

WORKING

— WITH —

GOD

*The Ten Modes of
Elevated Leadership*

DR. ELIYAHU LOTZAR

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Elevated Leadership*

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Leadership with a kick!

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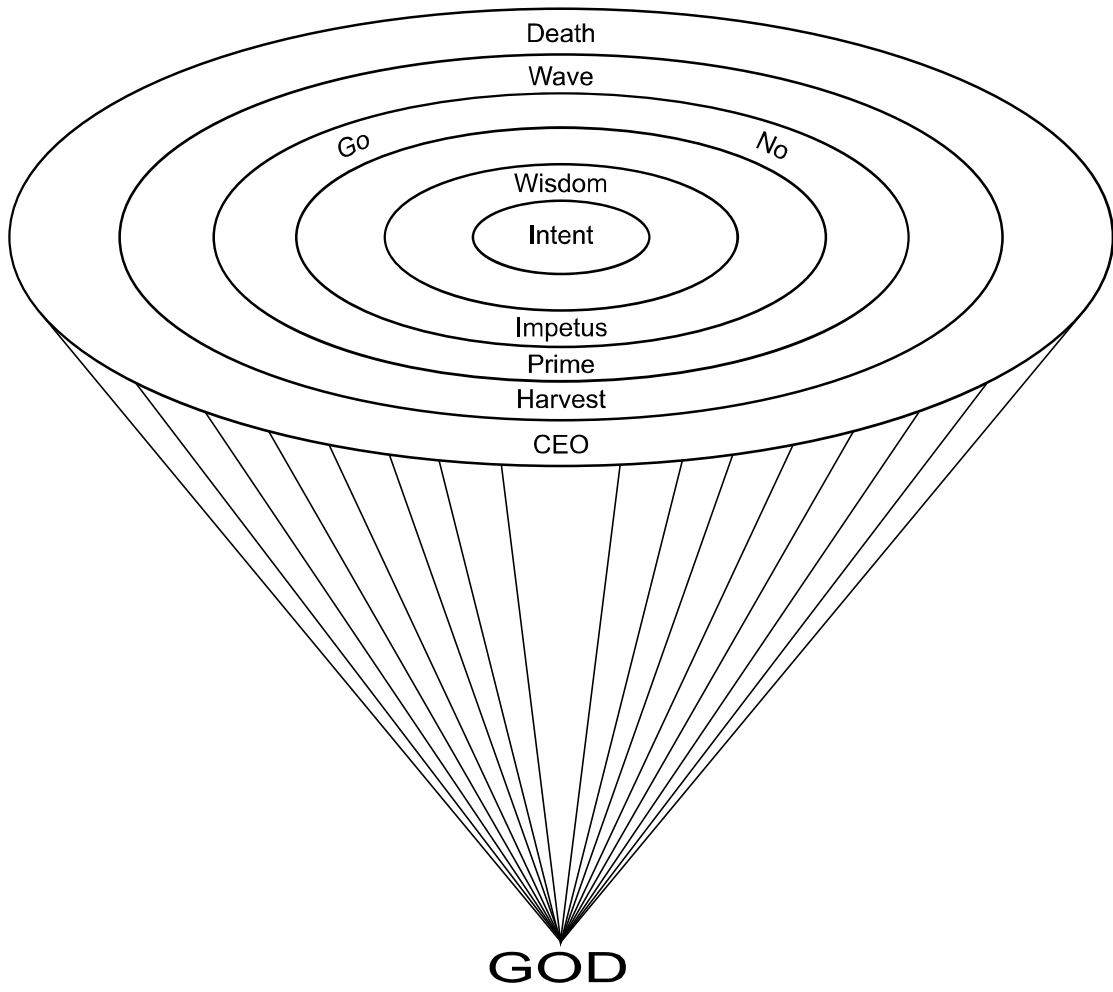


*Dedicated to you, dear reader.
With whom else would God work?*

I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.

Abraham Lincoln, 1864

Letter to a Missouri grievance committee



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INTRODUCTION

There are many good books on bringing God into one's work. They give sage advice, highlight biblical principles, and provide examples from the author's life and work. This book also gives some advice and tells stories from the lives of CEOs who work with God, but it is not primarily an advice-giving book or a storybook.

