



# GROWING LEADERS SESSION 7 LEADING TOGETHER



## Introduction

Session 7: Leading together explores a third key skill for leadership, working well with others. Many in leadership tend towards a solo approach to leading, whereas the New Testament offers us a different model. Leadership is best exercised in community, where complimentary gifts ensure that all that is necessary for good leadership is offered through a range of people.

It is also the case that in churches we need to work well with others in different areas of leadership to ourselves.

The participants are offered the following range of questions to explore with their mentor:

- With regard to Task, Individual, Group, where is your natural focus as a leader?
- Which areas might need addressing currently among those you lead?
- What are people's expectations in each of these areas?
- How are the levels of trust amongst leaders in your context? How could you play a part in increasing trust levels?

## Learning from Experience

Learning is a life-long process and the ability to learn as we go along – from our experience – seems an important, if not the most important life skill.

If we use our experience correctly, we cannot avoid learning from it. But 'five year's experience' may merely mean for some people the same year's experience repeated five times over. We must be active participants in the process.

### A CYCLE OF DISCOVERY

Learning by discovery is a very effective way of learning. It is the way we learn rapidly and naturally as children. This model is based on Kolb's learning cycle. There are four distinct stages.

#### 1. DIRECT EXPERIENCE

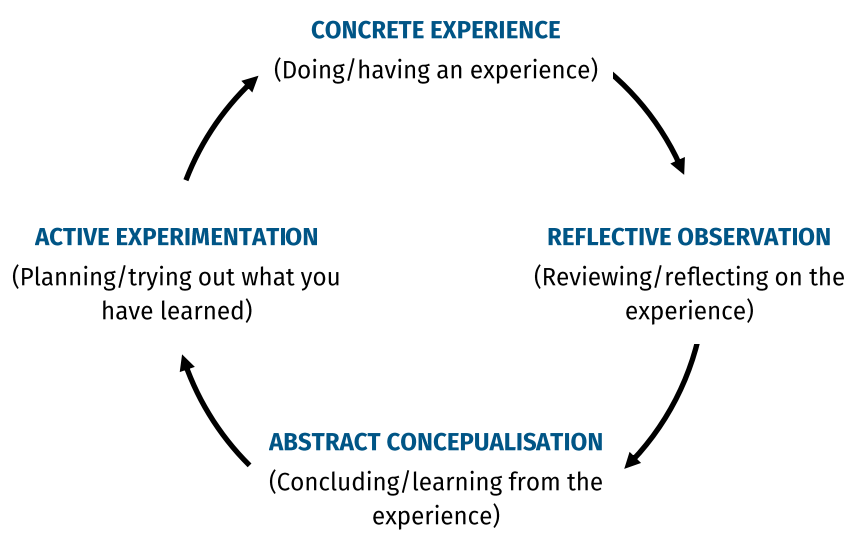
Being present at, and fully experiencing, a particular event or happening. This may be in a formal learning situation, but can be any happening in life. To learn from experience, we need to be aware of our physical, mental and emotional reactions as well as our observations of other people and things involved.

#### 2. REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

Thinking over what happened, dwelling on and thinking about the experience afterwards, making notes (mental or written) and extracting significant points of learning from it. How did it feel? Making observations, examining data. Answering the question WHAT happened?

#### 3. MAKING SENSE OF IT

Seeking to understand the experience and drawing conclusions from it; abstract conceptualisation – extracting the basic



principles from what has happened and building a theory (or relating it to someone else's theory) to explain it conceptually; comparing the current event with past experiences and attempting to generalise from them. This answers the question WHY did it happen like it did?

#### 4. PLANNING AND TRYING OUT IDEAS

Generating options, deciding on new courses of action, testing the theories and insights we have developed. What can I do differently next time to create a different (better) outcome? What will work in practice for me? Active experimentation. This answers the question SO WHAT? or WHAT NEXT?

This then leads back directly into Stage 1, where we review or test out our new ideas in a similar situation. Each time one cycle ends, a new one inevitably starts, so the learning is never-ending unless we close our minds to the experiences we accumulate through life.

#### THE MENTOR'S ROLE

One of the mentor's primary functions is to enable mentees to learn from their experience – to reflect on what is happening, to make sense of it and to decide how to act, in order to produce a different (better) outcome in a similar situation in the future.

Questions that assist mentees in working round the Learning Cycle are among the most useful contributions mentors can make. Focus on helping them gain clarity about where they are on the cycle and then help them to move on to the next stage.

### Resource recommendation

#### INTENTIONAL MENTORING, PAUL WILCOX (INSTANT APOSTLE)

Paul spends his time mentoring lots of people and brings a great deal of experience to the subject. Lots of practical ideas and helpful insights make this a great resource for those wanting to develop their mentoring skills.



'EVERY LIFE EXPERIENCE AFFORDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN.'

Growing Leaders  
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