of being”—is a prime example. In describing what diversity “success” would look like, black fellows almost unanimously spoke of a place where diversity is talked about all the time. It’s a factor in every decision. For many of the white, Latino, Asian, and Native American fellows, a company has succeeded when there’s no more need to talk about diversity.

The contradiction is pregnant with discussion points. If your company’s pushing for diversity, have you stopped to talk about what success looks like?

The frustration is a different matter. What comes out clearly from the fellows, particularly people of color, is that everyone’s not on the same page when we’re talking about commitment. The industry gauges commitment and success by high-profile things like hiring statistics, head counts in stories, and the occasional, big-time promotion. As the newsroom numbers “ooch” forward, many media leaders call it progress.

Others, especially people of color, measure commitment on a broader scale. They’re watching how the company corrects disparities throughout the organization, not just in their departments. They’re paying attention not just to who’s at the table but to whose voice gets heard. They’re not just interested in how under-covered communities get covered, but how much time, effort and money the community relations department is spending there.

Journalists notice where the newspaper is circulated (and where it is not). Promotions managers pay attention to how people are portrayed on the news. Editors care which vendors the company employs. As those numbers remain static, the fellows say, they question the company’s commitment to true diversity.

With the McCormick Scale, the fellows have pulled this conversation out of the parochial world of the newsroom and out of the narrow arenas of hiring and coverage. For anyone paying attention, it shouldn’t be hard to see how all that might change our understanding of the relationship between a company’s overall work on diversity and the morale, motivation and retention of those who hold diversity dear.

The “Leading the Way” report is hardly the end of a creative process. Tap into the minds of these leaders—executives from news and business as well as top managers from every floor of the company—and you’ll find grist for some of the most important conversations news organizations need to have if they’re serious about succeeding.

• What does it mean to be a strong leader on diversity?
• How do you get past fear?
• Why haven’t we gotten there yet?

Read the report. Look at the two that preceded it. Talk to co-workers about how they’d describe a good leader. How would diversity success look to them? Compare your company to the McCormick Scale and discuss where you are and why. Set about constructing your own list of measurements. Let “Leading the Way” get the conversation going. We might start finding some answers if we can find the right questions.
What Kind of Conflict Manager Are You?

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Could we just go one day without some kind of conflict in the newsroom? Probably not. And that’s not so bad. Conflict can be a natural part of living and working together. What matters is how we manage conflicts and how people feel about the outcomes. What matters is minimizing needless conflict in the first place.

And it all starts with you. Not you the leader, just you the person. Every one of us has our own approach to conflict; a sort of “default stance” we take. In a moment, I’ll help you figure out your primary conflict resolution style. But first, let’s focus on what conflict really is.

Experts in the field say it is pretty simple: Conflict exists when one person believes another is interfering with his/her goals.

In their book, Interpersonal Conflict Joyce Wilmot and William Hocker zero in on the whole area of goals. They believe we have four basic types of goals:

- **Content**—measurable things like money, the office with the window, or who gets to choose the movie tonight
- **Process**—how decisions are made
- **Identity**—“face” or self-image and social standing
- **Relational**—how we interact with each other; who leads, follows, shares, cares.

They suggest that while most conflicts are expressed initially as content or process goals (as in, “I’m sick of working with an ancient computer” or “Who decided this without asking me?”), they are most often about identity and relationships.

Getting the old computer replaced is probably not the person’s only goal; rather, feeling competent at work, feeling appreciated and empowered are identity goals that also may be at the heart of the conflict. Being involved in a decision isn’t just about process, it is about feeling valued in the work relationship.

It comes down to asking good questions and really listening to help bring out people’s multiple goals. And, depending on our preferred conflict resolution style, we may be perfectly awful at it.

Our conflict resolution style—that is, how we deal personally when we feel we are in conflict with another person—reflects a balancing act of two factors. They are the value we put on our own **goals** and our **relationship** with the other person.
• How important is it to us to achieve the goal we think the other person may be interfering with?
• How important is our relationship with that person?

Here’s a look at the most common conflict resolution styles:

• **Competition**: I generally value my goals over relationships. I see conflict in terms of winning and losing. I push for my advantage, argue my point and generally stand firm on my original goal. If conflict is a pie, I’m going to get the biggest share.

• **Compromise**: I’m willing to give up some of my goals to preserve the relationship, but I expect the other person to give up something as well. If we both sacrifice, we’ve demonstrated a willingness to get along. About that pie? We can both take a smaller piece than we wanted.

• **Collaboration**: I value my goals and our relationship, and I try to find creative ways not only to achieve both of our goals but build our relationship in the process. I figure out ways to make the pie bigger, so we are both satisfied.

