

Actualized Leadership: A Faith Based Perspective on Human Motivation and Leadership Styles

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Abstract

The Actualized Leader Profile (ALP) is based primarily on the seminal works in human motivation of David McClelland (1987) and Abraham Maslow (1954). McClelland's research into human motivation focused on the internal motive needs or "drivers" that direct and sustain human behavior: Achievement, Affiliation, and Power. In addition to McClelland's research, the ALP framework includes Abraham Maslow's concept of "self-actualization" as the fourth unique motive need and a modifier of the first three motive needs (measuring intensity of the other needs, and thus the participant's level of reactivity).

The ALP is based on an effort to synthesize and integrate various and competing models of human behavior as they relate to leadership and leader behavior. Here we provide a Biblical perspective of those theories and models and demonstrate how the ALP framework is an organic embodiment of Christian teachings on leadership development. Psychology and spirituality are intertwined in a mysterious form that deserves greater scrutiny as an effort to de-emphasize the extremes of remaining politically correct or dogmatically faith averse in the world of business. The purpose of this paper is to explore the opportunity to understand a leader's proclivity toward specific leadership styles with balanced views of both psychological and faith-based principles. A deeper understanding of our humanity combined with a stronger belief in our connection to the divine creates a powerful catalyst for change in a society that's increasingly blindsided by the bottom line.

Introduction

The psychologists, researchers, and human development philosophers providing the foundation for the ALP are Viktor Frankl, David McClelland, Carl Jung, and Abraham Maslow. The ALP framework represents an attempt to distill, synthesize and integrate these various and, at times, competing models and theories into one integrated framework. Although an obvious cornerstone for this model is the seminal work of Abraham Maslow who coined the term "self-actualization" as it relates to human potential and peak performance, the framework starts with an emphasis on *logotherapy*, a philosophy developed by Viktor Frankl. This is followed by a view of *logotherapy* through the lens of Biblical suffering.

Frankl is the author of “Man’s Search for Meaning” and has influenced an untold number of researchers, psychologists and philosophers. His philosophical foundation provides the basis for the ALP and the *Actualized Performance Cycle* presented at the paper’s conclusion.

Finding Meaning through Suffering

Austrian psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl (1946) discussed the horrors of his experience as a prisoner in concentration camps during World War II in his best-selling book “Man’s Search for Meaning.” It was in these hellish conditions that he came to realize that everything can be taken from us but one thing: *our freedom to choose our response to any situation*. This insight provides the first pillar and a basic assumption of our model: You are free to choose your response and your attitude to anyone and any situation.

With this insight, and his resulting therapeutic approach, “logotherapy” (the process of finding meaning in our suffering), Frankl challenges us with a profound truth: no one can make you feel, think or do anything; you have the freedom to choose your response and your attitude to any person and situation. When we react in anger or fear we give that freedom away. This insight led Stephen Covey in “The 7 Habits” to coin the term “reponse-ability”: the freedom and ability to choose our response to any situation. Viktor Frankl’s theory confronts us with a powerful truth: when we react to others in fear or anger, we relinquish this one guaranteed freedom. More times than not, the resulting interaction has negative consequences for the individual and adverse or outright dysfunctional implications for his or her group (The term “group” is used to refer to a group of three or more members, which could be a team, department, division or entire organization.)

Christianity was born of suffering. Salvation is the result of a climactic build toward the Son of God’s choice to realize meaning even at the hands of persecution. Not once did Jesus rebuff in fear or anger to defend against his accusers. It was said, “The governor marveled greatly,” at the fact that Jesus chose to stay silent despite his imminent crucifixion. (Matthew 27:14) Yet Jesus did not remain silent. He gave up his very life while in the same breath exchanging suffering for the opportunity to forgive. “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34) Frankl reminds us of our own power and freedom to choose our response to others, as well as the comfort of knowing that when we find meaning in our suffering, it ceases to be suffering in his philosophical theory of *logotherapy*.

As personified by Jesus’ example and supported by Viktor Frankl’s work, we have established the foundation for the ALP and the *Actualized Performance Cycle*. Power is found in our freedom to choose a meaningful response to any situation or person, knowing that “Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (Romans 5:3-4) Now, let’s turn our attention to human motivation and the motive needs or “drivers” that propel our behavior. In this endeavor, we will review the seminal work of David McClelland and explore unique motive needs from a Christian perspective.

Different Members of One Body: Exploring Human Motivation

The power that we desire as Christian leaders equipped to make a real difference in the world involves more than mustering enough faith to turn water into wine. Beyond miracles, our success is contingent upon how well we navigate both spiritual and psychological moors. This involves blazing an emotional path down which we can clearly mark behavioral signposts that speed our journey. Knowing what motivates us is the first step toward actualized leadership followed closely by a better understanding of what motivates our colleagues as well as those next in line to lead. The ALP provides a logical framework that allows us to step outside of our emotions -- equipping us to more intuitively approach leadership challenges that emerge at the level of unconscious behavior and action.

Many behavioral science theories attempting to explain human motivation – what drives us to do what we do – have been proposed over the last 100 years. Some researchers have focused on the internal needs of individuals that drive our behavior, while other researchers have examined the context and process by which we exert effort, and the expectations we have on successfully being rewarded. Although the works of Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1959) remain extremely popular, perhaps no other researcher has been more influential than David McClelland and his three-need or “Acquired Need” theory human motivation.

The word motivation comes from the Latin word *movere* which means “to move” or “to stir.” A need may be best thought of as an “internal state that makes a certain outcome appear attractive” (Robbins and Coulter, 1999). So, when we think of motive needs, also referred to as “drivers,” we are simply examining the internal states that drive or stir our behavior in attempt to satisfy this need (e.g., our desire for safety, the need for relationships and connection to others, our desire for control, etc.) As found in I Chronicles 28:9a, this type of psychological assessment is a discipline even with which the Lord himself is concerned, Scripture stating that he “Searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.” There are a number of very influential theorists through the years who have informed our thinking in this area, including Yale psychologist Clayton Alderfer’s ERG Theory (1972), Frederick Herzberg’s “Two-factor theory” (1959). It could be argued that no one has been more influential in describing what motivates or drives us to do the things that we do than the late Harvard psychologist David McClelland. McClelland (1987) identified three motive needs or drivers that propel our behavior: *Achievement*, *Affiliation* and *Power*.

