

ACADEMIC

Developing Leadership Capacity

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Interviewed by: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: As a journal, we are focused on the connection between character and leadership, and the kind of interdependence that they have. I know there's a lot of great work being done out there on leadership, lots of great work on character, but not a lot regarding their fusion. One of the things that we really, really focus on is the practical nature to it. We are evidence-based, but we really want to focus on accessibility, because the majority of our readership are not just military, but they're leaders - they're bench level leaders, in addition to leaders at all levels. So, we can put out some great science, but if we keep it just at the science level and don't get down to the "so what," we oftentimes lose that connected piece. We get a young second lieutenant, a young mid-level manager, they don't always understand the science and why it matters. So that's really where we try to spend most of our time.

Riggio: I think that's very important and something I've been doing the last few years.

Lindsay: Every October, we do a special issue of the journal and it's focused just on conversations with leaders and thought leaders like yourself. What we found is if we do interviews, it became very choppy. But, when we started

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having conversations, there was an interplay, and there was a lot to be learned in through the conversation, in that narrative. Besides podcasts, there really isn't not a lot of space out there to capture that essence of really why people got to where they are, what influenced them along the way. We aim to help fill that space. With that in mind, do you mind sharing a little bit about your journey how you ended up wanting to be in this space?

Riggio: Absolutely. I started out at Santa Clara University as an undergrad. At the time, the biggest major was business. So just by osmosis, I did audit a couple of business courses. I actually audited one with leadership expert, Barry Posner. I had an interest in the business world on the side, but I emphasized social psychology. So when I went to graduate school, I focused on social psychology and I was really interested in social problems, environmental issues, and things like that. I was frustrated with the clinical psychology approach of one-on-one, helping one person, and wanted to do something bigger. Interestingly, in graduate school, I ended up doing research primarily in nonverbal communication and relationships. We were looking at individual differences in nonverbal communication skill. For example, the skilled person who can walk into a room and light up the room, that kind of thing. While I was doing that research, my advisor at the time, Howard Friedman said, "I think what we're doing when we're looking at these people who are really skilled non-verbally and able to communicate emotionally, I think we're capturing what people call charisma." Naturally, I'm a serious graduate student, and charisma is kind of a pop term. So, I rejected that initially. But then I thought, "Okay. Well, let me investigate this." At the time, the only people who were doing any work on charisma were people like Bob House and Bernie Bass, who were looking at charismatic leadership, and then later Jay Conger, who is now my colleague. I started

sort of going down that path of looking at what I called "personal charisma," - what was that potential? It led me into leadership, obviously, and so I started merging those two.

At the time, I was at Cal State Fullerton. It was primarily a teaching university. I was teaching Industrial-Organizational (I/O) psychology and social psychology. I did leadership research as kind of a side hobby, but I was really focusing on individual differences in nonverbal communication. Then this position at Claremont McKenna College came up for this very new leadership institute, to become the director of that. I applied for the position, and I think I partly got it because they weren't sure if it was going to take off. They just wanted to get a leadership guy, so they thought, "Well, if it fails, he can fall back and teach social psychology."

We were wildly successful here. David Day is now the director, and before that, Jay Conger was director for a short time. What happened, is that my hobby became my passion. I started studying leadership, because I thought, "Wow, I'm really interested in human relationships and leadership." It's so multifaceted from the relationship aspect, that it's sort of a natural for a social psychologist to study. So, that's how I got into the field.

Lindsay: I find that journey interesting because the successful people I talk to, if they were to draw a line from where they started to where they thought they were going to be, 99% of the time it's not the path they thought. Not even close. It's that idea of somewhere along the way, something struck them that they're like, "This is really fascinating. This is really interesting. I can see myself doing this." And through a series of fortuitous situations or opportunities, they kind of ended up there. When I was talking with Dave Day,

or Barbara Kellerman, or Cynthia Cherrey of the International Leadership Association (ILA), it's the same thing. It's not that you ever expect yourself to kind of be where you are, but that passion has an important role on where you're at.

