

THE BIG IDEA

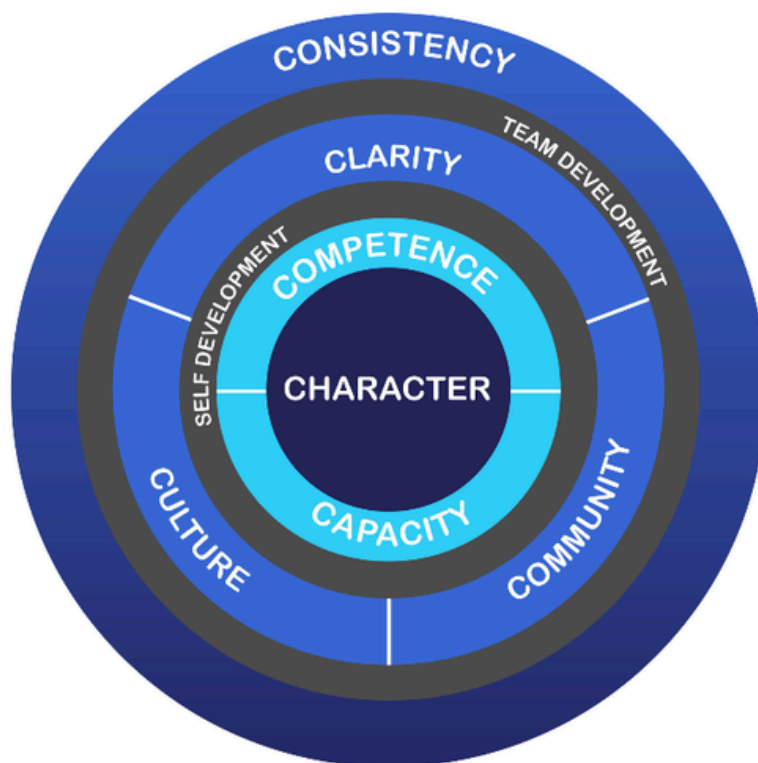
Every leader feels it: three steps forward, four steps back. The gap between your abilities and your responsibilities is real — but it does not have to stay that way. **Getting unleashed** means raising your abilities to meet your current responsibilities. The 7 C's name the issues. The 3 D's give you the path forward. Together, they are the framework that gets you free.

THE GOLDEN RULE

A problem well named is a problem half solved.

Most leaders jump to action before naming the real problem. Is it Character, Competence, Capacity, Clarity, Community, Culture, or Consistency? The moment you name it correctly, the solution path becomes dramatically clearer and faster. Naming is not delay. It is the work.

UNLEASHED LEADERSHIP



THE 7 C'S • THE ISSUES

CHARACTER

Hard decisions, demonstrated humility, ownership of failures, credit given away for wins. This is above-and-beyond moral ethics — it is how you lead.

COMPETENCE

Are your current skills aligned with what your team and organization actually need from you now — not who you used to be?

CAPACITY

Your time, energy, and attention as a leader. If you are reachable on vacation, your team believes they should be too.

CLARITY

Four questions every team member asks every day: Where are we going? How? What is my specific role? Why does it matter?

COMMUNITY

The trust and collaboration environment your team needs to thrive. It starts with knowing names — and who matters to each person.

CULTURE

The gap between your aspirational values (what you say you believe) and your actual values (what your behaviors confirm).

CONSISTENCY

Showing up every single time. All six other C's are meaningless without it. A friend of the Vances said this so clearly it became the 7th C.

THE 3 D'S • THE PATH FORWARD

DECIDE

Before acting, stop. Is this issue worth the commitment and sacrifice it requires to get unleashed? Own the decision first.

DISCERN

Dig below the presenting problem to find the real issue. Name it. Build your strategy and critical actions from the truth of it.

DELIVER

Take action on your plan — and repeat it. Delivery is not a one-time event. It is a process to sustain throughout your leadership.

■ THE 7 C'S IN ACTION • WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE IN YOUR WORLD

C1 CHARACTER STARTS WITH OWNERSHIP

Character in leadership is not about moral ethics — that is the baseline. Leadership character is about making the hard decisions others flee from, taking responsibility for failures, and giving credit for wins to those who earned them. Arrogance and lack of accountability are the two most visible character failures. The people you lead feel both — every single day.

THE APPLICATION: MODEL BEFORE YOU MANDATE

If you are leading under someone with low character, the answer is not confrontation — it is curiosity. Ask questions that invite self-reflection. Get unleashed yourself first before trying to change others. Your own character is the only thing you fully control in the room.