This book is also not moralistic. Many people hear the word "God," automatically jump to "morality," and hold their noses against the stale smell of religious pontification. I take it for granted that you are already moral and also aware that you have room for moral improvement.

No, this book is for you, a leader, to work directly with the Grand Creator Himself. It is my hope that it will help you work with God more efficiently and effectively, with more peace and power. This book is designed to tie you, your project, your entire organization, and God, together.

Investing yourself in establishing and/or strengthening your personal relationship with God will elevate your leadership.

What would it be like to involve God in your work? Or, if you already do that, to involve God more deeply? How would it affect you? How would it change your business? How would it impact your stakeholders?

Working with God may sound interesting, exciting, or even amazing. Or it may sound like career suicide. In any case, a structure to bring God into your business is smart. This book provides such a structure. It provides a tool for the challenge of dealing with God, with yourself, with your business, with God in your business, and with you in God's business.

WHY WORK WITH GOD? (LET'S TALK ROI)

Working with God *may* increase your bottom line. It *will* lighten your attitude, expand your viewpoint, and improve the depth of wisdom in your decision-making. It will sometimes bring joy even in turmoil. Working with God will strengthen beneficial attributes such as stability, openness, discernment, and grit. We may or may not put those things as metrics in the annual report, but we do want them.

The extra compassion it brings gives your organizational culture a competitive advantage, as compassion reduces internal friction. Innovative competition increasingly fuels the speed of change. Organizations *have to be* excellent; the days are pretty much gone when a good-enough business is good enough. We demand only excellent, high-performing employees. Compassion, in proper measure and properly placed, brings higher performance to the *team*, not just to the individual.

The race-for-best intensifies a values clash that is already basic to organizational life. On the one hand, we require constantly increasing throughput and consistently better outcomes. Better outcomes are better for the organization and stressful for its employees. On the other hand, we are human; we don't believe operating at a constant '10' stress level is good, and we want to treat employees and consumers as humans rather than as objects.

Gallup polls have shown¹ that employees really want to have a good time at work. They want collegiality, collaboration, and a sense of purpose beyond paycheck. Most people want their time at work to feed their soul, not just fuel their resume or make the owners rich. In the face of organizational decisions based on big data, 'human capital' analytics, remote work, and AI, your staff seeks to humanize their work experience. And that means providing opportunities for them to find meaning at work. In the 1980s, it was "*SHOW ME THE MONEY!!*" Now, the staff's mantra is "*SHOW ME THE MEANING!!*"

You already feed your employees' bank accounts; now, you are asked to feed their souls. They need it and seek it. Of course, to feed their souls, *you* also need to be tanked up with meaning, and you, too, need to feel taken care of.

Being tanked up and cared for is a simple, practical reason to work with God. After all, God does love you, always. Always, always, always, even when you make an 'oops.' Even a very bad 'oops.' God restores your strength by

¹Rothwell, J. and Crabtree, S. (2019). *Not Just a Job: New Evidence on the Quality of Work in the United States*. Lumina Foundation, retrieved on 6/19/2024 from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/not-just-a-job-new-evidence-on-the-quality-of-work-in-the-united-states.pdf>, Charts 9–11.

guiding you in the most efficient paths, as well as while you sleep and do not notice Him. And as for providing meaning, God has readied suits of tailor-made meaning for you and your people.²

There are more good reasons to bring God into your work of leadership. First, regardless of how excellent your organizational vision is, God's vision is always *perfect*. He sees what we don't. Second, bringing God into your leadership increases your peace and sense of security. That, in turn, allows you to make wise decisions at higher levels of risk and pressure. Third, God ups your relationship skills by changing how you see and be with others. Fourth, it can be lonely at the top. Wouldn't you like to have a friend who understands you and your situation, never has a selfish motive, and never steers you wrong? You don't always "got this," and even a CEO peer group doesn't always help. God has seen it all, and He loves you dearly. With God, you are never lonely. With God, you are also not at the top. That may sound unpleasant, but in reality, it's a relief. While everyone else sees you on top, you act in the security of His *with-you-ness*.