Riggio: Exactly. I think very few people sort of go down that path. I mean, I think about members of my own family, my siblings, and it's not a straight line. They end up in completely different places from where they started up.

Lindsay: I think that's one of the beauties of humaneness. It's not always that script that we think, "Oh, I have to do this, I have to follow this path," it's much more organic than that. Which, I think depending upon where you start from, it's actually kind of an encouraging situation, that you're not always locked into where you think you have to be, or there's just one path to success. The reality is, there's our path to success enhanced by the relationships we build along the way.

Riggio: Absolutely. I think the big thing for anybody going into their future career is to just build your skill set, and you'll find that the skills that you build early on, really do apply in a lot of different instances. So, in my case, research skills help you to do research in any topic. Then it becomes easier to switch topics. But also, there's all kinds of skills that you can gather up and hone, and it opens up opportunities. So it's all about learning.

Lindsay: I think you're right, because in the beginning, we tend to think more of the hard skills, more of the knowledge base. It's more about what we know or what we're going to do with that knowledge. I know you've written immensely on this, and what you've been talking about now is the power of the

relationship and the power of the soft skills, to not to neglect those either. It's almost like that educational piece is our ticket to the event, but it's what we do then with that knowledge, in terms of how we lead others and do that, is really what helps us become successful down the road, right?

Riggio: Yes. What I find with the soft skills, going back to kind of my non-verbal roots, is that people aren't very aware of how they're communicating non-verbally. A lot of that is just, sort of holding a mirror up to them, or in some cases videoing them. It really makes a difference. I mean, the expression of emotions and your ability to read other people's emotions. A big topic right now is empathy and leadership, and leaders who demonstrate empathic concern for other people. Actually, we've got a team of undergraduates, and they've kind of latched on to that, and that's what they're doing research on right now.

Lindsay: Leaders who kind of get it understand development is a lifelong journey. It's something where they're always reading, always learning and always doing that, but we know not all leaders do that. What have you found to be successful in helping to shine the light on those leaders that maybe don't get that empathy, that emotional intelligence, that relational piece? Is it through assessment? How do you help leaders get over themselves and understand that better?

Riggio: We have a Silicon Valley program, and I'm going to spend a couple days with them, and talk to them about leader development. One thing is to sort of have a plan and have a model that you can follow. The model that I use, and I worked with Bernie Bass on, transformational leadership, and not that it's the end all, be all model of leadership, but I find it very useful. The core of transformational leadership is really about two kinds of transformation. So you want to transform

your team in a way that, as Bass said, "To perform beyond expectations, to get things done." That's normally what most leaders focus on. We want to build a great team, and the goal is to be highly productive and to be a star group and get things done. But the second transformation, is doing it through your people, through followers, through your team members. All too often, leaders forget about that. There's two goals. It's not just getting things done, but it's also developing the people you're working with, increasing their capacity to lead. Because in the long run, it's going to make you a more efficient leader if you share the leadership with the team members, with the folks around you. And at the same time, by delegating to them, by empowering them, you're going to develop their capacity, and so that's going to take care of the next generation when you move on and these folks, the ones you're leading,

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are going to move into leadership roles. And so, I think the first thing is to realize that you've got two things you need to do. You need to perform, you need to get the job done, but you also need to develop people. Certainly for the military, that's really critical.

Lindsay: That is critical. If you just focus on the performance piece, you can do that in every transactive way. You can use rewards, inducements, punishments, all that kind of stuff, and you can get a certain level of performance. You'll get compliance, but you won't necessarily get commitment. I definitely agree with that second piece, that transformational is about understanding the leader's role to develop leadership

capacity in their people. It not only serves the individuals well, but actually will get them probably better performance down the road anyway. But it's interesting how many leaders just tend to focus on the job and performance, and not understand development. I think senior leaders get to that point or they get weeded out. They understand that if they're not building that capacity in their people, they're missing the boat and they're going to fall behind very quickly. If you talk about Silicon Valley, you'll fall behind your peers and your near peers very quickly if you don't understand that development at all levels.