Achievers, those with a high need for achievement, are driven for success, improvement, and accomplishment. They are primarily concerned with expertise and competence, and are detail-oriented, focused and very well-organized. These individuals are efficient, rules and process-oriented, and prefer consistency and predictability. Under stress, however, their “Leadership Shadow” is triggered and *Achievers* become narrow-minded and rigid, transforming into the classic “micromanager” which has been discussed briefly and will be examined in greater detail during the review of Carl Jung.

Affirmers, those with a high need for affiliation, are warm and friendly, and are more focused on interpersonal relationships and harmony than results and outcomes. They are primarily concerned with their connection to, and acceptance from, others. These individuals are loyal, trusting, and empathetic. Under stress, when their Leadership Shadow is triggered, these individuals become overly accommodating, avoiding confrontation and allowing others to take advantage of them.

Asserters, those with a high need for power, are candid, decisive and courageous risk-takers. They are often viewed as “natural” leaders who challenge the status quo and drive results. *Asserters* are primarily concerned with control and can be skeptical and slow to trust others. Under stress, when their Leadership Shadow is triggered, they become controlling, autocratic and condescending, often manipulating or intimidating others to get their way.

Within Christianity, leadership successes or failures are often solely attributed to the level at which the Holy Spirit indwells a leader’s life with much less emphasis on ones’ workmanship or ability to “rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15)” about their human instincts and behavioral patterns. However, understanding unique leadership styles is essential for operating effectively as one of many members in God’s body. It should be noted that to identify with one leadership profile, either as an *achiever*, *affirmer* or *asserter* is not to dismiss the importance of another. “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” (I Corinthians 12:21) God expects that we “study to show ourselves approved” and this should include examining our own motives and proactively shining light onto those areas of our lives where shadows threaten to give way to complete darkness. Christians find comfort in knowing that along the journey of self-actualization, “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness,” and that despite our shadows, “The light dwells with Him.” (Daniel 2:22)

Leadership Shadows and Living in the Light of Christ

Carl Jung is among the most influential psychologists on Western Culture. From his theories of personality type (“introversion” and “extroversion”) that led to the MBTI, to his concepts of the “collective unconscious,” “archetypes” and “synchronicity,” one could make a compelling argument that Jung’s influence on psychological systems of thought over the last 100 years is without a contemporary equal. An untold number of therapists and researchers have built their entire practices, and careers, on his concepts and frameworks. And it is Jung’s concept of the “shadow” that is critical for understanding how normally positive traits (e.g., organized and efficient) can become negative (e.g., rigid and inflexible) under stress.

The “shadow” is Jung’s concept of the dark, unconscious aspect that resides within each of us. While Jung acknowledges Christianity in general terms, his explanation of a “dark, unconscious aspect” of our experience does not fall strictly within the purview of Christianity despite its metaphorical semblance to good (light) and evil (darkness).

Biblically, shadows are depicted as both good and bad, as symbols of a protective shade (Psalm 36:7) or a place where evil lurks (Job 34:22). Jung believed that in addition to an individual's shadow, there is also a collective unconscious that is essentially the repository or unconscious DNA of human history, varying by culture. Similar to Jung's idea of the Collective Unconscious, the Bible points out that our struggle is against the "world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12) Although Jung was convinced that the collective shadow had an enormous impact on human behavior in the present, our focus will be to further refine his notion of the "personal shadow" by looking specifically at leader behaviors under stress, and how normally positive characteristics and traits can and do become dysfunctional or outright destructive.

The Shadow has been defined as the dark, rejected, instinctual sides of ourselves that we deny or repress. Impulses such as rage, lust, greed and jealousy reside in the shadow. We spend an inordinate amount of energy trying to deny, repress or manage this aspect of being. We often explode in angry denial when someone points out a Shadow trait in our self that, while blatantly obvious to others, has been repressed. Jung reminded us that we do not become enlightened by pretending to be perfect; rather, we become enlightened when we're willing to confront this darker side of ourselves.

Projecting an outward façade that buries those darker aspects of our personality may buy us some time and help us to save face as a leader but from a Biblical perspective, "No one can hide so that [God] can't see him." (Jeremiah 23:24) Perhaps King David had intimately come to understand this, as demonstrated by his prayer for God to "see if there be any hurtful way" in him. (Psalm 139:24) David, even as a "man after God's own heart," (I Samuel 13:14) eventually confessed that his impulses were just as alive and well as his predecessors' who had exhibited more deliberate and outward acts of jealousy, lust and greed. (I Samuel 18:9) Upon being initially confronted with his shadow, in the parable that Nathan the prophet told of a poor man's only sheep being unjustly taken for slaughter, David reacted with indignant anger against the idea that someone would murder and take that which was not his own. David's denial quickly turned into enlightenment because Nathan's confrontation finally opened up the space for David to identify with the story and admit that he was not perfect. Only then was he able to confront his darker side, face the consequences and begin to rebuild his life based on the truth about himself.

Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, is the concept of *Leadership Shadows*. We define them as the extreme and negative manifestation of our positive drivers, which are based on irrational thoughts, unfounded fears and limiting core beliefs. Based on the three motive needs or drivers identified by McClelland, there are three *Leadership Shadows: Fear of Failure, Fear of Rejection* and *Fear of Betrayal*. **Table 2** summarizes these shadows in the context of the ALP framework. Much like Jung's perspective of shadows, the Bible also depicts shadows as a fluid reference point, similar to a sundial that casts shadows for telling time yet with its accuracy dependent upon positioning or perspective. Meaning, from a Christian perspective, the three Leadership Shadows we've identified provide an indication of who we are at a given "point in time" but the reality of who we become is ultimately found in Christ. (Colossians 2:17) Hymn writer Katherine Davis sums it up well in these lyrics, "His banners are o'er us, his light goes before us, a pillar of fire shining forth in the night, till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished, as forward we travel from light into light. (Katherine Davis, Let All Things Now Living)

Table 2

MOTIVE NEED	LEADERSHIP STYLE	LEADERSHIP SHADOW
Achievement	<i>Achiever</i>	Fear of Failure
Affiliation	<i>Affirmer</i>	Fear of Rejection
Power	<i>Asserter</i>	Fear of Betrayal

The key contextual element related to all of the three styles and their corresponding Leadership Shadows is stress – that tense and taxing space we so often encounter in our professional and personal lives. This is the aspect of ourselves that is triggered by stress and often results in career (and relationship) limiting moves, such as micromanaging, avoiding conflict, or refusing to trust others.

We're often puzzled when at the pinnacle of ones' career, someone, notably a high profile Christian leader, suddenly chooses to make a move that completely undermines their position of leadership. Yet these foibles make sense, considering, it's also at the peak of success that a leader is more likely to experience heightened stress and fatigue. Wayne Cordeiro, in his book, *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion*, says, "The adversary lurks in the shadows of vulnerable moments in our lives. Like an uncomplaining sniper squatting in a darkened second-story room, he squints patiently into his high-powered scope, waiting for an opportune time to squeeze off a shot at his unsuspecting target." Thankfully the story doesn't end there. Scripture reassures us that, "Though [we] have fallen, [we] will rise, though [we] sit in darkness, the Lord will be [our] light." Micah 7:8

Jesus provides us with an example of how to deal with the darkest of moments at our most vulnerable. During a critical point in his ministry Jesus was led to fast and pray in the wilderness. Rooted in the temptation that awaited him was what the ALP describes as an appeal to all three motive needs -- hitting Jesus at what might have been one of his weakest moments in the flesh, having just fasted for 40 days. Satan said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (**power**) "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you..." (**affiliation**) "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him **all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor**. "**All this** I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." (**achievement**) (Matthew 4:1-11)

Jesus had performed many miracles up to this point so what was especially alluring about the temptation to turn stones into bread? Embedded in this particular temptation was a power play. Satan might have better said, "If you think being the Son of the Most High makes you so powerful, go ahead and prove it!" But that's still not enough to explain the brevity of this temptation. Jesus had already performed many miracles in front of very large crowds so why would he feel in the least bit motivated to demonstrate his power now, for Satan? Fast forward to Jesus' cry on the cross, "My father, my father, why hast thou forsaken me?" It's possible that in this moment of wilderness temptation leading up to the crucifixion, Jesus was motivated to prove his own power, apart from his father's, knowing in the Spirit that his father would soon forsake him. In the flesh, did Jesus ponder who he might become without his father? We typically emphasize Judas' kiss as the ultimate betrayal but it's plausible Jesus felt that his father's imminent abandonment could be likened to the type of betrayal an asserter style of leadership would particularly fear. So, it's important to understand that our leadership style is not colored solely by our motive needs but also by our underlying fears. Even more important, is the subject of how we deal with those underlying fears. Jesus confronted each of these temptations of the flesh by quoting scripture, demonstrating that in addition to self-awareness, it's by our connection to the divine that we're brought into the light.

Self-Actualization: Human and Divine

Out of this somewhat dark and depressing state of the human condition came what is known today as the "Humanistic" movement in psychology led by Abraham Maslow and his concept of "self-actualization." As described earlier, prior to Maslow the vast majority of psychologists and researchers focused on human deficiencies: why people act in destructive or neurotic ways, for example. Maslow turned the field upside down when he began to focus on psychological health, well-being and optimal performance. Maslow identified a number of characteristics and traits of these "self-actualizing" individuals that allow them to be more satisfied, more at peace, and ultimately, more effective. And what is perhaps most important to remember is that people aren't born this way. Just like the research into what causes or creates healthy cells in biology, Maslow found that there are changes we can make – both internally and externally in our environments – which facilitate and accelerate our growth and development.

Maslow's most famous contribution to the study of human behavior is his "Hierarchy of Needs" which attempts to explain human motivation from a needs-based and hierarchical perspective. According to Maslow (1954), there are four groups of basic or "deficiency" needs that must be met in ascending order. The goal of every individual is to meet a given need, and then allow a higher order need to emerge to drive our behavior. Maslow illustrated, and many subsequent researchers have pointed out, that satisfying one need does not necessarily mean that a higher order need will emerge. Both research and every day experience demonstrate that many individuals get "stuck" in a certain deficiency need, for recognition or a sense of belonging to others, which can and does adversely impact one's ability for continued growth and development, which is the self-actualizing process.

Figure 1 provides an overview of Maslow’s model, with the three motive needs captured in their appropriate level:

Figure 1



Christian leaders sometimes shy away from Jesus, the man. It’s too tempting to write-off Jesus’ leadership success as strictly a part of the divine and that of no human effort on His own. While it can be argued that Jesus’ dynamism as a leader was sustained by the same Spirit with which Christians believe they’re also filled, we can further identify with Christ by providing a deconstructed view of how He reconciled His humanity, that part of nature subject to the earthly reality with which we all contend, separate from His being fully divine. The challenge of viewing Jesus as fully human lies in our tendency to believe that Jesus’ success as a leader was singularly dependent upon God’s will for Him as His only son. Though unspoken, Christian leaders frequently embody a belief that Jesus was nothing more than a tool used by His Father to fulfill a divine purpose that had absolutely nothing to do with Jesus’ personal desire or will to succeed. How many times have you witnessed a Christian unable to take steps that will move them closer to achieving their goals because they’re waiting on the “nudge of the Spirit?” Lip service is given to the belief that Jesus identifies with our suffering – that lifetime struggle to wholly accept ourselves as imperfect leaders striving toward greater self-actualization.