• **Accommodation**: I’d rather give up my goals than risk our relationship, so let’s just do things your way. I want you to be happy even if it means my sacrifice. Have all the pie you want, including mine.

• **Avoidance**: I walk away from my goal and the relationship. It is not worth the trouble or danger of dealing with the situation. Pie? I don’t even want to get near it or you when you are eating.

Our approaches to conflict are shaped by our upbringing, faith, culture, past experiences and personalities. We all have a most favored style. And while each one has its use, some are more effective than others.

• **Competition** works when the goal is critically important and well worth the fight. But too often people with this style dominate others, even when the goal isn’t important. They risk losing good relationships and being seen as bullies, especially if they use threats or insults to get their way.

• **Compromise** works when a decision has to be made in a hurry, the other side seems willing, and we all feel good about taking less than we wanted. It is a good “backup” style. But if we approach every conflict thinking “compromise,” we may be missing chances for a resolution that creatively gets both parties what they want.

• **Collaboration** works when the parties really value a partnership and are willing to take time to keep asking each other good questions about goals, needs and interests. When done properly, it forges strong bonds. But it must be genuine, not manipulative, and the relationship should be worth the investment of time.

• **Accommodation** works when the other individual has high power (like a boss), and we recognize the need to build the relationship. It works in the wake of wrongdoing, as a conciliatory gesture. It can be destructive when it stems from a person’s fear of any sort of difficult conversation, because it ignores conflicts rather than resolving them.

• **Avoidance** works when the other individual is dangerous or all but impossible to work with. It is a self-preservation tactic that keeps us safe but also encourages bullies. It can lead to miserable working conditions or the loss of good people who simply choose to work elsewhere. Conflict avoidance can cause serious problems in the workplace.
Collaboration is the most effective of the styles and can be surprisingly rewarding to people who haven’t tried it. But each of the others has its place and time. How adept are you at each of the conflict management styles? If you asked your colleagues, what style would they say you favor? Could you ask them? Or would that cause a conflict?

There are self-diagnostic tools, like mini-quizzes, you can take to pinpoint your style. Your HR department may have some on hand. (One of the better known is called the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument.)

But there are also books that can help you build your conflict resolution skills. One of my favorites is Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and William Ury. Another book with useful self-tests is Understanding and Changing Your Management Style by Robert Benfari. Many of the ideas I’m sharing with you come from their good research - and both books offer practical tips so you can manage conflict in ways that are constructive, creative and healthy for everyone. Who could argue with that?
The Difficult Conversation
It’s Not Supposed to Be Easy

Scott Libin, Leadership and Management Faculty, The Poynter Institute

Occasionally during a Poynter leadership seminar, someone will ask how to deliver bad news. Leaders and managers describe all sorts of unpleasant responses to having “the difficult conversation,” from dry mouth to cold sweats to sleeplessness to digestive distress. And that’s on the part of the sender, not the recipient of bad news.

My answer to such inquiries isn’t often what people are hoping to hear. I tell them if it doesn’t hurt at least a little, they aren’t doing it right.

This is not quite the same as the old weight-room favorite, “no pain, no gain,” although there is some conditioning involved. Nor is it exactly like the words of the philosopher, “What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger.” Although it’s true that the trauma of making people unhappy does diminish somewhat with experience, if it goes away completely, something is seriously wrong. Empathy is an essential leadership skill. People who can casually, dispassionately dispense news that will crush somebody probably shouldn’t be the ones to dispense it.

Doctors tell us physical pain protects us in a way. Those who lose feeling due to previous injury or illness can suffer serious subsequent bodily harm without realizing it. Without a hard-wired warning system, people with impaired sensitivity are actually at greater risk.

I believe something similar applies to the stress most managers feel when they know they are about to cause pain by delivering bad news. It can occur on occasions ranging from the relatively minor, like disapproving a vacation request, to the most serious sanctions: suspension, demotion, termination. The dread that compassionate people feel when they know they’re about to hurt someone else—even for a good reason—keeps them from doing careless, thoughtless harm.

Leaders who successfully suppress every twinge of simple, human decency not only hurt individuals more than necessary in the short run, they hurt organizations needlessly in the long run. Rational adults understand that occasional disappointment is a fact of life. What we really resent are people who seem oblivious, or worse, immune to our feelings: Okay, you had to let me down but did you have to act like it was so trivial to you? Impressions of that sort spread faster in the newsroom than the latest computer virus. Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman in First, Break All the Rules say people don’t leave companies, they leave bosses. And, as every experienced manager knows, those who leave often aren’t the ones we want to lose.

What I think works well for leaders in difficult conversations is similar to what news viewers and listeners tell us works for anchors on the air: professionalism, composure and credibility, but also a sense of caring, compassion and a connection with content.