Riggio: Absolutely. And that's the sort of Bass and Avolio work that they did on transformational leadership. They said transactional leadership is fine, we need to be transactional. But transformational, by empowering the team members to share in the leadership, to take an active role, to increase the commitment, as you said, you're going to get performance beyond the transactional elements. You're going to get a higher level of performance, but at the same time, you're going to build this leadership capacity in your team. So it's a win-win situation.

Lindsay: It is, and it's fascinating that not everybody gets that. They don't always see that extra step. They see it as a cost, "Oh, I've got to do this," or as we see in leader development a lot of times, "I'll just send them off to a workshop," and then come back and everything will be magically better without really building that developmental culture within the organization.

Riggio: And that's critically important. When you talk about leadership, you've got to think about the situation. Does the situation support what you're trying to get them to do? All too often I've seen different kinds

of training programs fail because the leaders don't get it, don't understand it, and don't support it. Their people go learn something, leaders don't support it, so it isn't put into practice.

Lindsay: Either they don't like you said, learn it, or the organization is not set up to reward or encourage that type of behavior. It's kind of leader development versus leadership development. There's the individual component of it, but there also has to be an organizational part? Are we hiring in the exact leaders that we want and putting them into a culture that gives us the exact opposite of what we want? It kind of kills their dream and development early on when they go, "Oh, that's how we really do things around here."

Riggio: And a lot of times, it's really sort of lip service. I worked with this organization, and they were going to a new facility. All around they painted their value statements on the wall for the big facility. HR, and the CHRO told me, "We don't practice any of these. That's why we called you." I said, "Well, you've got to do work from the ground up. You can't just paint it on the walls and expect people to absorb it through osmosis." So we said, "We have got to talk to the leaders, because the leaders have to embody these values if you try to pass them on to the workforce."

Lindsay: And that's incredibly difficult, because it's very easy to throw money at a situation and go, "Oh, we spend millions of dollars every year on development," and then just kind of look at it as checking a box. But it's a challenge for some organizations, because the leaders that are at the senior levels, assuming they grew up in the organization, grew up in a very different environment than what may be needed today. So it's very hard for them to make those mental model shifts of, "Well, this is what I did to be successful," but

realizing that that may not be what's needed today in today's virtual and inclusive and diverse, and all those things that fit in today's work environment. It's different than 30 or 40 years ago when the individual started in the organization. Right?

Riggio: Yes, and that puzzled me. When I started out really getting into I/O psychology, management, organizational behavior, I would often run into these higher-level leaders, managers in the business world, and they would say things like, "Well, I learned this in my MBA, but I haven't opened a book since." And I thought, "Wow. You've got responsibility for people." My dad was an MD, and he was always studying. In fact, he's been retired for 20 years, and he still gets journals and reads them to keep up. I thought, "I would never want to go to a doctor who said, "Oh yeah, I went to medical school 25 years ago, and I haven't picked up a book since." Why would you go to that person? It's the same thing for managers. Now times have changed, because that was a long time ago, and now we do spend a lot of money on leader development, and training for the team members too. But are we getting the bang for the buck? Are we getting our money's worth for all that money that we're spending that you mentioned? I think we have to think about how to do this well, efficiently, and then get good return on investment.

Lindsay: The return on investment is the tough one, because you have multiple stakeholders and constituencies. I come from a psychology I-O background as well, and we know development takes time, and it's not always about profit and loss. It's an investment that is ongoing, but we tend to look sometimes at our cycles of performance in much shorter periods of time. We've got to not get rid of one for the other. We throw money at leader development, and we think, "Okay, we're going to be better next quarter,"

and it's not always that way. Especially, when we're talking about development or changing cultures, or in your consulting work going into an organization and go, "Hey, Dr. Riggio, help us figure out what's going wrong." That's an incredibly complex question.