Comparing ourselves to Him who “knew no sin” makes our aim toward self-actualization seem futile apart from our own connection to the Divine. (II Corinthians 5:21) It’s important to remember though, that here on earth, while Jesus grew in stature, He also grew in wisdom. (Luke 2:52) "Faith without works is dead," in the sense that no matter how much we believe God has a divine purpose for our lives, that purpose is brought to life by taking proactive steps toward reaching our highest potential. (James 2:20)

In a closer examination of how Christianity affects the bottom line for Christian leaders, a popular coping mechanism is often to excuse Jesus’ successful ministry as a God ordained destiny separate from a fully integrated human effort. It’s easy to entertain the ideas of Divinity and Humanity as complexly intertwined. Yet fathoming the plausibility of being fully human, irrespective of a religion or spirit one believes is independently guiding them toward greater self-actualization, is harder to accept for those whose faith defines their worldview. Notwithstanding the supernatural, Jesus’ life was a continuum of practical self-aware choices He made to realize the success He saw as a leader who eventually became perhaps the most iconic symbol of the last 2,000 years, leaving an indelible impact on the world.

The four theoretical frameworks have been discussed in an attempt, albeit brief, to synthesize and integrate these into a comprehensive framework for the ALP. Next, this paper will briefly examine the methodological approach for assessing the reliability and validity of the ALP and *Actualized Performance Cycle*.

Actualized Leader Profile Methodical Approach

There are numerous frameworks for discussing leadership, and several well-known and very insightful assessments available on the market today. Whether individuals complete a specific leadership assessment, such as Hersey and Blanchard's "Situational Leadership" assessment, or one related to personality traits (e.g., Workplace Big 5) or personality preferences (e.g., MBTI), there are numerous well-researched self-assessments that provide valid, reliable and insightful information for enhancing self-awareness and improving performance. What makes the Actualized Leader Profile (ALP) unique is that it is the only scientifically validated leadership assessment, of which we're aware, that is based on measuring motive needs, including self-actualization, while also affording a measure of the darker side (Leadership Shadow) of leadership based on the work of Carl Jung.

The ALP is a 57-item self-report assessment that measures an individual's dominant motive need, corresponding leadership style and leadership "shadow." The statistical analyses support a four-factor model of human motivation and leader behavior, and nine (9) characteristics of self-actualizing individuals (i.e. Actualized leaders). The four-factor model in the PCFA analysis includes Achievement, Affiliation, Power, and Self-Actualization. In this current research effort, "self-actualization" was determined to be a fourth, unique motive need along with the three identified by McClelland, but the ALP conceptualizes this scale as a modifier of the first three needs (measuring intensity of the other needs, and thus the participant's level of reactivity).

Validity for the ALP was established using a Principal Components Factor Analysis (PCFA) to ascertain both the number of factors (four) and the factor loadings for each survey item on the four scales. A four-factor model with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 was generated, and survey items were reduced from 40 to 20 based on the factor loading scores. Eigenvalues ranged from 14.13 – 1.91, and accounted for 44% of the observed variance. The reliability for the ALP was estimated by assessing the internal consistency of the survey items for each of the four scales (i.e., Achievement, Affiliation, Power, and Self-Actualization) by calculating Cronbach's Alpha for each scale item. The standardized item Cronbach's alpha for the four scales ranged from .781 to .857. The research effort is summarized, and conclusions are drawn with specific implications for leadership development.

ALP Methodical Approach in Summary

The Actualized Leader Profile is a valid and reliable self-report assessment for measuring human motivation and leader style, based on the integrated framework resulting from combining the Acquired Needs Theory (McClelland, 1987) and self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). The steps outlined in this effort follow well-accepted guidelines for the scale development process (Hinkin, 1995) and yield a four-factor model of human behavior and leader style, with impressive factor loading well above the suggested .40 cutoff, indicating that the retained survey items assess their desired component as defined in the theoretical framework. Moreover, the scales are estimated to have a high degree of reliability. The scales' average Cronbach's alpha is .818, meaning that the consistency of the items by scale is good. As such, it can be affirmed that the Actualized Leadership Profile is both a precise (valid) and consistent (reliable) assessment for measuring leader style, based on the underlying motive needs of the participant.

Next, let's look at cognitive behavioral therapy as a tool for managing our leadership shadows from a Biblical perspective.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): A Biblical Principle of Transformation

The Leadership Shadow Cycles for all three styles, Fear of Failure (Achiever), Fear of Rejection (Affirmer) and Fear of Betrayal (Asserter) follow the well-known and evidence based approach of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT. CBT is widely used in a variety of clinical and non-clinical applications for improving performance and personal satisfaction and happiness. CBT has been shown to be especially effective in treating anxiety and mood disorders.

People are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them,

Epictetus

The famous Greek philosopher really sums up CBT with this well-known quote. CBT is a powerful framework to help each of us “reframe” events, setbacks, colleagues, and the like so that we can become aware of what we are thinking (hence the name “Cognitive” Behavioral Therapy) and assess whether it is rational and valid, or irrational and incorrect. Once we are able to achieve this level of awareness, we can then replace irrational thoughts with others that are more rational, thereby triggering healthier emotions and more optimal behaviors and responses to any circumstance or situation.

The Leadership Shadow Cycle begins with the most common thoughts associated with each Style, and then illustrates the emotions that are likely triggered and the resulting behaviors. Until we learn to understand the thoughts and limiting beliefs that are triggering negative emotions, we will always be in a highly reactive state where our emotions, and our Leadership Shadow, are managing us.

Additionally, the work in emotional intelligence (known as EI or EQ) has been critical at demonstrating the multiple intelligences that people possess, as well as an understanding of why social or emotional intelligence is so critical for leadership effectiveness. The research in EI demonstrates that the further you go in your career, and the more people you manage, the more important EI is. However, concern with EI is that whether intentional or not we have made emotions “primal” in understanding leadership effectiveness. The ALP framework asserts that behavior doesn’t start with an emotion, it starts with the thought that triggers the emotion, which then can lead to less than optimal or outright dysfunctional behavior. In order to truly grow into our full potential, we must become aware of those thoughts in order to meet our Leadership Shadow.

