

# HOW TO LEAD: *The Dominator*

## DO'S

## DON'TS

### DO *this*

### ... *Not* THIS



Be honest, assertive



Allow to lead in areas of strength, casting vision for where you hope to go



Model leadership through serving (Mark 9:35)



Confront lovingly, empathetically (sometimes privately); stick up for the dominated



Politely interrupt: "I like what you're saying about ... what do you guys think?"



Stay logical, steady, neutral, direct



Come out stronger for a contest of wills



Let them take over; be passive



Shy away from humility because you "can't afford to lose ground"



Fail to expose how their behavior affects others



Surrender when they're passionate, allow to consistently interrupt



Get emotional, insecure, overapologetic, or consistently allow denial of behavior

# HOW TO LEAD:

# The Wallflower

EASILY OVERLOOKED BECAUSE YOU NEVER HEAR HER SAY ANYTHING

## DO'S & DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS

### Help group members refrain from

- Interrupting.
- Steering the conversation their own direction.
- Finishing this person's sentences.
- One-upmanship.
- Discomfort with quiet spaces in conversation.
- Overreacting or personal critiques, which can communicate a lack of emotional safety.

Let a more dominant or talkative personality run group conversation.

### Invite the person or couple for coffee or dinner to build trust and intimacy. In your interactions

- Give space for them to thoughtfully respond.
- Consider a quality-time activity to break the ice (board games? A walk? bowling?).
- Start conversation with sharing meaningfully, then ask deeper questions about the introvert's personal journey.

Follow norms of the "extrovert ideal." Being a good speaker isn't the same as having wise, thoughtful ideas. Introverts can be focused, reflective, circumspect—even better listeners. What innate value does your wallflower add?

### Ask for their input amid group conversation. Then draw out more of the Wallflower's heart:

- What was that like for you?
- What are you afraid will happen?
- What do you hope will happen?
- What do you wish would happen?

Fail to discern: What lies beneath their natural reticence to speak? How could you create more comfort? If you don't understand what lies beneath, "getting them to talk" can grow more important than the person.

Privately ask a friendly, thoughtful group member to quietly help your Wallflower feel welcome.

Force them into the spotlight. There are likely reasons they're uncomfortable sharing extensively. Respect privacy and be patient! Their lack of sharing or comfort ≠ your failure.

Earn their trust and respect through emotional intelligence, organization, thoughtful responses, and a gentle approach. Share conversation topics beforehand via group email.

Feel like group conversation is the goal or that the wallflower has nothing to say. Instead, ask one-on-one for more feedback.

# HOW TO LEAD:

# Off-roader

WHO LOVES TO VEER OFF-TOPIC—TAKING YOUR GROUP WITH HIM.

## DO'S & DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS



Politely interrupt. "Let's stop for a minute. I want to respect everyone's time and let anyone else chime in."



Host a group with no time for connection before and after or for full, easy discussion of the topic.



Pull aside the off-roader beforehand. "I noticed a few people aren't joining in the discussion as much. Would you be willing to hold back a bit so I can give space for that?"



Forget to prioritize the fellowship and relationship-building that form an interesting, supportive, well-connected group—not just a social Bible study.



Close off a topic clearly by asking, "Is there anything someone wants to add before we move on?"



Fail to be an assertive facilitator. Sometimes your group may be hoping you'll step in with the long-winded.



Tactfully ask, "I may be missing something. Can you help me connect what you're saying to the topic of \_\_\_?"



Lose sight of compassion. Instead, create a culture where people can be themselves and enjoy humor and humanity.



Present a key question to pull people back on topic.



Lack the confidence to ask, "May I interrupt you here?"



Ask a question to restore an interrupted speaker's dignity. "You were communicating something important. Can I ask you to continue what you were saying?"



Be so goal-focused you miss opportunities to set aside the topic and care for a member's acute need.

# HOW TO LEAD:

# The Oversharer

WHO MAY NOT KNOW WHAT QUALIFIES AS "MORE THAN YOU NEED TO KNOW"

## DO'S & DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS



Help them cut to the chase: "I want to make sure I'm following you. What happened regarding [topic at hand]?"



Discern: Is this vulnerable? (connecting; challenging to greater intimacy, even if controversial)

Or is it inappropriate? (alienating; dominating with too much story; indiscreet)



Say, "Thanks for sharing. I appreciate you setting a tone of vulnerability for the rest of us. I want to make sure everyone gets a chance to chime in, so let me present the question again..."



"Let me pause you briefly. I do want to hear your story. But I also want to respect how this may affect people who (have a different life experience/may have strong feelings with this topic/don't feel comfortable with the play-by-play of your 43-hour labor).

"Would you mind fast-forwarding so we can still hear the heart of what matters to you? Your story's important here.



Welcome each member's humanity—while keeping one from dominating the spotlight. We want community that's a (less intimate) version of "naked and unashamed" (Genesis 2:25).



Forego consideration for group members by relinquishing your role as leader—and fail to assertively step in with the long-winded.



Passively forget to shepherd the individual (outside of the group) toward self- and others-awareness. Rather, gently seek to understand why they overshare—Do they lack a friend or someone to listen? Do they know what to reveal when?



