



# GROWING LEADERS SESSION 8 EMBRACING COST



## Introduction

Session 8: Embracing cost begins part three of the course, keeping faithful in Christian leadership. In this session we take an honest look at the cost of being in Christian leadership.

We have found that many people enter a Christian leadership role with a rather naive view of what it will be like, and they quickly become disillusioned. Yet a careful study of both the Bible and Church history reveals that suffering and hardship are the norm for Christian leaders, not the exception.

The main exercise in this session is to write a letter to a younger leader about some of the costs of leadership. You may like to ask your mentee to share this with you, and then use it as a way-in to some of the issues it might be helpful to explore in your session.

They are invited to explore the following with their mentors:

- What are the things about leadership you struggle with most?
- What can you do to deal well with these things?

**'WHAT I HADN'T SPOTTED WAS THAT MY THOUGHT PATTERNS HAD BECOME ENTRENCHED AND THE ROAD I WAS TRAVELLING ALONG HAD BECOME WORN DOWN INTO A RUT. I WAS STUCK. AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT.'**



- How can you develop others in leadership in a way that helps them understand the cost?

## Sticky Times

Most of us get stuck at some point in life. An intractable problem in our work situation. A relationship that has gone sour. A personal issue we've grappled with for years. A character flaw where we long to see change.

Getting 'stuck' is a common issue. Indeed, most people have an area where they are stuck. This may be big or small, short or long term. So how can we help?


### IDENTIFYING 'STUCKNESS'

Often a participant will know where they are stuck, and a simple question will identify the area. 'If you were to identify an area of your life where you feel stuck, what would it be?'

But there are those occasions when the person doesn't actually realise they are stuck. This happened to me recently. Over a number of years I'd been grappling with a particular issue and according to my mentor doing a reasonable job of it. I'd talked openly about the issues, asked friends to pray and offer counsel, poured my heart out to God, and kept a watch out for those insidious dangers of frustration leading to bitterness, taking shortcuts leading to sin, and confusion leading to doubt.

What I hadn't spotted was that my thought patterns had become entrenched and the road I was travelling along had become worn down into a rut. I was stuck. And I didn't know it. And we all know that the difference between a rut and a grave is only six feet.

My mentor, having listened carefully to me over the course of a year, eventually made this comment 'James, as I listen to you I wonder if you have got stuck in a fruitless place and need to move on?' I wasn't quite sure what she meant, so asked my mentor to say a bit more. 'Difficult places are



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often the places where we grow most. It is here God does his refining work in our lives, invites us to greater trust and dependence on him, but sometimes we get stuck in a particular place when God is actually inviting us to move on. I think you might be there.'

Now it is hard to describe how these simple words impacted me. They came as divine revelation with lightning bolt tendencies. By which I mean – I knew they were right. As I sat there I could literally feel a sense of release. The last few months have been wonderfully different.

There are those occasions when a person is stuck and needs someone to point it out to them. Ask yourself: 'As I've got to know my mentee over past months, is there an area where I think they are stuck and may not realise it?' And if you do prayerfully identify an area, take courage and sensitively offer it to them.

## Resource Recommendation

### MENTORING FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH, TONY HORSFALL (BRF)

Tony offers us a helpful introduction to mentoring for spiritual growth. The author is clear the book is about spiritual direction, and certainly the focus throughout is on this practice, but there is so much good material it would be a pity if it was only read by those interested in spiritual direction per se.

Each chapter is a short, simple, sensitive reflection on a different aspect of the mentoring relationship. As someone who has read fairly extensively on the subject, I think this is one of the best introductions to mentoring I've read. And it is written by a British author!

The book covers the topic in a systematic way – what is mentoring, the biblical historical background, qualities/skills/tools of a mentor, and the process of mentoring. The chapter on Roadmaps and Guidebooks is particularly helpful in offering four different ways of identifying where someone might be on their faith journey. Whilst we are not operating as a spiritual director, there is much good material in here for GL mentors.

## UNSTICKING STUCKNESS

Once the area is identified, what next? As a mentor our job isn't to 'solve the problem' for them, but rather to offer them a sounding board to work on the issue. Here are few simple things we can do:

- **Explore the issue** Why do you think you are stuck in this area? What does it feel like to be stuck in this area of your life?
- **Find the root** What is at the root of this place of stuckness?
- **Look for release** What would help you move forward? What would hold you back from moving forward? What would it feel like to be unstuck?
- **Identify a first step** What one thing could you do to move on in the next month?
- **Offer to pray** What would you like me to pray for you in this area?

Sometimes the issues are so big that people need professional help, and our role is to encourage them to find such help. On other occasions it is a long term issue, and we need to avoid simplistic suggestions of easy progress. Yet for many, getting unstuck is a process that brings amazing release and an ability to move on.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

It is good to remind ourselves in all these things of the power of prayer. God longs to bring freedom in leader's lives. He is more than capable of releasing people from things that have held them for a long time.

Let's never underestimate the importance of bringing these things to God. Pray for your participant when you are with them, and as much as you are able when you aren't.



Growing Leaders  
[www.cpas.org.uk](http://www.cpas.org.uk)  
[admin@cpas.org.uk](mailto:admin@cpas.org.uk)  
0300 123 0780