Riggio: It is. There is an issue I get about consulting with a lot of more traditional firms. They're kind of problem solvers. But you really need to help the organization with more of the organizational development orientation of helping the organization so that they can develop the capacity to solve their own problems going forward, because otherwise what you're doing is creating dependency. The analogy is, if you're a parent, you don't want to solve all your kids' problems, you want to teach them how to solve their own problems, because they're going to have to stand on their own two feet eventually.

Lindsay: Or live at home for a really long time. It's kind of that balance that you want to do. We look at the medical community and we say, "Okay, that's a profession." There's certainly an ongoing continuing education that goes with that. It gets to some of the stuff that Barbara Kellerman has been talking about, with leadership as a profession. What is it that we're doing to help people understand that it's not so much that position, it's the development, it's the ongoing nature? What are we continuing to do and study that is going to help us continue to grow over our lifespan?

Riggio: You're absolutely right, and that was the point. Way back I was thinking, "Wow, why do most managers not think of themselves as professionals in the same way that the doctors and lawyers do with continuing education, continuing development?" The best leaders I know, and we get exposed to a lot of CEO and C-Suite level people because of being in a leadership

institute, and the better ones are the ones that, when we say, "Well, why are you interested in what we're doing?" They're going, "Because I want the latest and greatest. I want exposure to what research is finding in terms of leadership development, so that we can implement it in our organization, so I can become a better leader." These are very senior people. So you can easily spot the really great leaders, because they're the ones who say, "I don't know it all, I need to keep learning."

Lindsay: Right, they're the ones that have a reading list, examining professional periodicals, or are listening to podcasts. They're trying to figure it out, and they're staying connected in that way. I have to admit, that was one of the things that drew me to the field of I-O psychology. That connectedness to the field, that kind of ongoing, desire to want to be able to learn, but learn with a purpose. It's not always perfect, no field is perfect, but just that focus that everybody's kind of trying to do this together, I just thought was fascinating.

Riggio: I don't do much consulting anymore, but earlier in my career, I did a lot. One of the things I used to notice if I went into the office of the decision-maker, I looked on their bookshelf and if I saw books that I knew, I mean higher level stuff, I thought, "This person gets it, and so we're going to move forward." If I looked and considered the bookshelf kind of pathetic, and there wasn't a lot of leadership or management good work on there, I thought, "Wow, they're not going to hire me because they don't get it."

Lindsay: That is something that I generally ask most leaders in these types of conversation is, "What does your individual leader development look like? I know you're in the classroom, you're going to conferences, doing that kind of stuff, but what does your individual leader development look like? You're

very senior, you're obviously knowledgeable and at the top of the profession, what do you do to stay connected and excited about what's coming down the pike on leadership and leader development?

Riggio: I think that's an important issue, and I think I didn't get that until I came here. It was that kind of labeling, that self-identification as a leader. Because I think as a faculty member, you don't think very much about that you're in a leadership position, because you just don't think that broadly. You go and you teach your classes, and you do research and all that. But I think what really brought it home to me, that sort of "aha" experience, was when people started saying, "Well, you're running this institute, you're in a leadership position, what's your leadership mantra? What kind of leader are you?" That sort of thing. I started saying, "You know what? I need to accept this better. I need to work every day on my own development when I'm in a leadership position." I think being a professor too, being a teacher, what can I learn that can make the experience in the classroom better? What can I learn that can really sort of charge the students up? So I try to constantly do that. The other thing too with the COVID situation, and we went to online teaching, I got kind of excited about it, because I said, some of the things that are working online, might actually work when we go back. We actually had the first day of class today. Going back in the classroom, what new things did I learn from online teaching that will translate into the live classroom? So, I'm kind of actually excited about the sort of a silver lining of having to go to remote teaching.