"Humility seems really important in leadership — have you seen someone model that well? What did you learn from them?"

C2 COMPETENCE IS ABOUT THE NEW ROLE

The most common mistake when a top individual contributor becomes a leader: they keep doing what got them promoted. The most valuable work shifts completely. Ask three questions: What kind of work is most valuable in my role right now? What skills does my team need me to develop? How do I manage my time differently to deliver that valuable work?

THE APPLICATION: ASK THE THREE QUESTIONS

Schedule a 30-minute block this week to answer all three questions honestly for your current role. Write the answers down. If you cannot clearly answer what the most valuable work is in your leadership position right now, you are likely still doing your old job.

"Am I doing what got me promoted, or am I doing what my team actually needs from me right now?"

C3 CAPACITY IS MODELED, NOT JUST MANAGED

Healthy capacity means managing your time, energy, and attention — and modeling that for your team. If you are reachable on vacation, it does not matter what you tell them about rest. Your calendar must have fluff space. You have to be interruptible by design. Your people need to know they can reach you without derailing you.

THE APPLICATION: CREATE AN AVAILABILITY SYSTEM

Define and communicate when and how your people can reach you. Whether it is structured office hours, a signal on your door, or a clear calendar block — the method matters less than whether your team understands it. Start here: do my people know what my availability actually looks like?

"Here is how I manage my availability — and here is what it means when you need me urgently versus when it can wait."

C4 CLARITY MEANS EVERYONE ANSWERS THE SAME WAY

Every team member is subconsciously asking four questions every single day: Where are we going? How are we getting there? What is my specific role? Why does it matter? Most leaders answer one or two consistently. The test of clarity: ask every person on your team these four questions independently. If the answers match, you have clarity. If they do not, that is your work.

THE APPLICATION: RUN THE FOUR-QUESTION AUDIT

Ask each team member the four questions independently — no meeting, no prompting. Where are we going? How? What is your role? Why does it matter? Map the gaps. The gaps between their answers are the leader's responsibility to close — every one of them.

"In your own words, what do you see as your specific role in where we are headed this quarter?"

C5 COMMUNITY STARTS WITH A NAME

The fastest way to build or destroy community is remembering — or forgetting — what matters to your people. It starts with the name. Then who their people are. Then the important dates, events, and experiences they have shared. You do not have to rely on memory alone — build a system. But you do have to make it a priority. Leaders who skip this erode trust faster than almost anything else.

THE APPLICATION: BUILD YOUR PEOPLE SYSTEM

For every direct report, create a simple profile: name, family, key dates, what they are carrying personally, what they care about. Review it before every 1:1. Then go one level up: actively create opportunities for your team members to know each other the same way. Trust between teammates is also your responsibility as the leader.

"Before we get into work — how is [name they mentioned] doing? You mentioned something important was coming up for them."

C6 CULTURE IS CONFIRMED OR CONTRADICTED

Culture is not what you say you value — it is what your behaviors confirm. There are aspirational values and actual values. If you say you value people over profit but every meeting starts and ends with numbers, profit is your actual value. What gets celebrated gets repeated. What gets ignored disappears. Culture is shaped by those two forces every single day.

THE APPLICATION: CELEBRATE CONNECTION BEHAVIORS

If you lead a sales team: stop only celebrating closed deals. Celebrate when someone remembers a client's birthday, asks about their family, sends a thoughtful note. Ask your team to tell you about the person, not just the contract. Draw public attention to connection behaviors. What you recognize is what gets repeated.

"Before we talk about the numbers — tell me about the person. What do you know about them? What is actually going on in their world?"

C7 CONSISTENCY MULTIPLIES EVERYTHING

The framework originally had six issues. A colleague pointed out: if you implement all six and do not implement consistency, none of it matters. Consistency is waking up every day and choosing all of it — your character, your clarity, your community-building — even when it is hard, even when it is inconvenient, even when no one is watching. It is the multiplier on every other C.

THE APPLICATION: DECIDE AND DISCERN FIRST

Do not attempt consistency without deciding it and discerning the real issue first. Leaders who jump to consistency without naming the problem right just repeat the wrong thing consistently. Name the issue. Build the strategy. Then show up for it every day.

"I am committed to this — not as a one-time initiative but as how I lead from here. You will see it in how I show up, not just in what I announce."

