

Timothy Clark

Global thought leader in 21st century leadership, cultures that adapt and innovate, psychological safety, leading change & transformation

Leading with Character and Competence. Organizations don't outperform their leaders, they reflect them. That's why leadership is the most important applied discipline in the world, and yet the topic is crowded with absurd theories that have spawned a myth-making industry. At its irreducible minimum, leadership is a combination of character and competence. Leaders with high character and low competence are ineffective. On the other hand, leaders with low character and high competence are dangerous. Title, position, and authority are merely accessories. To robe yourself in the outward vestments of leadership does not make you one. The formal conferral of authority no more makes you a leader than a black turtleneck makes you the CEO of a tech company. Rank can only hint at the possibility.

Leading Organizational Transformation. There are only two basic processes in any organization—execution and innovation. Execution creates and delivers value today, whereas innovation attempts to create and deliver value tomorrow. There is a permanent and natural tension state between these two processes that is inherent in the role the leader. Leading transformation is both an emotional and organizational processes that leaders must learn to master. Clark describes the EPIC stages of the journey and provides practical tools for new leaders to navigate their organizations through major initiatives in highly dynamic environments. He explains how leaders can successfully summon and redirect institutional will.

Increasing Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Safety. If leadership is influence, emotional intelligence is the conduit of influence. Emotional intelligence is a leader's delivery system for creating value. But how? Ground-breaking research shows that emotional intelligence is the primary enabling skill for creating psychological safety, which is the level of confidence an employee feels in being able to learn, give and receive feedback, and challenge the status quo. The level of psychological safety, in turn, is the critical variable leading to both career and business impact. Clark explains how a leader's ability to create psychological safety has become a threshold requirement of leadership in the 21st century. To create psychological safety, leaders must cultivate (1) respect, and (2) permission in the organizational culture. When they do this consistently, the organization advances through a progression of five stages: (1) exclusion/unsafe, (2) inclusion safety, (3) learner safety, (4) collaborator safety, and finally, (5) challenger safety.

The Power of Micro-coaching and Outcome Accountability. Micro-coaching is to coaching what agility is to strategy. Consider the traditional approach to strategy: Gather senior leaders once a year, blue sky the future, set goals, create a pro forma and here we go. The problem is that in the 21st century strategy is often dead on arrival, obsolete the day it's unveiled. Remember the premise of all strategy--value is perishable, like melting ice. The only question is the rate of the melt. Leadership coaching must follow the same arc and respond to the same need as strategy, but in this case, it's the need for learning agility--the ability to learn at or above the speed of change. Micro-coaching, then, is the practice of engaging people in frequent, brief, and continuous coaching conversations that move people progressively through three stages of accountability: (1) task, (2), project/process, and (3) outcome. As a former 1st Team Academic All-American football player and Oxford scholar, Clark knows a thing or two about coaching and accountability. Through his research, Clark has discovered that far too many leaders and organizations are content to allow employees to perform at task-level accountability, which breeds dependency and learned helplessness. High-performing organizations, on the other hand, have a different expectation. They move people from task-level to project-level, and finally, to outcome-level accountability. As Clark observes, "It's in this last transition that the magic happens. Once people move to outcome-level accountability, life changes because this is where the independence, creativity, autonomy, and ownership come in. This is where people have peak engagement and career-best experiences." Clark also takes audiences through his original research on delegation patterns in leaders and demonstrates how leaders gain greater leverage and effectiveness by avoiding the tendencies of the absentee landlord, the buddy, and the micro-manager.