Lindsay: I like that aspect of it because what you're hitting on is kind of that idea of our identity, seeing ourselves as a leader, not just an educator, but a broader aspect of how do we view ourselves? We've got to view

ourselves as a leader, not just a manager. I think it's easy for people to see that manager role, but not necessarily that idea of, "Well, I'm low in the organization, I'm not really a leader." But the sooner people can understand that idea of identity formation, that, "Yeah, I am a leader even though I don't supervise thousands of people, but I can still be a leader on my team, I can still be a leader in my group, whatever that is." Once you kind of get that aspect, the development piece kind of naturally flows from it.

Riggio: That's kind of a nice segue into the other area that I've been really interested in, and it's followership. How do you develop as a follower, your own sort of leadership? How do you play that role in the best possible way? That transition, I think, was really important to me. I've done a lot of work and done some research, and we had a conference that was one of the first conferences on followership. There's sort of a community that's saying, "Look, not everyone's going to be a leader." In fact, the vast majority of people are really more in this kind of follower role, this team member role, and how can they best develop so that they share the leadership? In a lot of ways now, there's some new work coming out saying, "How can followers make their leaders better? How can the followers impact their leaders and keep them on the right path, make sure that the collective, the team, is doing as much as they could possibly do?"

Lindsay: To be able to support one another. You mentioned earlier about the leader trying to develop leadership capacity or share capacity within the team. But we also know that that goes upward. We can lead up into the organization. I think sometimes people get that confused as a bit of a false dichotomy of either you're a leader or a follower. But they're not mutually exclusive. I can be in both roles at the same time, where I'm going to be a follower certainly, but then I

can still have some leadership impact leading around to my peers. That's one of the things that's always been fascinating about the military culture. I spent 22 years in the Air Force and now I still work for the Air Force on the civilian side, but that idea of 100% of our senior leaders grew up in the organization. I mean, many organizations would love that. 100% of our senior leaders started in our organization. We get to grow them literally from day one. In a way, there's kind of a beauty there, because you literally get to have impact over every aspect that happens. The challenge with that too, is back to some of the other things that we've talked about too is, how do we get people to think about themselves as a leader when they're a follower in a very hierarchical organization, that they are also a leader? Or how do we infuse new knowledge and information and development when we know that our general officers of tomorrow, takes us 25 to 30 years to grow? That transitioning between thinking about myself as a leader, the identity, the transition from follower to leader, and kind of in between. All of those things are very, very important.

Riggio: Exactly, and that leads to another area that needs a lot more attention is really understanding, what does it mean to be an exemplary follower? I was talking to Jay Conger a while back, and we were saying, "What are the skills of a leader, and what's the overlap skills that followers need to have? And then what's the unique set?" We sort of thought of it as a Venn diagram. And then he brought up entrepreneurship. He said, a lot of entrepreneurs have certain kinds of qualities too that overlap with leadership. But they're unique, and so creativity may be more important for entrepreneurship than for leadership, and maybe creativity in followers may take different paths. So anyway, it's complicated. I think that's the interesting thing about studying leadership is it really is fantastically complex. I started

out studying interpersonal relationships. Well, they're pretty simple compared to leader-follower relationships. I think the interesting thing about leadership is if you think about it, so you have your boss, the person you report to, and they're a leader. But we also have leaders at a distance. So our political leaders have an impact on our lives, but we may never see those people. So that's why leadership is so sort of multi-layered, that it really impacts us a lot of times, and we don't even realize we're being impacted by it.

Lindsay: Or who we're impacting and who we're impacted by until sometimes we sit back and do some reflection. Because we're so busy, we are not always good at going back and thinking about those that may have had an influence on us or helped us on that journey. We tend to think, "Oh, this is what I did," versus, "This is what influenced me." Kind of that whole leader-follower situation thing, where we sometimes discount the strength of that situation, or others that had an influence on us.

