MONTH 10:
THE CURRENT REALITY: HOW DO YOU SUPPORT AND EMPOWER LEADERS?

OBSERVE

Leaders are often visionaries. They envision a future reality, and invite others to join them in creating it. The problem with visionary leaders is that they often miss the starting point: ***what is***. They are so focused on **there** that they never take the time to evaluate and examine **here**. It is the **here** that is our starting point, and so we must take time to identify what **here** is.

The journey of multiplying leaders begins with evaluating our current reality. We need to identify the starting point so that we can invite others to join us into a new future.

The **Assessing Leadership Capacity** tool below helps identify the current reality of your organization. Take time to answer these questions honestly. Then, explore the following questions:

As you embark on the work of multiplying leaders, what assets do you bring?

What challenges must you face, and what adjustments might be necessary before you take your first steps?

IDENTIFY
Read **Matthew 23:13-34 (MSG).**

Jesus had no problem identifying his current reality when he spoke of the Pharisee system in the first century. With words like "hopeless," "roadblocks," "double-damned," and "frauds," Jesus was not in the business of trying to win friends among the Pharisees.

Instead, Jesus spoke truth about the current reality so that those around him would be inspired to join him on the journey into God's preferred future. Bringing clarity to a current situation—honestly communicating the truth, no matter how painful—is part of what leaders do to define reality.

Identifying your current reality includes sharing your findings honestly with the community in which you are leading. It can be tempting to gloss over or omit more difficult truths about your organization. But honesty will allow you to make sense of uncertainty and help others

deal with ambiguity or confusion as well. But most importantly, it will facilitate discussions about possible solutions to your challenges. This will help you move from your current reality to your preferred future. Doing the work of identifying your current reality moves the conversation out of heated, personal opinions and into the realm of observable reality. It will also help you to exercise courage as you face the challenges you have identified as part of this assessment process.

Think about the state of leadership development in your congregation. Reflect on the blunt words you might share if you were to share your thoughts and feelings without holding back. How much of what you just shared is objectively true, and how much is your personal perspective, feelings, and opinions?

Now that you've separated personal opinions from objective truth, what is the number one need that you can identify for a leadership development system in your organization or ministry placement?

APPLY
An environmental scan helps to evaluate *what is real* in your current situation. This grid provides a simple process for identifying your current reality by looking at everything from an alternative perspective.

On one side of the grid are **environmental factors**. These can be influenced by either **internal** or **external** factors. The other side of the grid identifies **tensions** in your system. Tensions can be either positive or negative. They are situations that currently exist or have the potential to exist. Tensions can be viewed as either **challenges** or **opportunities**.

Consider the following grid to help you better define your current reality regarding leadership development—how you are growing, developing, and reproducing leaders.

Tensions

	Challenges (negatives)	**Opportunities (Positives)**
Internal		
External		
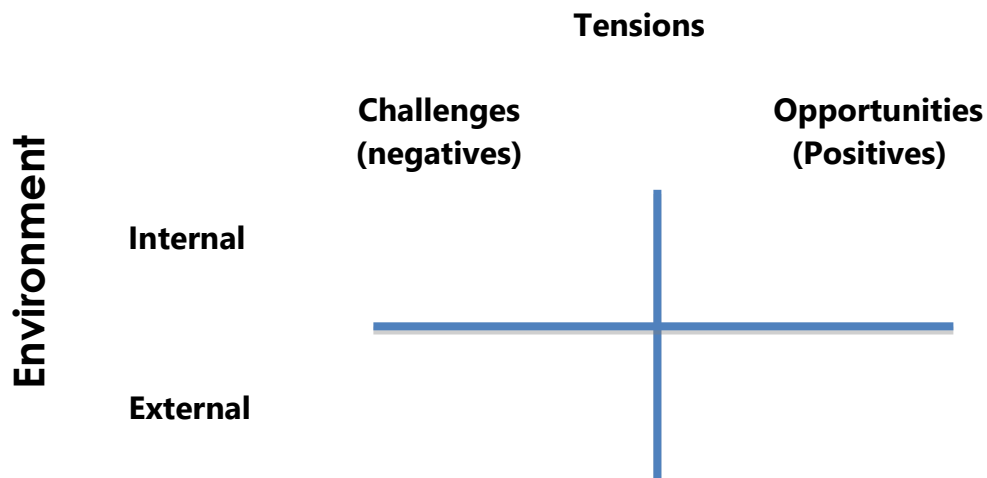
Environment