Lastly, though God is the ultimate friend and helper, our democracies have forgotten His majesty. Today's American is born into a social system that spent several centuries equalizing all manner of creatures, big and small. God is not just your friend; God is the Almighty. Since He owns the company, the land under the company, us in the company,

²If you haven't read or listened to Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (2012, Zondervan Press), I recommend his easy-to-read post-Postmodern statement about how God provides purpose and meaning for life and work.

and the air in us, it's probably wise for us to work with Him. After all, from where does your power ultimately originate?

WHY YOU?

Suppose you believe that God exists or may exist, but religion and/or spirituality make you uncomfortable or semi-uncomfortable. In that case, you have probably invested more of yourself in your relationship to work than in your relationship to God. This book is here to help you put a penny or two on the other side of that scale.

If you are already a faith-filled, God-loving leader, this book can enrich your conversation with God and help you through bad times and good. This book, with its modes, stories, and action steps, will help you 'make the low places high and the high places low so that the glory of the Lord will be revealed' more and more in you and through you at work. Stay tuned.

If you are reading this, you are probably not a committed skeptic.

WHY ME?

I coach executives, lead leadership retreats, and design and lead organizational transformation initiatives. I've started and run successful and unsuccessful business ventures. I hold a Doctorate in Executive Leadership with seminal research into employee soft skills that has been continually accessed by commercial, educational, government, and military entities around the globe for years now. Still, many organizational consultants are more accomplished than I am.

But business is only part of the puzzle. For whatever reason, when I was eight years old, the holy God revealed Himself to me. As I looked out over the massive stone platform of what had been God's house in Jerusalem for almost a thousand years, there He was. Though formless, He was overwhelmingly present. He was alive. He was dense and weighty, grand, yet quiet. He radiated and yet contained enormous power. So very ancient, patient, kind. Untouchable yet intimately close, wholly present until there was nothing else. He exuded complete authority. What He conveyed carried more weight than any words anyone had ever said to me, even my parents, who were—or had been, up until that moment—my source of safety, meaning, and truth. When you meet God, you know that He is God.

Moving images across the screen of my mind, God showed me people as they hustled and bustled nearby. They were doing religion—in this case, religious Muslims on top of the temple platform and religious Jews in the plaza below—and regular folk doing their workaday things in the modern part of the city. Maybe with words, maybe heart-to-heart, He told me that people aren't looking to know Him, even many of those who think they are. I could see that they sincerely thought they were looking for Him. Yet, in the depth of truth that mostly only God sees, they were not. They were just being busy doing their best but pursuing matters of their own design.

Some were looking *at* Him or at their image of Him, but none were looking *for* Him. They were busy creating God in their own image, objectifying Him, and thereby objectifying themselves. In the process, they put a veil in front of their minds. Seeing God makes easy sense to a child, but adults have many reasons and commitments that fog their once

clear windshield. And how do *you* feel when someone you love deeply doesn't get you?

This book responds to the wistfulness I felt in the Ancient of Days, a love almost like a pain or a sadness. Without much drama, this book offers an opportunity of amazing significance.

God wants us to look for Him. Really. His riches await. He'd love for us to look up for just a moment and knock on His office door. He wants us to come in, have a holy hug, share a meal, peek at the real radiance of life, and go back to our work full of peace and inner joy, focused and ready to share a richer life—of which the workplace is such an integral part.

So here is your opportunity. Do you want to work with God?

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book describes ten modes. When you familiarize yourself with these modes, you more quickly locate and correct imbalances in yourself, others, and teams. Recognizing that you or others are in any particular mode provides a starting point for you to turn to God in a short prayer: “God, I didn’t get what was wrong, but now I do. Show me how to move the team and myself forward.”

Use this book when:

- Your decisions have significant ramifications.
- Things aren’t working well in your organization or in a part of it. Or when you are doing so well that you risk the ignorance of arrogance.

This book starts with your business. Good news: it *is* about you. The book then moves beyond your business to God’s business. Better news: it’s *not* about you.

Modes 1-6. The first six chapters bring to life six modes necessary to start and optimize an initiative. That initiative might be a startup, a strategic initiative in a developed organization, or a project. These first six chapters map the modes to organizational functions and provide ways to develop an action-oriented relationship with God. That relationship should help you lead, manage, and keep your business at the peak of its organizational lifecycle.

