

Course Administrative Matters For “Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model”

Werner Erhard
Independent

Michael C. Jensen
Jesse Isidor Straus Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus, Harvard Business School

Steve Zaffron
Founder and Head of Research Development, Vanto Group

Jeri Echeverria
Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, retired, California State University

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This document contains the **ninth** of **nine** Pre-Course Readings for our one-semester course “Being A Leader and The Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model.”

Some of the material presented in this course is based on or derived from the consulting and program material of the Vanto Group, and from material presented in the Landmark Forum and other programs offered by Landmark Worldwide LLC. The ideas and the methodology created by Werner Erhard underlie much of the material. The authors are responsible for all errors or incompleteness in this work.

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Reading 9: Course Administrative Matters For “Being a Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological / Phenomenological Model”

I. OVERVIEW

The sole objective of this Course is to leave you actually *being a leader* and *exercising leadership effectively* as your *natural self-expression*. By “natural self-expression” we mean a way of being and acting in any leadership situation that is a spontaneous and intuitively effective response to what you are dealing with.

Getting yourself clear about the following Course Administrative Matters will support you in realizing the promise of the Course.

A. OUR PRESENTATION METHOD: READ SILENTLY ALONG WITH OUR SLIDE READER

We will read aloud each word you will see on the screen. We read each slide aloud because the person reading the slide knows what the entire sentence means, so she can convey the meaning of the first words in the sentence right from the very beginning.

The slide reader’s reading supports your comprehension by conveying the meaning right from the beginning of a sentence; and for a paragraph, right from the beginning of the paragraph; and for a section, right from the beginning of the section.

As we read the slide aloud, please silently, word for word, read along with us.

During the reading of the slide we will frequently interrupt the reading to comment and discuss what has been read, or sometimes we will do this after the slide is read.

From time to time during the Course we will stop and give you an opportunity to confirm for yourself that you are clear about what has been presented, and to give you an opportunity to confirm the validity of what has been presented in your as-lived experience.

As alluded to in the “Voice Reader Study” conducted by the Department of Computer Sciences at the University of Regensburg (2015), when listening to text being read aloud while simultaneously reading it to themselves, participants experienced a 44% increase in comprehension over reading to themselves only. In addition, the 44% increase in comprehension in this study was produced by a computer-generated voice that speaks with no understanding of what is being read, as contrasted with the way it will be read to you in this Course.

While there are questionable aspects of this study, its findings are consistent with the survey responses we receive from our participants in each of our six-day courses.

If there is a word you do not know the meaning of, or if you have a question or comment about anything stated on the screen, please raise your hand and wait to be called on. If you simply want something re-read, just shout out “please re-read [indicate what you want re-read – for example, ‘the last sentence’, or ‘the first paragraph’, ‘the whole slide’, or whatever]”.

B. ABOUT REPETITION IN THIS COURSE

Some Course distinctions are repeated several times throughout this Course. For you to realize the promise of this Course – without having to take copious notes and study for hours – repetition is critical. In addition, a website about professional presentations makes the following point about repetition:

“If you make a point only one time, at the end of your presentation, just 10% of the audience will remember that point. If you repeat a point six times, retention jumps to 90%. Without repetition, 40% of your audience will forget virtually everything you said within 20 minutes of your conclusion.” (Wilson, 2000)

C. GETTING THE MEANING RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING

In order to deliver on what we have promised you, what gets said in this Course must be said with the rigor demanded by the need to master being a leader and exercising leadership effectively as your natural self-expression.

To accomplish this rigor, a good deal of the content of this Course is exactly – word for word – what you see written on the screen in front of you.

As we said earlier, if there is a word you do not know the meaning of, or if you have a question or comment about anything stated on the screen, please raise your hand and wait to be called on. If you simply want something re-read, just shout out “please re-read [indicate what you want re-read – for example, ‘the last sentence’, or ‘the first paragraph’, ‘the whole slide’, or whatever]”. This will support you in getting the meaning right from the beginning.

D. A CRITICAL ASPECT OF HOW WE WILL WORK TOGETHER: YEAH BUT, HOW ‘BOUT, WHAT IF?

During the Course, it is important to get up on the mat your own “yeah buts”, “how ’bouts” and “what ifs” about anything being presented.