The Bible dedicates a significant portion of its teaching to an emphasis on transforming our thought life. Scripture instructs us to continuously think about good things (Philippians 4:8). Thinking *wholesome thoughts* isn't as easy as flipping a switch though and requires a reconditioning of our minds to eliminate thoughts that habitually lead us toward negative outcomes. Changing our pattern of thinking requires intentionality. The Bible speaks about our thoughts as if they are a force with which to be reckoned, a power with which we must contend. But many are slow to take an active role in creating new patterns of transformational thinking. According to Scripture, we are to "control our thoughts," "prepare our minds," and "guard our minds." (II Cor. 10:5, I Peter 1:13, Philippians 4:7) This is not a one-time task yet requires a constant state of disciplined "renewal." (Romans 12:2) Leading a disciplined thought life based on the Word of God is a Christian leader's main defense as they experience the dynamics of each *leadership shadow cycle*.

The Dark Side of Achievement: Fear of Failure Leadership Shadow Cycle

Achievers desire perfection, and have an underlying belief that their way is the best. They often struggle with a sense of not feeling worthy and therefore focus on their accomplishments to help prove to the world, and themselves, that they are enough. Unfortunately, the irrational thoughts that underlie the Fear of Failure Shadow trigger the emotions and behaviors that, over time, almost guarantee that Achievers will fail.

Christian leaders struggle with the need for achievement, especially in terms of how they measure up in God's eyes. One author put it this way, "It seemed as if my self-esteem was congruent with my performance or lack thereof. The concepts of abiding and acceptance had yet to penetrate my heart. I knew God had said to Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) but I didn't know he said it to me as well. These were dark times." (Bryan Loritts, *Saving the Saved: How Jesus Saves Us from the Try-Harder Christianity into Performance-Free Love*) This author and many leaders, whether religious or not, use achievement as a means of gaining approval from others to convince themselves they're really enough.

But the Bible says, "It is when the Lord thinks well of us that we are really approved, and not when we think well of ourselves." (II Corinthians 10:18) Further, when we "rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil" we miss out on the rest that God really meant for us as His "beloved sheep." (Psalm 127:1-2) And perhaps Jesus speaks straight to the heart of achievers in his words to Martha as she worked feverishly to earn his approval, "You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed-or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

The Dark Side of Affiliation: Fear of Rejection Leadership Shadow Cycle

Affirmers desire connection to, and approval from, others. They have an underlying belief that relationships are paramount and separation or rejection from others must be avoided at all costs. They often struggle with not feeling wanted unless they are helping others. Unfortunately, the irrational thoughts that underlie the Fear of Rejection Shadow trigger the emotions and behaviors that, over time, almost guarantee that they will experience the rejection and separation they are so desperately trying to avoid.

Despite an affirmers' seemingly insatiable desire to be *chosen* as a friend and confidante, it's imperative that we understand that "Even before he made the world, God loved us and *chose* us..." (Ephesians 1:4) When an affirmer operates from the context of being unconditionally loved, they're more likely to stand up for themselves when others try to take advantage of them. Jesus identified with the rejection affirmers fear most, the Bible stating that "He is despised and rejected of men." (Isaiah 53:3) Christians are promised that "Whoever believes and has decided to trust in Him, for this one, there is no judgment, no *rejection* and no condemnation." (John 3:18) An affirmer's fear of separation can be paralyzing. While it's true that some form of rejection and separation are unavoidable in this life, especially to those who fear it most, Jesus promises that "He will never leave us. He will never forsake us." (Hebrews 13:5)

The Dark Side of Power: Fear of Betrayal Leadership Shadow Cycle

Asserters are natural leaders who crave power and like to be in control. They have an underlying belief that the world is not safe, and that resources are scarce. They often have a very strong "Zero-Sum" mentality, meaning if someone else "wins" then, by default, they "lose" because theirs is a world of scarcity, not abundance. They often have difficulty trusting others and fear vulnerability, often waiting to be betrayed. Unfortunately, the irrational thoughts that underlie the Fear of Betrayal Shadow trigger the emotions and behaviors that, over time, almost guarantee that they will experience the sense of betrayal and loss that they are so desperately trying to avoid.

The Bible provides an alternative route for those who might be tempted to exercise leadership from that dark place of needing to maintain control at all costs. "You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God." (Leviticus 25:43) Though asserters are often gripped by the temptation to take extreme measures for driving their vision, the Bible says to leaders, "Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness, nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock." (I Peter 5:2-3) Joel Peterson, in his book "The 10 Laws of Trust," says "Indeed, I've learned that to trust means taking a leap of faith—a necessary part of giving over control to another." For the assertive leader, it's imperative to understand that in contrast to the scarcity mindset fueled by their shadow, the Bible emphasizes that "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." (James 1:17)

Actualized Performance Cycle

Using Maslow's well known "Characteristics of Self-Actualizing People" as a foundation, the ALP development research over the last twenty years has uncovered the "attributes" of more self-actualized leaders, with a focus on performance in organizational settings (See Appendix X for a full list of Maslow's characteristics and their connection to the 9 Attributes of Actualized Leaders.) Based on this research, the ALP framework identifies nine characteristics of more self-actualized leaders, referred to as the 9 Attributes of Actualized Leaders. There are three (3) attributes categorized across three domains: Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral. When the 9 Attributes of Actualized Leaders are combined, one from each domain (Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral), the conditions are set for three patterns of being and behavior that facilitate optimal and sustained performance. These three patterns – referred to as the 3 Sequences of Self-Actualization – are key for performing at our highest levels, and sustaining said optimal performance. The purpose of this section is to examine each sequence from a cognitive, emotional and behavioral perspective and to relate it back to optimal leader performance.