I hasten to add that your suffering is not likely to provoke sympathy or admiration on the part of the person in that difficult conversation. Any suggestion that “this hurts me more than it hurts
you” is likely to work about as well with adults facing bad news as it does with kids facing a painful vaccination. Expecting to be thanked or pitied for having to hurt someone else is the height of self-centered management and only aggravates the harm.

So, if some of your unpleasant supervisory duties cause you too much self-pity, take a closer look at your last paycheck, because the un-fun stuff is part of what you’re paid to do. And, because your feelings count, too, find a friend in management or outside the company to commiserate with when the hard part gets to you. Also, try these tips to make things a bit easier on yourself:

- Expect and accept that difficult conversations will be just that - difficult, even unpleasant. That’s normal. Don’t let it catch you off guard, and don’t think it reflects weakness on your part.
- Prepare, but don’t over-prepare. A good night’s sleep and a clear head will do you more good than a script you’ve burned into your brain.
- Try not to schedule anything else terribly stressful for an hour or so after your difficult conversation. Decompress, whether it’s over a cup of coffee or some copy-editing.
- Debrief with your boss or a trusted, carefully chosen colleague.

The bad news I have to deliver is this: If you suffer when you deliver bad news, you probably always will—and probably always should. It’s not supposed to be easy.
Tips for the Difficult Conversation

Scott Libin, Leadership and Management Faculty, The Poynter Institute

Assess the situation

- Can this relationship be saved?
- Can you be open-minded? Should you be?
- Have you come to terms with your own emotions?
- Do you know your own hot buttons?
- Ask yourself: “What if I’m mistaken?”

Set objectives

- To obtain information?
- To deliver information?
- To collaborate, plan or prepare?

Find your focus

- It’s not about the individual, it’s about behavior/performance.
- It’s not about “attitude,” it’s about actions.
- Make it manageable.
- Consider two or more short discussions, rather than one long one.
- Establish and schedule next steps.
- Summarize, review and adjourn.

Consider nonverbal factors

- Pick an appropriate time and place.
- Be mindful of position, proximity, privacy, etc.
- Use care with eye contact, body language, listening skills.

Avoid

- Debate
- Distraction
- Interruption
- Provocation
- Presumption—especially about feelings, beliefs (“You think... “)

Don’t bury the lead.
Focus on those in the room: I, we, me, you, rather than he, she, they, them.
Be prepared. Be specific. Be yourself.
Introducing the Ten Lousy Listeners

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

1. The Multitasker—Sure I’m listening. While I type. While I scan my computer screen. While I take just this one call. While I open this letter and page through these message slips. Now, what were you saying?

2. The Party Animal—Do I have a minute? Sure. Come on in and tell me what’s on your mind. I know you’ve been trying to get in to see me. Go ahead, shoot. Hey, someone else is at the door. Come on in. We’re just chatting. Always room for one more!

3. The Sentence Finisher—Stop right there, I know exactly where you are going. No need for you to finish that thought, I will. Am I smart, or what? Don’t you appreciate a boss who is efficient and supportive? Go ahead tell me—I’ll finish that sentence for you, too.

4. The Debater—Whatever you’re saying, I’ll challenge. I’m only playing devil’s advocate of course. I might be doing this to help you. Then again, I might not. How do you know? I do this all the time. Keeps people on their toes.

5. The Ann Landers—Say no more. Here’s my advice. Take it. You may not have asked for my advice. You might just have wanted me to listen to you and let you vent. You might have wanted to figure things out yourself. But how can I prove I’m a leader if I don’t jump in with a ready answer? You’re welcome.

6. The Great Philosopher—Now, let me tell you what you really mean, but on a much broader, deeper and meaningful level because it comes from me. I knew all this, by the way, without ever having asked you any follow-up questions about your thoughts or feelings. Why would that be important?

7. The Autobiographer—Ah, the story you just started brings something very important to mind: me. I’ve been there. I’ve done that. I will now tell you all about my experience since it will be so valuable to you.

8. The Clock Watcher—I’m very good at face-to-face meetings. I look at your face, then my watch face, your face, watch face....I also fidget extremely well.

9. The Speeder—You want to talk? I’m really busy so can we make it fast? I’m on my way to a meeting. Walk along with me. Can you just send me an email?

10. The Dropper—Thanks for sharing your thoughts with me. After this meeting, I promise to keep them in mind. Unfortunately, I will forget to follow up with you promptly, or perhaps ever, leaving you wondering if you dropped off my radar screen.

Do you recognize yourself among the 10? Would your staff see you in the group? Could you ask them...and listen?
Goleman’s Leadership Styles from Primal Leadership

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Daniel Goleman has written extensively on the topic of emotional intelligence and leadership. In his 2002 book, Primal Leadership, he and his co-authors draw on a global database of 3,871 executives to determine the effect of leadership styles on successful business outcomes.