It is important for you to ask any question or make any comment that comes up for you. And, it is equally important to bring up any “yeah buts”, “how ’bouts” or “what ifs” that come up for you. Obviously, this supports you in gaining clarity on what is being presented, and in doing so supports you in discovering for yourself the conversational domain required for being a leader and exercising leadership effectively as your natural self-expression.

E. CONTRIBUTING TO A NEW SCIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

We intend what is in the Course to contribute to research on and the development of a new science of leadership. We discuss this in some detail in our chapter: “Creating Leaders: An

Ontological/Phenomenological Model” in *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership*, (Chapter 16), Scott Snook, Nitin Noria, Rakesh Khurana, eds., Sage Publications 2012, Harvard Business School NOM Working Paper 11-037, <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1681682>).

So, in addition to the contribution it makes for our students, we also use our slide-deck presentation method because it makes the content of the Course readily available for faculty members to research, experiment with, and innovate from as part of the curricula in universities throughout the world.

This presentation method allows faculty who will be leading the Course in their universities to use these slides to both master the material and convey it effectively to their students.

F. REGARDING OUR ONTOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

As you have read in your Pre-Course Readings, part of being a leader has to do with dealing with certain of the ontological constraints we all have. For many of us these constraints are likely to occur for us as a personal matter. While we will expect all Course participants to deal with these personal ontological constraints, if you object to sharing or discussing some issue, we respect that. Just say when you do not want to speak about a particular issue. If you want to decline an invitation to speak about or deal with something that might offend or violate your culture, simply say that you decline.

At the same time you should be aware that this Course provides you with a unique opportunity and a safe environment in which to complete and leave behind anything you wound up with that leaves you less than fully effective or lessens your quality of life.

G. WHO YOU WILL PARTICIPATE WITH IN THIS COURSE

Various nationalities, ethnicities, cultures, ages, genders and educational experiences will be represented in your course room. As a result of the various kinds of diversity in the course room, from time to time you may be surprised, curious, or even taken aback by a phrase, expression or gesture that in your

culture is not commonly used or means something different than the way it is being used by the person speaking. Given the likelihood of hearing such a phrase or expression or seeing such a gesture, we request you allow for our differences by giving others the space to communicate in the ways that they do.

H. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ADVANCED STUDY OR FOR THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN LANDMARK’S PROGRAMS OR FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN ANY KIND OF DISCIPLINE

Adding to the diversity in this Course, many of you have advanced degrees in or are highly trained in a specific field of study and some of you have participated in programs conducted by “Landmark” and/or earlier, “est, an educational corporation”.

This Course has been conducted successfully on four continents in a number of academic and training institutions including business, military, and medical schools. Like the course you are in, there has been a similar degree of national and ethnic diversity, and diversity of educational and training background in each of those courses.

For those of you unfamiliar with Landmark, Landmark is (and est was) a global company that provides personal and professional development programs. More than three million people have participated in the programs offered by these two organizations and associated management consulting firms. Landmark also has a global management consulting subsidiary called Vanto Group which has consulted for many organizations including Apple, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceuticals, NASA, Tata Group, Asian Paints, Reebok, and others.

If you have participated in advanced study in a specific field or in another discipline or practice, or in the programs of Landmark – you may from time to time in this Course hear terms or ideas that you have heard in your field of study or in some other program. You may be tempted to think that what is meant by those terms or ideas is what was meant when those terms or ideas were presented in another program, practice or discipline.

The value you created for yourself out of what you learned or experienced in those programs, practices or disciplines will be beneficial in dealing with what is presented in this Course, but *only* if you deal with anything in this Course you find familiar by looking newly.

That is, to be effective in this Course you must deal with any familiar terms, ideas, or concepts (distinctions) clear that what those terms refer to, or what those ideas or concepts are speaking about is significantly different than what those terms meant or distinctions that were spoken about in other programs.

Our experience has shown us that no particular background or culture has been required to realize the promise of this Course.

I. FOR LANDMARK GRADUATES

The purpose of this Course is creating leaders, rather than personal development. In realizing the promise of this Course, Landmark graduates will have a certain edge and at the same time a very substantial barrier to overcome.