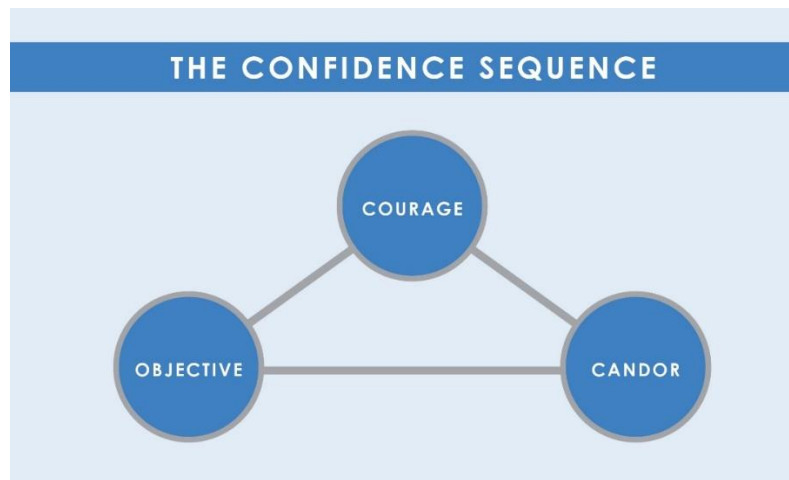
Author, Mildred Banks Wynkoop, in her book "A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism," said, "Faith must always have enough self-awareness to reject one thing, enough to accept another." In order to exercise faith to the fullest, it's important to make choices in favor of the more enlightened aspects of our cognitive, emotional and behavioral being. To choose confidence is to reject insecurity.

To choose optimal performance is to reject sub-par performance. To choose renewal is to reject pre-occupation. Faith is the "substance" of the success for which we all strive as leaders who frequently battle the unseen. (Hebrews 11:1)

The Confidence Sequence

Confidence is quiet; insecurity is loud.

Anonymous



Confidence is defined as *the feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities; a firm trust*. Confidence is more than the fuel that drives productive behavior, however. It is the hopeful expectation in a positive outcome, whether that confidence is placed in one's own ability, or as faith in another, and for Christians, as faith in Christ. **Actualized Leaders** are more fully integrated and balanced, and are more likely to experience true confidence. I use the qualifier "true" to differentiate between arrogance and hubris on the one hand, and false humility and meekness on the other. Confident leaders are those who possess a very high degree of self-awareness, and at the same time trust their colleagues and teammates to make decisions and take appropriate actions.

In order to better understand the *Confidence Sequence*, it is important to understand the three elements that drive this sequence, and they follow: Cognitive: **Objective**; Emotional: **Courage**; and Behavioral: **Candor**. This sequence, and in fact the very foundation of self-actualization, starts with **Objectivity** in our lives. Maslow stated that the most important attribute to develop was our ability to be truly **Objective** in assessing ourselves, others, and our environment, in order to make decisions based on reality, as opposed to our hopes or wishes.

Objectivity sits right at the heart of effective leadership. The irony of dispassionate leadership for achieving objective results is never so potent as in the realm of Christianity, a religion marked by the historical paradox of "holy war." This oxymoron presents itself at the institutional and interpersonal levels of Christian leadership. Christian leaders are pressed on every side to lead with passion at the exclusion of their personal feelings and opinions when interpreting the facts of Christianity to their parishioners and communities. These expectations are felt even more in a post-modern climate where objectivity is increasingly synonymous with political correctness. Not only are Christian leaders required to remain objective within their church or denomination but they're also pressured to develop an alternative objectivity for dealing with those outside their circle.

Religious leaders once asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" No doubt, the question was, in their minds one of complete objectivity but upon taking a closer look, their motive was emotionally charged, ultimately looking for a reason to accuse Jesus. In response to the personal attack, Jesus uses this as a pivotal teaching moment to point out the need for an objectivity based on interpersonal needs versus institutional mandates. "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Matthew 12:11

Following **Objectivity** is the Emotional Attribute of **Courage**. **Courage** refers to the emotional resolution to live at least part of our lives outside of our comfort zone, and to effectively manage our fear. Nelson Mandela famously said that courage is "not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

Courage allows us to take our **Objective** assessment of our environment, or ourselves, and to have the emotional fortitude to take the necessary but often painful or unpopular actions to live our purpose and highest potential.

The Bible is rich with leadership examples that clearly present the characters as courageous heroes of the plot. Upon closer examination, these heroes always walked a tight line between success and failure and it was their courage fueled by an indomitable faith that later made their story worth canonization. Esther is one such character. In the shadows, she learned of a political plot that involved the possible annihilation of her people, the Jewish people. She found herself at her own crossroads of courage and no one, including Mordecai, understood the full complexity of the decision with which she was faced. In spite of the risk and temptation to maintain her comfort as queen she decided to face danger and possible death by getting entangled in the political realm of her leadership role.

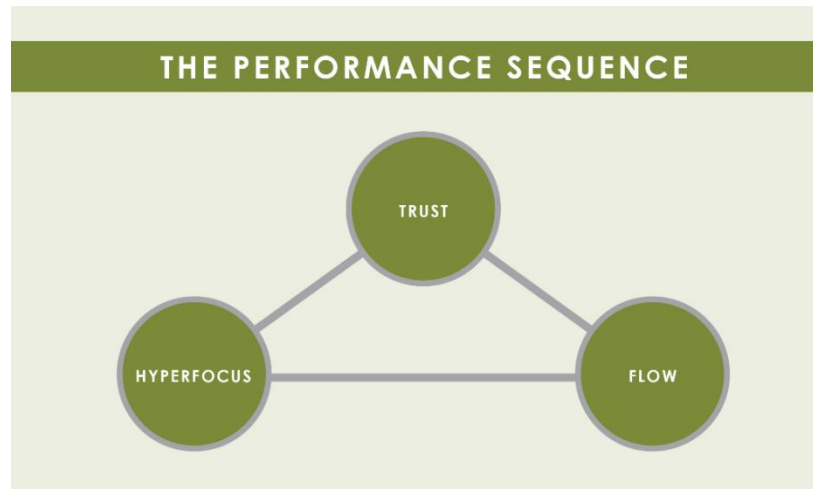
Finally, from thinking and feeling with **Objectivity** and **Courage** comes the behavioral manifestation of **Candor**. **Candor** is the state of being forthright, open, and sincere in our communications with others. It is not the state of being blunt or rude, but it is the ability to be frank and honest with others. **Actualized Leaders** often have a strong abiding belief that being candid with others is an expression of honoring them without making assumptions about their likely response or reaction to it.