Having that relationship with God prevents you from being captured by your own favorite values and their blinding biases. It gives God permission to influence your circumstances. He offers *more* than what you normally see. The price? As in a successful human-to-human relationship, you soften your ego. The mature professionals around you will respect that.

Modes 7-10. After you've traveled the first six modes, you reach a door. Beyond the door is *God's* business, *God's* goals. Four modes help you become CEO under God. Go through the door or stay on the road more traveled; it's your choice.

Apply the Action Steps in each chapter and you should feel more connected to God and your business. This connection gives you more peace *and* edge-of-your-seat aliveness. It will also give your business more agility as you move from mode to mode.

DEFINING "BUSINESS"

In this book, "business" refers to any ongoing group that comes together to create value for others. It relates primarily to commercial outfits but also includes nonprofits, associations, government agencies, sports clubs,

healthcare organizations, etc. If it regularly organizes people and resources to create value, it's "business."

DEFINING "MODES"

A mode is a state of operation. A mode is a distinct mental, emotional, operational, and spiritual space hidden in daily life. It's a framework that focuses our perceptions, thoughts, choices, and actions. When we are in a mode, we see, feel, think, believe, and act as guided by that mode. Modes behave as filters in front of our lenses, narrowing and adding color and importance to the world out there. They also connect us with this or that characteristic, or mode of operation, of God. This narrowing allows us to comprehend and act in accordance with a world and a God that is too vast to take in and relate to all at once.

If we are in 'hourly worker' mode, we focus first on how something happening in our environment might influence how many hours we work, how much we get paid per hour, what our supervisor means when she says she expects us to 'go above and beyond,' etc. If we see an employee's behavior as guided by 'hourly worker mode,' we see that their behavior isn't only personal, it's also structural, and that gives us the mental flexibility to create a new structure. For instance, if we entered them into a profit-sharing agreement, their mode would be less focused on 'me and mine.' It would expand to 'us and ours.' That might bring other headaches, but it's an example of how we can use modes to change behavior without the hassles of using carrots and sticks.

Though there is a relationship between organizational culture and modes, which mode you are in changes more rapidly than which culture you are in. When conscious of

which mode you are in, you are free to choose to stay in it or move out of it to a more helpful mode. That is why modes are more useful in organizational change than is culture. Practice noticing and guiding yourself through modes. This allows you to see them in yourself and those you lead, giving you leverage.

Modes influence outcomes by increasing or decreasing the perceived utility of various options. Let's say you are that hourly worker's supervisor. They come to you and ask for a raise. If you are in management mode, you might think of the ripple effect on the rest of the staff and the budget you have to deal with. You might say, "Well John, let me think about it," and are stalling for time to find a way to have the least blowback when you say 'no.' If you are feeling for the guy, knowing that his kid was just diagnosed with a treatable but painful and expensive disease, you might be in 'do the right thing for the guy' mode. You might say, "Well John, let me think about it," and, being in that help-the-guy mode, are already thinking of some things you can do to try to get his wages increased, duties lightened, and his schedule made more flexible.

Modes influence others. Anyone new to a department is quickly schooled in who the good and bad guys are outside their new department. It's not far-fetched to have two of your teams be in perennial conflict mode—for instance, sales and legal. Or maybe two teams used to work well together, but a feeling developed in one team that the new executive favors the other and gets them special favors. Team members start assuming that members of the other are selfish, even cutthroat, and maybe even use words like 'idiots.' Those negative perceptions encourage feelings of aloneness and danger. Perceiving danger, they must then protect themselves.

That first team will look out for itself regardless of how inaccurate their original perception of the other team was because they believe their perceptions and thoughts. The other team, naturally, sees the first team protecting itself, and it does likewise—doom loop. Against everyone’s better judgement, their time and productive energy are gnawed away as they obsess about others’ actions.

Modes are self-perpetuating. Human reality reproduces through the mind’s definition of circumstance. Our mode of operation falls under Newton’s first law of motion: we stay in the mode we are in until a force of sufficient strength intervenes to change our direction. That’s why crime shows look at the criminal’s “MO,” their *modus operandi*, to predict future behavior.