Create an atmosphere lacking grace. Awkwardness, neediness, or even instability are chances to show how Jesus responds to our weakness.



Fail to pray about why the oversharer grates on you personally. Do you

- Tend to be task-oriented?
- Shy away from intimate conversation?
- Struggle with impatience?
- Grow irritated with poor social skills?
- Have a strong idea of the perfect group?



Keep the oversharer from perceiving your group as a safe place. Communicate freedom from shame, even when members are less than socially desirable or self-aware (see 1 Corinthians 12:23).

# HOW TO LEAD:

# The Scoffer

MAY MAKE THE LAST PERSON WHO TALKED WISH THEY HADN'T.

## DO'S

## DON'TS

### DO *this*

### ... *Not* THIS

Attempt to understand possible "whys" beneath the scoffing:

- Frustration with flawed social norms & limited perspectives.
- Longing to be an individual; for compelling, honest dialogue.
- Desire to enlighten listeners, or appear insightful.
- Past pain from conventional ideas.

Ostracize the scoffer (or reject valid points) because they're a pain in the neck.

Instead, show that those off-the-beaten-path, outspoken, and even rude are welcome here. (I.e., show them the gospel.)

Appreciate their individuality, confidence, & ability to think differently.

Assume their confidence goes to the core. Scoffing can mask deep insecurity and can seek power or control.

Understand they may not value agreeableness or group unity. Still, work to maintain the emotional safety of the group.

Abandon the discredited person: "[Name] does bring up some things that are valid and important to hear..."

Ask them to answer first. Find something to agree with. When disagreeing, stick to facts.

Sideline group discussion to make sure the person who's right "wins." Pick your battles (i.e. areas of essential doctrine, etc.)!

Approach privately, acknowledging their strengths.

Then focus on behavior: "Your comments may not encourage emotional safety. Be yourself; bring alternative ideas. But do it without tearing others down (see Ephesians 4:29)."

Pretend "I was just joking" excuses pain they're causing (see Proverbs 26:18-19).

Instead, respond calmly, confidently: "We all love having fun. But not through digs at each other. Keep the joking constructive."

Help them shift their focus from "me" to "we." Scriptures that may help: John 17:23, Romans 12:16; Ephesians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Indulge sarcasm with laughter, or let the scoffer drive a wedge between group relationships.

Say, "It seems you're feeling \_\_." Ask a sincere follow-up question.

Feel like you must respond every time; silence sometimes speaks loud enough.

If you're the target, be gracious but honest. "That's painful to hear. Not sure you heard the heart of what I'm saying."

Expect change to appear overnight. So pray for the scoffer to see how and why they're causing pain, and to heal from their own hurt.

# HOW TO LEAD: *The Campaign Manager*

## DO'S DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS



Say, "I understand this is important to you. To preserve unity and focus on Jesus as King & Savior, let's table political stuff for private conversations" (see John 18:36).



Force (rather than invite) group members to participate in political conversation.



Encourage biblical common ground and understanding of opposite perspectives (see 1 Corinthians 12:21). Invite individual experiences: "How does that issue affect you directly?"



Allow a group member to be marginalized for political leanings or make agreement your goal. Rather, appreciate the breadth of the body of Christ and the opportunity to love when you're not the same.



If your group wants political conversation, emphasize the whole Bible's view on the issues (see 1 Corinthians 3:4-5).



Promote party or policy lines. Instead, acknowledge truth's complexity—and that portions of both parties warrant respect and repentance.



Remain aware of group members' non-verbal signals, being ready to politely defer a too-heated or inconsiderate conversation (see Proverbs 31:8-9).



Let them dominate the group or hurt others; be passive.



Remember the Campaign Manager isn't likely *for* what angers you about her political party.



Fail to communicate how their behavior affects others.

# HOW TO LEAD: *the "Fixer"*

WHO HAS A GREAT IDEA TO MAKE IT ALL BETTER ("HAVE YOU TRIED...?")

## DO'S & DON'TS

DO *this*

... *Not* THIS



Acknowledge the well-intentioned motives of the Fixer: attempting to offer practical help and real solutions to alleviate pain.



Ignore that "fixing" may fuel appreciation, significance, and/or superiority as "the giver."



Realize meddlesome or uninvited fixing can lack empathy and communicate, "I know what's best for you."



Squash gifts of teaching or service. Instead, reroute these gifts. (Could the Fixer administrate the next service project?)



Gently steer conversation back to the humility of listening rather than contributing. "That's an idea. [Storyteller], can you tell us more about...?"



Allow the entire group to intrude with "let's fix \_\_\_\_'s problem," unless that's what the storyteller wants.



Encourage your group to identify and lean into questions of their souls (*Is God really good?*), creating space to listen to God and each other—and seeking the journey with Him rather than just clarity.



Avoid unearthing painful questions ("Is God punishing me?"), which like Job's friends, can drive them into deeper despair.



Model reflective listening. Acknowledge storytellers' emotions. Like Jesus, ask open-ended, thoughtful questions ("What do you need most right now?").



Settle for glib, simplistic answers that reduce someone to a problem to be remedied.



Encourage the storyteller's own ability to listen for God's voice.



Regularly allow a fixer to trample group members' boundaries with unwanted "help."