Jesus' entire ministry was shaped by his practice of candor. Not once did Jesus mince words when it meant cutting to the heart of the matter and saving lives in the process. Perhaps the most poignant example of Jesus' candor was expressed in his exchange with the woman at the well when he indiscriminately pointed out her infidelities. For most, we'd skirt around the issue and sugarcoat the message in favor of preserving another's feelings and escaping our own embarrassment. Yet Jesus fully understood that the outcome of candor is a discovery of truth and it's "knowing the truth that sets us free." (John 8:32) When these three Attributes are in place, you are more likely to experience true, grounded, and realistic **Confidence**, which is the fuel necessary to propel you to your highest potential and purpose. Ultimately, as Christians in pursuit of greater self-actualization, we can be "Confident of this, that he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

The Performance Sequence

The emotional reaction in the peak experience has a special flavor of wonder, of awe, of reverence, of humility and surrender.

Abraham Maslow



The *Performance Sequence* refers to an optimal state of performance, which today is also known as “Flow.” Flow was the term coined by the University of Chicago psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi to describe the state of being *fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus and enjoyment in the process of the activity*. In essence, Flow is characterized by complete absorption in the moment where one often loses track of time, or forgets to eat, because of the profound sense of engagement in the activity. In more popular vernacular it is often referred to as being “in the zone.”

In order to achieve Flow, the task or activity must be challenging, but not so challenging as to create anxiety, and also must match your current skill set, but not be so easy that it creates boredom. When you find this zone or "Flow Channel" between challenge and skill, you are more likely to experience Flow or Peak Performance as illustrated below.

In order to better understand the *Performance Sequence*, it is important to understand the three elements that drive this sequence, and they follow: Cognitive: **Hyperfocus**; Emotional: **Trust**; and Behavioral: **Flow**. The Bible gives us instructions not to "neglect the gift that [we] have...to practice these things, immerse [ourselves] in them, so that all may see [our] progress." (I Timothy 4:14-15) The Bible also instructs us to "Commit our works to the Lord, so that our plans will be established," (Proverbs 16:3) With God at the helm of our performance plan, we can be sure that he will teach us to do the "good works" that He's prepared for us to do "beforehand," disallowing the negative outcomes associated with an Achiever's obsession to perform just for the sake of gaining approval from others. (Ephesians 2:10) Hyperfocus, trust and flow are built into God's model for success.

The *Performance Sequence* starts with having **Hyperfocus**. Having an intense focus is critical not only for concentrating on the task-at-hand, but also for triggering the emotional (Trust) and behavioral (Flow) manifestations of Peak Performance. Hyperfocus allows us manage the normal day-to-day distractions of social media or pop culture so that we can intensely concentrate for sustained periods of time on the task at hand. Biblically, we're admonished to "look directly forward" and to let our "gaze be straight before" us. (Proverbs 4:25).

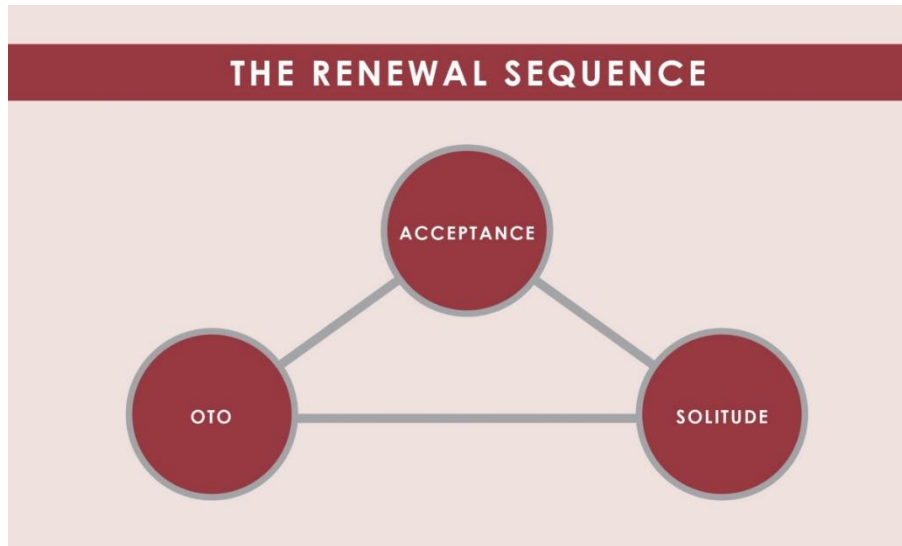
Following **Hyperfocus** is the Emotional Attribute of **Trust**. **Trust** refers to the emotional state of having a confident expectation in the character and performance of others. Trusting others allows us to delegate more effectively, often freeing up the time and space or "runway" to experience Flow. Moreover, **Trust** in one's own ability is critical for managing the personal risk that is often required for performing at an optimal level. The Bible also instructs us to "Trust in the Lord with all [our] heart and lean not unto our own understanding." (Proverbs 3:5) This verse that many Christians have recited from childhood carries a lot of psychological punch. It's not just a fairy dust admonition to trust, an act that often seems a lot like magic. Yet it addresses two intertwined aspects of our humanity with which we must all contend, heart and mind, when reaching toward a worthwhile state of being. We're not to seek to maintain control by reasoning through our circumstances, creating if/then statements and plugging everything and everyone into our own equation of understanding. Christ should be the cornerstone of our ability to extend trust to ourselves and others.