3 ACTION ITEMS

1 Name Your C.

Before your next leadership interaction, identify which of the 7 C's is your weakest right now — not the easiest one to name. Write it down. A problem well named is a problem half solved. That is where it starts.

2 Run the Four-Question Clarity Audit.

This week, ask each person on your team the same four questions independently: Where are we going? How? What is your role? Why does it matter? Map the gaps between their answers. Those gaps are yours to close.

3 Build One People Profile.

Choose one person on your team and create a simple note with their name, who matters to them, key dates, and what they are personally carrying right now. Reference it before your next interaction. Then build one for every person.



***A problem well named is a
problem half solved.
Name the C first. The solution
goes much faster.***

Dr. Garland Vance and Dorothy Wood Vance



CARRY FORWARD QUESTIONS

1. Which of the 7 C's is the real issue in my leadership right now — not the easiest one to name?
2. Am I doing what got me promoted, or am I doing what my team actually needs from me now?

• **BONUS DEEP DIVE • THE SCIENCE BEHIND COMMUNITY & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

Dorothy and Garland identified Community — the trust and connection between team members — as the issue people-facing leaders and sales leaders struggle with most. They noted that simply getting people to see each other as human beings is what breaks down silos. The peer-reviewed research is unambiguous: psychological safety is not a soft concept. It is the measurable foundation of team learning, performance, and innovation.

1 Psychological Safety & Team Performance (Kim, Lee & Connerton, 2020): Published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, this study confirmed that team psychological safety directly predicts team performance through two pathways: increased team learning behavior and higher collective efficacy. When people feel safe, they learn. When they learn together, they perform better. This is exactly the Community dynamic Garland and Dorothy described — connection enables performance.

[View on PMC](#)

2 Psychological Safety & Management Team Effectiveness (Mogard & Rorstad, 2022): Across multiple management teams, psychological safety showed a significant indirect effect on team effectiveness, mediated by behavioral integration — how much team members collaborate, share information, and take collective ownership. The more people feel safe speaking up, the better the team performs at every level of the organizational hierarchy.

[View on PubMed](#)

3 Edmondson, A. (1999, reviewed 2023) — Six Decades of Psychological Safety Research: Amy Edmondson's foundational and follow-up work — spanning 25+ years and reviewed in the *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology* — established the relationship between team psychological safety, team learning, and team performance. Her conclusion: a psychologically safe environment enables divergent thinking, creativity, and risk-taking, and motivates learning. Community is not a nice-to-have. It is infrastructure.

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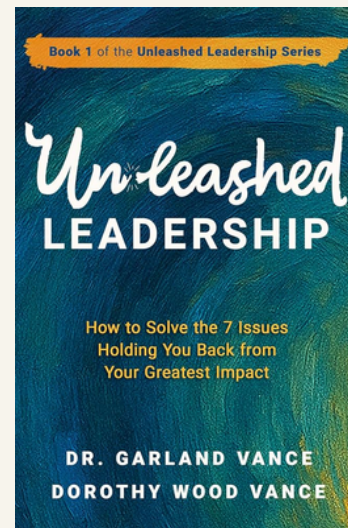
FEATURED RESOURCE

Vance, G. & Vance, D. (2024). ***Unleashed Leadership: How to Solve the 7 Issues Holding You Back From Your Greatest Impact***

Drawing on 25+ years of leadership research and coaching, Garland and Dorothy identify the seven issues behind 95% of leadership challenges — and give you the framework to solve every one of them. The 7 C's, the 3 D's, and the proven path to becoming the leader your team deserves. Available in print, digital, and free audiobook with bonus content.

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[Free Audiobook →](#)



BY BRYAN BUCKLEY

THE 1ST 5 MINUTES

Garland and Dorothy just gave you the framework for getting unleashed as a leader. But leadership without connection skills leaves the room half empty. The 1st 5 Minutes is how you show up in every interaction that builds community, earns trust, and closes the gap between who you are and how your team experiences you — starting in the very first minutes of every conversation.

[Get the Book → bryanbuckleyspeaks.com](https://bryanbuckleyspeaks.com)



TURN YOUR 1ST 5 MINUTES INTO YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE — LEVERAGE OR LOSE IT.

Bryan Buckley is the leading authority on the 1st 5 Minutes of a business conversation — 5X author, speaker, corporate trainer, and podcast host. He helps sales professionals and leaders develop, deepen, and master their business communication skills so every conversation counts.

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