If you are a Landmark graduate, for you to realize the promise of this Course, you must in fact deal *newly* with any terms, ideas, or concepts (what in Landmark are sometimes referred to as “distinctions”) that you hear and think you already know.

If you do not deal newly with any terms, ideas, concepts or distinctions you already know from Landmark, you will face a substantial barrier to overcome. This is in part because one’s brain uses what is already known in its scramble to deal with what is encountered. Moreover, given our human addiction to “being right” and attempting to “dominate” a discussion, we are thrown to “I already know this”.

For you to actually master what is presented in this Course, you must be willing to treat anything that sounds familiar like you don’t know what it’s all about – that is, you must treat it like you would treat anything that was entirely new for you. In other words, watch out for anything you think you already know about, or even think is like something you already know.

It may be helpful to know that what underlies a good deal of what is provided in the programs of Landmark was created from an underlying model (paradigm) that is dealt with explicitly in this Course.

In fact, for those of you who are Landmark graduates, you will find that what you get out of this Course will make an important contribution to the value you received from your participation in the programs of Landmark. But counterintuitively, that only happens when you do not let the terms and distinctions you learned in Landmark's programs get in the way of mastering what is presented in this Course, no matter how much anything in this Course at first sounds like something you already know.

This is also true for terms, ideas, and concepts (specialized terms) from any academic field of study or other disciplines or practices you might be familiar with.

While this Course is focused on what it takes to create leaders, the thinking and models presented here constitute a perspective (theoretical foundation) that creates the opportunity for powerful new insights in any discipline or endeavor related to human nature and human function.

J. COMPLETING THE PRE-COURSE READING

Be sure to complete all nine Pre-Course Readings and Assignments before the Course begins. In addition, please review the Pre-Course Reading #8 (*Promises, Conditions and Rules of the Game*) within 24 hours of the beginning of the first day of the course so that you are clear what the *Promises, Conditions and Rules of the Game* are for the Course.

We will respond to any questions or comments you had from your Pre-Course Readings and Assignments as we deal with those topics or terms during the Course.

In addition to the Pre-Course Readings, you received a Course Leadership Project Assignment. You will be receiving further assignments related to your Course Leadership Project as we go through this Course.

K. WHERE TO SIT IN YOUR COURSE ROOM

Each morning and after each break, when you come into the room, take the front-most available seat, and the center-most seat available in that row. Please follow this instruction even if you prefer not to sit close to the front.

In addition, please sit next to someone you have not sat next to before. Do this after each break throughout the Course.

L. ABOUT YOUR BREAK ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE COURSE

This Course is not about being given answers. It is about you being empowered to discover for yourself what is being presented, and to do so in a way that results in expanding your opportunity set of ways of being, thinking, creative imagination, planning, and acting. As such, it is vitally important that you come prepared to each session having completed whatever preparatory work is requested of you so that you can engage in the course dialogue.

This Course will not be easy, and in order to fulfill on the promise of the Course, and in order for you to discover for yourself what is being presented, your full participation is required. The Course gets done through your participation.

What is meant by “discover for yourself” is both what those words mean in the everyday common-sense meaning of those words, and at the same time, there is a term-of-art meaning that we will make clear during the Course.

What is meant by “discover for yourself” in its term-of-art sense is fundamental and critical to your achieving being a leader and exercising leadership effectively as your natural self-expression.

However, at this point your understanding of “discover for yourself” in its everyday common-sense meaning will suffice. And for now, “discover for yourself” contrasts with “received knowledge” or mere information.

In this Course we will be asking questions that are different than you might be used to and requiring answers that reflect your having dug deeply into what is presented by “discovering for yourself” the as-lived experience of what has been presented.

In order to realize the promise of the Course, it is critical that you transform what is presented from something you understand and maybe even see the validity of (something conceptual) to something that becomes a part of your natural self-expression (something that, so to speak, uses you).

One practice that will make a difference in your effecting that transformation is to ask yourself “What does this look like in the living of it?”, or “What does this look like in my life?”, or when appropriate “What does this look like in doing it?”

Each time you complete a break-time assignment, be ready to share what you discovered for yourself as a result of engaging with the assignment.

Now We Are Ready To Engage With What It Actually Is To Be A Leader And
What It Is To Exercise Leadership Effectively
As Your Natural Self-Expression.

See you in the Course.

REFERENCES

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