

By Teri Traaen Ed. D.P.A.
December 2012

Dear Colleagues:

The final quarter of each year brings a time for contemplation for each of us as leaders in terms of how we have done in reaching not only the business goals allocated to us by our employer, but often (and more importantly) whether we have refined and successfully lead our team in ways that reflect innovation and compassion. Note the use of the terms, innovation and compassion, in framing our individual perception of success in the role of leader. It is easy to become limited by the sameness of repeating what lingers in our leadership styles that reflect past choices and comfort zone behaviors. Often, this is reinforced within organizations where quiet continuity is sought above all else. However, a key question in reviewing the strategy of your leadership style is whether you are simply seeking reduction of personal anxiety or the escalation of team performance in relationship to the work that you are engaged in performing. Listed below are several key questions that may assist you in a personal, year-end analysis of your performance as a leader:

1. Specifically, what **advanced** innovation skill building have you completed in the last 12 months? How have you translated this to your personal leadership style? How have you taught this methodology to your team/subordinates?
2. What form of 360 degree (performance input from sources who are peers, subordinates and supervisors) feedback have you sought and used during the last 24 months? What was the most significant knowledge that you gained about your own performance as a result of this process?
3. How have you measured the impact of your ability to build relationships versus negatively impact relationships and the effect of your behavior on your organization's business goals?
4. What are your limitations in the work environment? How have you built a team that serves to help overcome these limitations?
5. Are you still growing in the development of your advanced leadership skills? If not and you believe that you have hit a plateau, why are you choosing to remain in your current role?

Select a time where you can review these questions at least twice each year. Scribe your responses and revisit this written journal of your progress as often as necessary. Life is too short to remain stuck in old patterns of leadership. We wish you and your team members only the very best for 2013.