Finally, from thinking and feeling with **Hyperfocus** and **Trust** comes the behavioral manifestation of **Flow**. **Flow** is that state of performing "in the zone" where one is totally immersed in an activity and able to perform at very high levels with seemingly little effort. We often think of Michael Jordan on the court as a quintessential example of this state. Music fans often refer to Rush's drummer Neil Peart playing "Tom Sawyer" as an example, and movie buffs may cite one of Meryl Streep's 19 Academy Award-nominated roles as exemplifying this state of total immersion and transcendent performance. When these three Attributes are in place, you are more likely to experience this transcendent state of total immersion and satisfaction, which Maslow famously said gives a profound new sense of meaning to life itself. For any Christian who has experienced this state of transcendence, you'll hear from them that *flow* is a "blessing" and mystery of spiritual abundance as expressed in the hymn penned by Thomas Ken on the campus of Winchester College, "Praise God from whom all blessings *flow*, praise him all creatures here below, praise him above ye heavenly host, praise father, son and holy ghost."

The Renewal Sequence

We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves; otherwise we harden.

Goethe



A common symbol for **Renewal** is a rainbow. Whether viewed from the perspective of God’s promise to never flood the earth again, or from a more natural perspective of the interplay between sunlight and moisture after a storm, the image conjures the notion of something new and fresh. “Renewal” is defined as follows: *to make like new; restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection*. From a human performance perspective, it represents a space or “sacred pause” from activity and engagement to allow for rest and reflection. It is within the *Renewal Sequence* where we not only learn about ourselves and others, it is where we reflect, reconnect, and recharge so that we are ready to face another day’s challenge with vigor, creativity, and passion.

The Bible likens renewal to "waiting," promising that those who "Wait for the Lord will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary." (Isaiah 40: 30-31) Emily P. Freeman, in her book "Grace for the Good Girl: Letting Go of the Try-Hard Life, says, "Jesus didn't put expectations on himself. He didn't micromanage his own image and constantly try to align his reality with his ideal. Instead, he lived expectantly, *waiting* for the next step. His was a life of total and complete dependence and submission to the voice and will of his Father." (Freeman, pg. 31) So then, *waiting* is the opposite of *doing* and renewal depends upon our willingness to submit to the process of patient renewal through Christ.

In order to better understand the *Renewal Sequence*, it is important to understand the three elements that drive this sequence, and they follow: Cognitive: **Optimal Time Orientation (OTO)**; Emotional: **Acceptance**; and Behavioral: **Solitude**. The *Renewal Sequence* starts with being mindful in the present moment, what the ALP refers to as having **Optimal Time Orientation** or **OTO**. Giving ourselves the gift of this moment, without focusing on past regrets or anxiety for the future, and without distraction from “smart” phones or social media, is a powerful shift that is critical for performance. When we allow ourselves to be present, we not only experience **OTO**, we also create the necessary conditions for renewal, rest, and regeneration. Followers often misunderstood Jesus' intentions when his timing did not align to their expectations. There were multiple times when healings seemed to take place "late" while Jesus was busy "living in the present" of another moment. Perhaps one of the most difficult scriptures for Christians to understand is John 8:32, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself." This verse however, lies at the heart of Optimal Time Orientation.

Following **OTO** is the Emotional Attribute of **Acceptance**. It has been argued that **Acceptance**, what Tara Brach refers to as “radical acceptance,” is perhaps the greatest gift you can give yourself. Maslow argued the same point. Accepting yourself, flaws and all, allows you to experience true inner peace and tranquility. Carl Jung pupil Isabel Briggs Myers (cocreator of the MBTI) stated that the most well-adjusted people are those who are “glad to be what they are, or are psychologically patriotic.”

That's a very powerful notion; are you loyal to yourself and your true nature, or do you commit treason against yourself everyday by disavowing your nature and resisting self-acceptance?

Christianity facilitates self-acceptance by giving leaders a way by which to see themselves anew. David expressed this understanding in his prayer that God "Create in [him] a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within [him]." (Psalm 51:10) From a Christian perspective, self-acceptance isn't about accepting ourselves without the intention to change. Self-acceptance also comes with the responsibility to "lay aside the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." Colossians 3:9-10

Finally, from thinking and feeling with **OTO** and **Acceptance** comes the behavioral outcome of **Solitude**, which triggers personal **Renewal**. **Solitude** refers to an intentional state of being alone that facilitates reflection, relaxation, and planning. Although it may be commonly thought of as something negative and to be avoided at all costs in our hyperconnected and extreme-extroverted world, it is crucial for our ongoing growth and development. In her book "Introvert Power," Dr. Laurie Helgoe reminds us that while we are bombarded from a very early age to develop social skills, we as a society are woefully inadequate at fostering "solitude skills" where we learn to create and protect personal boundaries, foster creativity, and nurture the life of the mind. The Bible's antidote to this state of existence is a proactive pursuit of those elements that foster renewal, "For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength." (Isaiah 30:15) It's also important to remember that solitude for a Christian never means to be completely alone for he said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." (Exodus 33:14)

Implications and Conclusion

Throughout this article, we've provided a view of the Actualized Leader Profile from a Christian faith based perspective. While many psychologists resist a grounding in one religion over another to support their scientific claims, history proves that the spiritual aspect of our total being cannot be divorced from an honest assessment of our personality and particularly, our leadership style. The intent is not to "generalize the basic model of the psychoanalytic movement (upon which much of the ALP framework is based) to one that [is] more explicitly religious or spiritualist." (Richard Noll, pg. 61) Yet, this paper should serve as a tool to facilitate the application of both psychological and spiritual principles through the lens of Christianity, as a means of understanding how the divine plays an irrefutable part in our ability to emerge as self-actualized leaders.

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