Using past literature as well as their own research, the authors categorize six leadership styles and the effectiveness of each. They are:

**Visionary:** Visionary leaders remind people of the larger purpose of their work. They guide people toward meaningful goals. They inspire, are empathetic communicators, share information and make people feel included and appreciated. Goleman finds this to be the single most effective leadership style, especially when a business is adrift or in need of a turnaround.

**Coaching:** Coaching leaders excel in one-to-one connections with team members. They are good listeners, help people identify their strengths and weaknesses, help individuals set performance goals, and connect their work to achievement of those goals. They delegate, give people stretch assignments, and send a message that “I believe in you, I’m investing in you.” The authors call this an effective leadership style and one that builds employee loyalty.

**Affiliative:** Affiliative leaders promote harmony in the organization, build relationships, value the team and foster collaboration. They are praise-oriented and emphasize positive morale. Goleman says this style can be effective, especially when an organization is going through stressful times or needs to heal rifts. But it can be ineffective if the leader does not honestly address tough issues or hold people accountable.

**Democratic:** Democratic leaders solicit input from followers and get commitment through their participation. Leaders, whose followers have specific expertise they lack, may succeed by involving them closely in decision-making. Visionary leaders may succeed by enlisting followers in the implementation of their clear vision. Goleman believes this style is effective, notably when the participants are competent and decision-making isn’t bogged down by a laborious process.

**Pacesetting:** Pacesetting leaders hold and exemplify high standards of performance and consistently drive people toward improvement. Pacesetters have little patience with perceived underperformance and may appear to value outcomes more than people. Goleman says this style should be used sparingly as it can create short-term results but long-term problems, especially if it is the only style a leader employs.

**Commanding:** Commanding leaders demand immediate compliance, expect unquestioning response, keep tight control on process, and may criticize more often than they praise. At their worst, they threaten and intimidate. The authors say this style is effective only in limited
circumstances, such as dealing with truly problem employees or in a crisis or emergency situation when instant top-down decision-making must prevail.

“Leaders with the best results didn’t practice just one particular style. Rather, on any given day or week, they used many of the six distinct styles—seamlessly and in different measures—depending on the business situation.” Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, *Primal Leadership*, Harvard Business School Press.
Twenty Questions About Your Boss

Jill Geisler, Group Leader, Leadership and Management Programs, The Poynter Institute

Your relationship with your boss is built on shared values, goals and performance. Some bosses are open books, others inscrutable. No matter. It is up to you to learn as much about your manager as you can in order to make the most of your working relationship. When it comes to managing your boss, knowledge is power. Knowing the answers to these 20 questions can help you and your boss work together more effectively.

With that in mind, please fill in the blanks regarding your manager:

1. Preferred method of giving info to me is: _______________________________________________
2. Preferred method of getting info from me is: ____________________________________________
3. Biggest current pressure is: __________________________________________________________
4. First and foremost values are: ________________________________________________________
5. Biggest “hot button” is: ______________________________________________________________
6. Passion outside of work is: ___________________________________________________________
7. Has expertise in: __________________________________________________________________
8. Lacks expertise in: __________________________________________________________________
9. Vision for our organization is: _________________________________________________________
10. Would be really hurt if someone: ___________________________________________________
11. Best boss my boss ever worked for was: _____________________________________________
12. When there’s a small problem, expects me to: _________________________________________
13. When there’s a big problem, expects me to:___________________________________________
14. Will not compromise when it comes to: _______________________________________________
15. Considers a great day at work to be: _________________________________________________
16. Handles pressure by:_______________________________________________________________
17. Is respected by her/his bosses for:___________________________________________________

18. Respects others for:_______________________________________________________________

19. Has a blind spot about:___________________________________________________________

20. Thinks I’m great at:______________________________________________________________

How easily did the answers come to you? Could you answer every one with confidence? Consider meeting with your boss, asking these questions and comparing your answers. Would you feel comfortable doing that? If not, what would it take to get to that level?
Mission Statement

The Radio Television Digital News Foundation provides training programs, seminars, scholarship support and research in areas of critical concern to electronic news professionals and their audience.

As the educational arm of the Radio Television Digital News Association, RTDNF offers professional development opportunities for working and aspiring journalists and journalism educators. The Foundation’s primary objectives include:

- Promoting discussion of ethics and integrity in news coverage
- Developing leadership skills among news professionals and sound management practices in news organizations
- Encouraging diversity in news organizations and in news coverage
- Assessing the impact of technological change on the news industry
- Fostering exchanges of ideas and perspectives at the local, national and international levels
- Supporting U.S. First Amendment rights, worldwide press freedom and the public’s right to know.

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