Riggio: Yes, and we can think about that we all have role models that we sort of follow, and in a way, they're developing us but they may not even know us. Everybody has sort of the hero, and they want to have those same qualities, and so that person may be impacting their development, but they are not even aware of it.

Lindsay: I also learned that part of development is looking at some of those less effective leaders, some of those leaders that didn't actually do the right thing or make what we would think would be the right call. How did they deal with it? How did they manage that? How did they lead through that? That kind of gets into that idea, I think of character. When we talk about leadership at the academy, our focus is on developing

leaders of character, people who lift others, who live honorably, and who elevate performance.¹ So it's not about being perfect, but it's about where we're coming from, or how do we react to those situations, or how do we overcome a negative situation?

Riggio: Those are the lessons we learn from failure. We learn better lessons and we learn more from our failures than our successes. Because when we're successful, we often don't reflect on it. But when we fail, we really reflect on it, and we try to figure out, and particularly if we're motivated to be better, then we think, "Gosh, I don't want to do that again. I don't want to screw up again. So how can I avoid that in the future?" That's where the real learning takes place. You don't often reflect and say, "Oh, okay, another day, I satisfied my goals. What was it that made me satisfy my goals?" You just take it for granted.

Lindsay: You are right, we just kind of move on. I think that's where that idea of the identity, that idea of not just, "That was painful, I don't want to go through that again," but also that kind of higher level processing of, "I want to be at my best for my team. I want them to be successful as well. I don't want to let them down or be the weakest link on my team. When I see how hard they're performing, I want to make sure that I'm working just as hard if not harder." Right?

Riggio: Exactly. I'm actually working with a group right now, and we're trying to look at this idea of, all too often, when we measure outcomes, we actually are measuring the team's outcomes. So we sort of think of performance/productivity and we measure, what's the team output? If we want to talk about the climate, we measure their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction with

the team. We don't think about it in the sense of the unit, so what we've been talking about is shared leader-follower outcomes. What are the elements where the two have to work together? We are coming up with terms like synergy. Is there a leader-follower synergy? Is there chemistry? We focus on the more proximal elements of what the team is doing. Right? What's going on in the process that leads to the outcome? The idea is if there's synergy, you get higher performance. If there's chemistry, people are more satisfied, both the leaders and followers are satisfied with the team performance. That's one of the things we're working on, because all too often we say, "Okay, the leader pulls this lever, and the followers do X, and they produce X." There's a whole lot going on between what the leader does, and the outcome.

We learn better lessons and we learn more from our failures than our successes. Because when we're successful, we often don't reflect on it.

Lindsay: So, the impact of the synergy with performance, but also looking at the importance of the chemistry and satisfaction. There are different outcomes, and there are different impacts on an organization. Someone may be satisfied, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're going to be your best performer. Or someone may be your best performer, but you're running them into the ground and they are clearly not satisfied. That is critical to understand those differential impacts. I'm assuming trying to figure out what that looks like, maybe what some indicators are, how to even measure that, that's got to be interesting to go down that road.

¹ For more information on the Leader of Character Framework at the United States Air Force Academy, please refer to: <https://www.usafa.edu/character/>

Riggio: It is. My daughter, who is in tech in Silicon Valley, one of the things that happened was when they moved to remote, they actually were getting more done, they were more productive. She stopped and said, "Yeah, we're being productive, but we're doing the same thing. What we need to do is really reflect on how can we do this better, not how can we do more of it? We can always do more, but we're exhausting the limits on doing more of the same thing. How can we do it better so that we can be more efficient?" She was talking about things like machine learning and AI, and things like that. Can we take the human element out of it, and be even more productive, but have less of a toll on our people?

