

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS LEADERSHIP TRAINING

HIGH ROAD LEADERSHIP

Chapter 6

Develop Emotional Capacity

WHAT WE'LL COVER TODAY

Eight ways. One pathway.

01 Refuse to See Yourself as a Victim

02 Control Your Emotions and Process Them Quickly

03 Keep Short Accounts

04 Put Other People's Opinions in Perspective

05 Know a Problem from a Fact of Life

06 Become Comfortable with Discomfort

07 Grow Capacity Ahead of Responsibility

08 Make Caring for Yourself a Priority

Pathway: Resilience

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

You Cannot Give If You Are Drowning

Last month we studied giving. Rick's line was, "I want more for you than I want from you." That only works if the leader has capacity left to give.

Pressure Is Part Of The Job

Federal deadlines, partner friction, proposal crunch, SEWP, Vision 2030. The work does not pause because we are tired.

Culture Imitates Stress

The team copies what leadership does under pressure, not what we say in a calm month.

The Long Game Needs Margin

Burnout kills Vision 2030 faster than a lost bid. Emotional capacity is how we stay in the game.

LEADING HAS NEVER BEEN TOUGHER

Maxwell has led for more than 50 years. He says leading people has never been harder than it is now. After 2020 and 2021, people are still struggling emotionally. Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide. Anxiety and depression cost the global economy about \$1 trillion a year. In the U.S., more than a quarter of adults face major depressive episodes or anxiety disorders.

In that environment, a lot of people want to opt out. Leaders cannot. People are counting on us to weather the storm, make hard calls, and take them to a better place.

If we are drowning, we cannot save people who are drowning.

If we are locked up emotionally, we cannot lead anyone to freedom.

WHAT EMOTIONAL CAPACITY IS

The ability to respond to adversity, failure, criticism, and pressure in positive ways.

Stand up under internal conflict

Manage your own emotions so you can lead others well

Stay on the high road when the easy road is to shut down

Leadership is a high-pressure job. High pressure requires high capacity.

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR EMOTIONAL CAPACITY

Maxwell's eight practices. Work them under pressure, not after it.

1

Refuse the victim story

2

Process emotions fast

3

Keep short accounts

4

Put opinions in perspective

5

Separate problems from facts of life

6

Get comfortable with discomfort

7

Grow capacity ahead of the load

8

Take care of yourself on purpose

REFUSE TO SEE YOURSELF AS A VICTIM

A victim story feels true. It also hands your power to someone else.

Seeing yourself as a victim is disempowering. You start believing bad things will keep happening, you blame others, and you stop trying because "it will not work." Robert Quinn calls that life the walking dead: meaninglessness, hopelessness, quiet desperation. It is personally draining and relationally destructive. Good leadership becomes almost impossible.

The bottom line: if you see yourself as a victim, you give your power away.

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first."

MARK TWAIN

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LIFE

Maxwell's parents taught him this young. He passed it to his children and grandchildren. Six places you own, no one else.

ATTITUDE

My attitude is a choice. I work to keep it positive every day.

TIME

I have a set number of hours. I control how I use them. Other people do not dictate my schedule.

PRIORITIES

I act on the most important things every day. Lesser things do not get to distract me.

POTENTIAL

I am responsible for my own growth and my God-given potential. If I do not develop it, no one else will.

PASSION

I do not wait for someone to inspire me. I fuel the spark and get up ready.

CALLING

I am responsible for the gifts and opportunities God gives me. I work to do what I was put on earth to do.

ACT YOUR WAY INTO FEELING

It is always more effective to act your way into feeling than to feel your way into action.

George W. Crane: motions are the precursors of emotions. You cannot control the feeling directly. You can choose the action.

After college Maxwell read Og Mandino. The practice was simple: if I feel depressed, I will sing. If I feel sad, I will laugh. If I feel fear, I will plunge ahead. Today I will be the master of my emotions.

Charlton Heston, after his Alzheimer's diagnosis: "I got to be Charlton Heston for almost eighty years. That's more than fair." Gratitude broke the victim story.

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS APPLICATION

When a proposal, a partner issue, or a personnel problem lands, do not wait to feel ready. Take the next right action.

CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS AND PROCESS THEM FAST

Not suppression. Feel it, name it, redirect it.

Coach Toyin Crandell teaches "emotional homes." Under pressure, the brain stops thinking logically and you get stuck in an unproductive state. Your emotional home is the road map back to the door. If sadness is your default under stress, gratitude is the home you walk back to.

Psychologists have discovered that 95 percent of your emotions are determined by the way you talk to yourself as you go through your day.

BRIAN TRACY

An emotional home lets you feel the emotion, avoid a poor decision, and point your heart back to a positive state.

AN EVENT ISN'T OVER UNTIL I'VE LEARNED FROM IT

Maxwell's evening process after conflict or high pressure.

1 Review my day by myself. What happened in my world today?

2 Think about myself. What did I learn about myself today?

3 Talk to myself. What do I need to hear myself say?

4 Direct myself. How should I apply what I've learned?

5 Take action myself. Will I follow through with action?

Time spent reflecting is wasted if it does not produce action.

KEEP SHORT ACCOUNTS

Emotional baggage is capacity you cannot spend on your people.

