

Simplicity balances the hard & soft parts of leading

Our first Transformation Experience webinar has come and gone, with great information from Doug Krug, author of *Enlightened Leadership*. Doug also wrote *Leadership Made Simple* with Ed Oakley. In it, they describe a process to move from a problem to a solution orientation. They claim that leadership is not a mysterious, elusive talent, but an ability that everyone has at times. We must remember that there are two parts to leadership: the “hard” part (managing processes & things) and the “soft” part (leading people). The latter is always the most difficult, and yet so much of leadership discussion is about managing the processes. Both are necessary for success. Here are some of the components of simplifying leadership:

- The answers are in the room—within the organization, your people are the experts who have solutions. The leaders don’t have to have all the answers.
- Forward focus—discover what is working well now and where we want to go, and come up with the strategy to do it. Forget about what’s not working and who’s to blame.
- To learn what’s working well, ask questions like, “where do we agree, what is successful, what are some of the things we like about the situation?”
- What is making it work? Get an understanding of what is causing the success—this is powerful!
- Clarify the goal—be clear about what you want to have happen. Doug and Ed cite a study showing the main reasons teams fail: the top two were unclear goals, and changing goals. Set a goal and stick with it.
- Establish benefits—articulate the benefits to accomplishing your goal.
- Plan and take action—this is where you formulate solutions and move them into action. Be clear about how you will measure progress, how you will know when the goal is met.
- Throughout this process, you are working collaboratively with your people. The steps described are a process, however, the way they are done is the key to taking care of the soft part of leading. Ask, “What concerns do you have?” to allow people to share their fears, concerns and other obstacles to getting to your goal.

Krug and Oakley’s simple framework allows the soft part of leadership to be taken care of along with the hard part. Balance is the key, and they provide many more ideas and stories to illustrate the process. How might these ideas assist your team in reaching the goals of your ministry?