Sometimes we need external help to see and/or get out of a mode. Because God is omniscient, He always sees another angle. As you build your relationship with God, you develop the ability to hear or feel God and receive His help in moving yourself and others into a more helpful mode. Sometimes that means you must admit something insufficiently good about how you’ve been leading and change. But it is better to admit it to yourself and change than to suppress it and be accused of it publicly.

DEFINING GOD

I’ve used the word “God” enough by now to have to define the word. This definition is also a bit heady.

The pronoun problem. I refer to God in He/Him/His language. Not “PC,” I know. (Then again, neither is mentioning God.) The truth is, I haven’t met a theologian who thinks that God is limited to being male. Since God is a unity

beyond the material that He created, God encompasses the male/female dichotomy even if He also exists within it.

*Human reality reproduces through the
mind's definition of circumstance.
Because God is omniscient,
He always sees another angle.*

Then there is the bit about simplicity. You probably don't want me to write "He who is He and She and beyond either He or She" every time I say "He." Also, the Bible refers to God as He (also as They), so when you check out what the Bible says about God (if you do), this book will align. But don't let the gender thing get you stuck. If it is a problem, put a pin in it and keep going.

Why leave such an important point alone? Because of the second, more serious point: God is so big that we humans cannot define God.

God is; man slices and dices. Defining anything is saying: "It's *this*, not that." Defining what is as "only this" slices a part from whole-cloth reality. This slicing up diminishes the impact of reality in us, making it possible to handle and ultimately to master. The tactic is very useful. It allows us to rearrange pieces, accomplish things, and change our reality's landscape. As a leader, you know the power of words. Master your words, and you master your reality. Or so it seems.

By separating truth into distinct parts to be able to master our reality, we also distance ourselves from reality itself, which, made by the One, *is* one. The more we master our reality through our traditional habit of understanding, the

more we veil ourselves from God's power and radiant glory and His created truth. We think we know. But distanced from actual reality and its Creator, we lose our sustenance and joy. We stop "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" with God.³ We lock ourselves in our own understanding and seek a God who never left us. Lacking the connection with God and His luscious whole-cloth reality, leaders lapse, tyrants fall, empires break apart, depression, anxiety, anger, insufficiency, and all manner of fears beset us. And, we get stuck in whatever modes we believe will get us back to living in the whole cloth reality with God.

Enough said. If God is, then God is the whole; we are a part, and the part cannot see to define the whole. To work with God, you'll need faith a sincere willingness to check Him out. You'll at least need some smidgeon of emerging faith to see if He is real and will bring you beyond the constraints of your definitions and competing narratives and values. One way to do that is to focus on the unifying modes—in this book, they are "Prime" and "CEO." Another is to train yourself in modal agility, moving from one mode of relationship with reality and God to another mode of relationship with reality and God. This book is designed to help

³In the biblical account, the first thing God speaks to man is to tell him that all things are permissible for his consumption except that "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die." (Gen 2:17 ESV) But in one of the most pivotal moments of the Bible, we indeed eat of the knowledge of good and evil, opposing appetites, and competing values. As a consequence, we immediately no longer see God. Rather, upon hearing Him among us, we hide ourselves from seeing Him: "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the breeze of the day, and they hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." (Gen 3:8 BSB)

you get modally agile and give you the ability to get unstuck from whatever definitive but limited reality you may be in at any given time. And the living God is always with you to guide you beyond the slices that you call reality. God is the constant of our changing relationships to the changing world.

But to grasp the Constant, you'll need to sit with Him without defining Him, without the intellectual "He is this not that" understanding that is the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. In Moses' first recorded interaction with God, he asks God to name Himself. God names Himself "*Ehieh Asher Ehieh*," "I Will Be What I Will Be",⁴ defining Himself without being defined. God will always be One.

DEFINING BIBLE

We can keep this one simple. That this book refers to "The Bible," may be seen by some readers as Christocentric or Judeo-Christian-centric. Aye, 'tis. Though I am familiar with many world scriptures, this book keeps it simple: "The Bible" refers to Genesis through Revelation. If you have fully lived out all that is in those books and still see it as insufficient, I look forward to meeting you.

BUSINESS, MODES, GOD, BIBLE: WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

It really is all about love. It's about God's business of love, and the love of God's business, and us here together in this big adventure of love.

Let's go.

⁴Exodus 3:14