Ask yourself:

- Identify internal/external challenges.
- Identify internal/external opportunities?

With your coaching partner, share your top one or two themes/conclusions from this environmental scan.

NEXT STEPS
Leaders help to define:

- **Where we are**
- **The challenges we are facing**
- **Where we are headed**

Until we have identified where we are and what might stand in the way of moving into God's preferred future, we will struggle to create a process for getting there.

In light of your current reality and any challenges/opportunities in front of you, what kind of leader do you need? And how many?

What skills, qualities, gifts, and/or talents should they exhibit or work towards?

The more detailed you are in your responses to these questions, the greater the foundation for creating and expanding your leadership development system will be.

REFLECT
Joyce Meyer
Some people have a difficult time facing truth and reality. They prefer to live in a make-believe world, pretending that certain things aren't happening.

Oprah Winfrey
The thing you fear most has no power. Your fear of it is what has the power. Facing the truth really will set you free.

Assessing where you are as an organization means setting aside time for deep reflection on your current reality, challenges, and opportunities for transformation. Evaluating where you are as an organization also means aligning your reality with God's will.

In Genesis 1, we have the account of how God defined reality. God named a reality that included day, night, sky, earth, and seas. When we read through Scripture, we see how God

establishes moral reality through giving the law. God defines how we are to worship. God defines the standards for human behavior—how we are to live. In leadership, reality is defined through our values and decisions; the more our reality aligns with God's definition, the better it is, and the more we flourish.

Where does your current reality differ from the reality God has defined? What might you need to do to move your reality into greater alignment with God's reality?

Who do you need to talk to about building a process for developing leaders who can live out the vision of your organization? What do you need to share with them? When will you do it?

Assessing Leadership Capacity[1]

To take the first step in evaluating the current reality of your organization's leadership, rate its strength on a scale of one to ten in the following areas. Then write down one thing you will do to address any weakness. Your ratings will give you an idea of the areas on which you need to focus.

Score for each question:

We're poor performers	We're okay, but nothing to cheer about	We're at or near benchmark status

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

1) Do you know what leadership skills your organization needs to move ministry forward significantly?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

2) Does your organization have a process for identifying, assessing, and developing its next generation of leaders in all of its ministry areas?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

3) Do you have specific development plans for your high-potential leaders?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

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[1] Adapted from Douglas A. Ready and Jay A. Conger, "Make Your Company a Talent Factory," *Harvard Business Review*, June 2007, https://hbr.org/2007/06/make-your-company-a-talent-factory.

4) Are you able to deploy gifted people quickly and without significant disruption to other parts of the organization when opportunities arise?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

5) Do you have diverse and plentiful pools of gifted people who are ready, willing, and able to be deployed to new opportunities at volunteer and leadership levels within your organization?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

6) Do you have diverse and plentiful pools of leaders who are capable of moving into leadership in significant ministry areas in your organization or into new or existing staff positions?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

7) Do you offer emerging leaders developmental experiences specifically focused on preparing them for future leadership challenges within your organization?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

8) Have you, as a leader, used words or actions to unequivocally demonstrate that you are fully committed to developing leaders within your organization?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

9) Would the people around you consider you actively engaged in identifying, recruiting, and equipping emerging leaders in your organization?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?

10) Do you hold other leaders accountable for engaging in leadership development within your organization?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What will you do to strengthen your organization's capacity in this area?