Lindsay: That's an interesting perspective because, from an organizational standpoint, if people move to remote and they're being more productive, a natural reaction is, "I'll just shove more work at them, so that if they did eight hours of work in six hours, well, that's two hours of increased capacity that I can now put in there." But it gets back to, I think, one of the points that you mentioned earlier that was, moving to that virtual teaching, and now jumping back into the classroom, we have a really special opportunity there to kind of change our mental model a little bit about traditional classroom education in terms of what might that look like. Not just continue what I've done before, but how might I change how I show up, how can I structure my class? What might the syllabus or assignments look like? We have these inflection points sometimes, like COVID, that force us to look at things I think in a little bit different way. This has been a great conversation. With all of what we have talked about, what advice would you have in terms of maybe young leaders who are just starting out? And we've talked through several things already today with that aspect, but what advice would you have for young leaders who are wanting to

develop and understand their role as a leader? What would you say to them?

Riggio: The obvious thing when you're talking about any kind of development, is you have got to have a plan. So, you want to figure out, what is it that you want to focus on? Then you have got to realize it's going to be really hard work. Look at exercise or something like that as kind of an analogy. If you want to get in better shape, you want to lose 20 pounds, or whatever, you have got to have a plan. You have to have goals and you have to measure it. It's the same thing when it comes to development. When we focus on leadership development, those are exactly the elements we're looking at. So where are you now?... get some assessment, and we are big on assessment.

You can do this at the individual level, sort of take stock, reflect on, where am I now? What are my skills? How good am I? You may have to get some feedback to do that and get that baseline. Then have a plan, something that you can follow, and then make sure you work at it on a regular basis. We could say every day, but the idea is to work on it on kind of on a weekly basis. And actually, and I'm not plugging my own stuff, but I thought about this during COVID and kind of being locked out. So, my latest book is actually called *Daily Leadership Development*. What I tried to do was take all these sort of little pieces and lessons that I learned, and wrote this book for my students, so that after they graduate, they can continue to work on their leadership development. So, I'm giving it to them when they graduate, and the idea is, it's five minutes of reading each day and with some exercises or with some ideas about what you could do today to become a better leader. The idea was to try to give them a plan, somehow get them to working at it on a regular basis. The first thing I say is, "You can do it day-to-day, or you can do it in a week long chunk or whatever, but just keep

working on this." All those things we know like assess so that you know what the gains are. When you need help, get help. Things like that.

One of the things, and I know you talked to Dave Day about this, but we've been hiring professional coaches for our students because we realize they need that guidance. They're college students, and they benefit from having someone who can give them some feedback, and give them some professional ideas and some encouragement. That's the way you're going to get better. It's just not going to happen through osmosis.

Lindsay: No, it's not. One of the other people that I interviewed for this issue of the JCLD is Tom Kolditz down at the Doerr Institute. That is one of the things they've done and I know West Point has done that as well. They've really seen the value of the coaching skill, being able to sit down with, and not just a mentor, not someone in your chain of command, but somebody external to sit there and kind of talk through this process about development, because it is a very organic process that can be very powerful. I actually do coaching as well, because I found it to be very rewarding, but also to help my own awareness as a leader in terms of how I approach things.

That idea of that daily leadership development is critical, because it highlights the importance of the intentionality of it. If you want to go run a marathon, you're not just going to go out and run a marathon. It would be very painful and less enjoyable than if you have a plan, you have some intentionality toward it. In fact, you are likely to fail. Development is like that. We grow in our ability to kind of understand, reflect awareness, but you have to have that intentionality, you've got to have that purpose, that game plan, like you talked about, that assessment, the ongoing nature of it.