HACKETT

"I've had a few arguments with people, but I never carry a grudge. You know why? While you're carrying a grudge, they're out dancing."

HUBBARD

A retentive memory can be useful. The ability to forget is the true token of greatness. Successful people cannot afford to live in the rearview mirror.

ALVIN DARK

"There's no such thing as taking a pitcher out. There's only bringing another pitcher in." Look back after the game to learn. Do not carry the inning.

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS APPLICATION

Partner friction, a missed deliverable, an internal miss. Resolve it, apologize if you were wrong, forgive, and get your eyes on the next play.

PUT OTHER PEOPLE'S OPINIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

One of the most limiting beliefs: their opinion of you matters more than your own.

Maxwell's first church vote: 31 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain. He was devastated. His father said, "That's the best vote you'll ever get." Maxwell spent Sundays scanning the room, wondering who voted no. That is a people-pleaser leading, not a principled leader.

He changed four ways: he put values ahead of the people he wanted to please. He looked forward more than backward. He found new models. He moved away from people who were holding him back.

"Do not be too concerned about what others may think of you. Be very concerned about what you think of yourself."

JOHN WOODEN

"The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be."

LEO BUSCAGLIA

If the criticism is true, work on yourself. If it is untrue, do not let someone else's issue become yours.

A PROBLEM VS. A FACT OF LIFE

Fred Smith Sr. to Maxwell: if you cannot change it, it is not a problem. It is a fact of life. Howling at the moon wastes energy.

FACTS OF LIFE (YOU CANNOT CONTROL)

Where you were born	What other people say or do
Your genes	The weather
What you did yesterday	The stock market
Death	

There are never two consecutive good days in any leader's life.

Leadership is problem-solving. Do not build your life around your troubles. Focus on the vision, not the obstacles.

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS APPLICATION

Government timelines, shutdowns, a customer delay, an entity name on an AT&T letter. Some of that is a problem you can work. Some of it is a fact of life. Spend your energy on the first.

BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH DISCOMFORT

Progress requires change. Change involves risk. If staying inside the comfort zone is the goal, the leader slowly dies. Pat Riley called complacency the Success Disease. It takes root when you feel good about who you are and what you have already done.

Sifu Ted Wong (Bruce Lee's student) on walking: to move, you throw yourself off balance so the next foot catches you. Off-balance is uncomfortable. It is also the only way forward.

Anything I've ever done that ultimately was worthwhile initially scared me to death.

BETTY BENDER

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS APPLICATION

New vehicles, new partners, new leaders in new seats. The discomfort is the walk, not a sign you should stop.

CAPACITY MUST OUTFRAN RESPONSIBILITY

A gap between what you must do and what you can do well drains everything.

Responsibilities > Capacity

Burnout

Responsibilities = Capacity

Chronic stress

Responsibilities < Capacity

Sustainable success

BOUNDARIES

Identify what others expect. Redefine, reclarify, or renegotiate what is not realistic.

COUNT THE COST

Every commitment has a price tag. Calculate it before you say yes. If you already overcommitted, admit it and revisit.

ALIGN WITH PURPOSE

Without a clear destination you waste energy on work that does not matter.

Capacity is not fixed. Maxwell wrote a whole book on that (No Limits). Focus on strengths. Do not let anyone, including you, tell you that you cannot grow.

MAKE CARING FOR YOURSELF A PRIORITY

"Self-care is never a selfish act. It is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others."

PARKER PALMER

A rested, recharged leader can take the high road. Mindless scrolling is not rest. Be intentional.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

Stay connected to a greater source for encouragement and guidance.

RELATIONAL ENERGY

Time with people who restore you. For Maxwell: Margaret, kids, grandkids, people who value growth.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Maxwell's goal: swim 30 minutes a day. Stay in the game as long as you can.

MENTAL GROWTH

Every day: read, think, ask questions, file what you learn, write. The only guarantee of a better tomorrow is growth today.

The essence of high-road leadership is serving people and giving your best. That is possible only if you have something to give and the capacity to give it.

PATHWAY

RESILIENCE

The pathway to developing emotional capacity.

The ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. Strong leaders bear the emotional brunt of problems for their people. They rebound quickly. They help others bounce back. Then they rally, inspire, and navigate to success.

QUESTION 1

Where am I drowning right now?

QUESTION 2

Where is my capacity below my responsibilities?

The less baggage you carry, the further you can go.

APPLYING IT AT INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

Five checks for this quarter.

- ☐ **Victim language.** Where am I narrating a story that gives my power away?
- ☐ **Short accounts.** What grudge, miss, or partner issue am I still carrying into the next meeting?
- ☐ **Facts of life vs. problems.** What am I howling at that I cannot change?
- ☐ **Capacity vs. load.** Where did I say yes without counting the cost?
- ☐ **Self-care so we can keep giving.** What is one intentional practice this week (spiritual, relational, physical, or mental) so I have something left to pour out?

Last month we said we want more for people than we want from them. This month we build the capacity that makes that possible.

DISCUSSION

- 1 When did you last lead well under pressure, and what did it cost you emotionally?
- 2 Which of the eight ways hits closest to home right now?
- 3 What is one fact of life you have been treating as a problem?