Riggio: You hit it right on the head too. You'll run that marathon, but if you don't build up to it, you ran it, now you're exhausted, but what have you developed in the long run? You don't have that increased capacity, that's got to be developed over time. I think a big issue too, is leadership is pretty abstract, and how do you develop it? What I try to do is break it down into its components. I've mentioned I'm going to teach in Silicon Valley, and we have limited time up there, because in the Silicon Valley program, they're doing full-time internships. They are going to school full-time, but what I try to do is break down leadership, because I don't have that much time with them. I say, "Okay, here are some basic building blocks that you can work on." One of them is character. One of the things we spend a lot of time on is ethical leadership. I challenge them to think about ethics and character in their own life. I do this exercise where I have them, "Here's the exploding car scenario." They can always solve those. Then I bring it home, and I say, "Okay, here's something going on at campus. What are you going to do?" They blow the whistle on the exploding car, if they're at their job, in this scenario, this made up scenario. They have a harder time bringing it home and doing the right thing on campus. I hope that from that they look at it and go, "Sure, I can solve an ethical problem in theory on paper, but how does it relate to my own life, and will I be able to be a better person and make better decisions at home, not just on paper?"

Lindsay: I think it's very easy to kind of project ourselves in those crucible moments of a life or death type situation and what am I going to do. Versus the ones that maybe have ultimately a longer term, just as significant impact, but it might be like you said, on campus. I know there are these issues that are going on, but what am I going to do about it? That really resonates with me because I like what Hogan and Kaiser talked about with the notion of, "Who

you are, is how you lead.” It gets back to your early work on individual differences. We lead from who we are. It’s that authenticity, that genuineness, that having empathy.

I can’t fake empathy because the people around me won’t buy into it because they know it’s not genuine. So it’s that ability of, like you’ve been talking about, is I’ve got to understand who I am, how I’m showing up, to understand that my leadership is going to be a byproduct of that. Some of that is skill, how I communicate, how I make decisions, how I interact, but a lot of it is how I walk into that situation. Am I thinking about how I can use people or what I can do for people (more transactional)? Am I going to get performance out of them? Am I going to help them develop so they can do that?

Riggio: It’s critically important. That’s why I was drawn to your journal because of the character aspect, because I think that’s just critically important.

“It goes back to Aristotle, it goes back to cardinal virtues, that a good leader is only going to be good if they’re a good person. So, don’t try to reinvent the wheel.”

Lindsay: I appreciate that, and I think you don’t see a lot of it out there. There are some pieces like what Marvin Berkowitz is doing with character education, but we really like the fusion of the character and leadership, and what does that look like in practice? How am I caring for my people? What am I doing? It’s not just about the mission, although the mission

is critically important, but what am I thinking about in terms of people? So we really focus on the fusion of character and leadership and how they come together.

You are connected across the leadership field in terms of editorial boards and your position, so as you think about leadership moving forward, are there any exciting trends or areas, and you mentioned empathy earlier, that you’re excited to see how that fits into leadership development and education as we move forward?

Riggio: I think the biggest thing is that idea that we’ve spent so much time focusing on the leader, and what’s happening is team development, and the followership thing is not getting the same amount of attention. We know that from HR in terms of training, the lion’s share of resources go to the top-level people. They are the ones that are getting all the high-level training, the expensive stuff, and we’re not spending as much time on the team members. I think the other thing too, is we don’t take into account the

context, so we don’t do in-context learning. In reflecting on that, and related to my ethical leadership exercise that I do with the students, sure they can solve these things on paper when it’s a fictitious organization, they can figure out what the right thing to do is. But would they actually be able to do it and blow the whistle, and potentially put their job at risk and all that kind of thing? What can they do when they

come back to the campus on a day-to-day basis that can make them into a better person? You have to think about not just how am I developing as a leader, but how am I developing as a person? The research that I’ve done around character has really been, and it was because one of my colleagues who I was working with said, “It goes back to Aristotle, it goes back to cardinal virtues, that

a good leader is only going to be good if they're a good person. So, don't try to reinvent the wheel." Because he was a philosopher, he said, "Why don't you focus on developing cardinal virtues, making people more courageous, more prudent, more temperate?" So we use that as a model to sort of say, "Well, here's our model of leaders of good character, or those who have strong cardinal virtues." Going back to the ancients, going back to the Greeks. I appreciate the time to talk about this. I think what you're doing is really important.

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