STRATEGY

RESEARCH | TOOL CREATION | EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT | COORDINATED IMPACT
Mission Statement

The mission of the Center for Positive Leadership is to increase positive leadership in the world. We do this by supporting research on positive leadership, creating tools to help people practice positive leadership, providing multiple forms of educational programming to help people practice positive leadership, and by coordinating teams engaged in change efforts whose work will be magnified and accelerated with positive leadership.

Definitions

Positive leadership - Acts of unusual virtuousness that other people follow because they feel elevated by the acts.

Virtues - Standards of moral excellence. Examples include as courage, compassion, humility, integrity, ambition, inclusivity, creativity, and wisdom.

Virtuousness - Exhibiting of all the virtues that are relevant to a situation, with excellence.

Following - Imitation, building on an action or its impact, or complying with requests.

Moral insight - An idea about how to exhibit unusual virtuousness that a person would not have acquired without questioning beliefs that they take for granted. Moral insight is practical wisdom.

Why Positive Leadership

The reason that our mission is to increase positive leadership in the world is because positive leadership helps people address four common issues.

Our world is full of intractable, downstream problems. These are problems that have no easy solution. People often only see the symptoms and seldom consider the underlying causes. These may be global, local, or organizational problems.

Change is often hard. The change that is necessary to address intractable, downstream problems is often difficult. It requires effort, breaking habits, developing new worldviews, altering relationships, investment, risk, and may even require sacrifice.

People habitually try to solve problems. People seldom consider doing anything in response to problems other than try to solve them. However, when problems are intractable, the efforts to solve problems often makes them worse. Instead, problems should be re-framed, transcended, accepted, or transformed.

Efforts to make the world better often occur in uncoordinated silos of effort. Intractable problems are often inter-related, but we try to solve them one at a time. Further, the people who devote their lives to solving problems often do it alone, or only with people in their own organization or community. We miss opportunities to magnify our efforts by working together.

Positive leadership helps people to address these issues in our organizations, in our communities, and across the world. The world’s intractable problems often emerge because of the lack of virtuous action and would be prevented from emerging in the first place if we practiced more positive leadership more regularly. Once these problems emerge, it takes exceptional virtue to unpack the upstream causes of problems and to re-frame, transcend, and transform them. People who practice positive leadership take on the effort, risk, learning, fear, sacrifice, and investment needed to make
change. People who practice positive leadership work with, motivate, and galvanize people across silos and boundaries to achieve great things together.

**Problem Statement**

The Center for Positive Leadership supports the research, creates the tools, and provides the programming needed to increase positive leadership in the world, but there are two challenges that could prevent us from doing this effectively and sustainably. These challenges are:

1. Winning the hearts and minds of people to embrace positive leadership as a solution over simpler, less difficult, or flashier solutions.
2. Acquiring the funding necessary to continue this work beyond our initial promise of funding from the University of Louisville Athletic Department, the final year of which is 2027-2028. This funding must either come through donors or through people who pay for our programming, tools, and other services.

**Guiding Policy**

We know, and have learned much, about how to win hearts and acquire funding, and our goal is to continue learning through experimentation and implementation. We present here a summary of the guidelines we are currently following.

**Winning Hearts**

- Our initial market should be gatekeepers and influencers.
  - Examples of gatekeepers include managers who make training and development decisions for mid-size and large organizations or professors who decide what to teach hundreds of students.
  - Examples of influencers include social media influencers but may also include people who mobilize people and resources in other ways, such as community organizers.
  - We need to convert these people so that they convert others.
  - We also need to give these people increasingly better tools for taking positive leadership to others.
  - The more our efforts with people build on each other, the more influence grows through social persuasion. For example, by recruiting affiliated professionals, supporting them, asking them to support each other, asking them to create and present leadership tools, and connecting their followers across social media, we have been able to find more opportunities for them and also to create resources and a positive reputation for the center.
- We should prioritize individuals and organizations who are local over individuals and organizations who are distant.
- We need to give gatekeepers specific, personal, concrete experiences with positive leadership changing lives and helping their organizations improve.
  - Where possible, we also need to back up those experiences with data.
- Although we cannot make positive leadership easy, we need to constantly find ways to make it more accessible and easier to understand, and to make the value it creates clearer and more obvious.
Acquiring Funding

- Offer tools and educational/developmental programming in a tiered fashion (with offerings ranging from free to tens of thousands of dollars, we give people the chance to have experiences with positive leadership that will help them see why they want more, and to get more at the level of commitment (financially) for which they are ready.
- It is time to start transitioning toward charging for many of our events and services, both to ensure participants are committed and that we are really offering what people want/need.
- We need to both do things for potential donors, so they see the value of what we are doing and ask donors to do things for/with us, so that they get the experience of participating and serving.

Strategic Approach and Tactical Actions

The following initiatives explain how we will execute our guiding policy.

Creation of an Interrelated Leadership Development Portfolio

Previously, leadership tool creation, affiliated professionals, and events were loosely connected at best. Now, with our new leadership development portfolio, these three initiatives will become increasingly interrelated.

- We are in the process of developing a leadership model with interrelated online assessments/reflections, coaching and facilitation handbooks, and a train the trainer program which will be delivered free with certification to affiliated professionals, and then they will use these tools to deliver programming to others. Individual assessments/reflections will be free on the website. 360-degree or organizational assessments will cost money. Assessments will be used to begin the process of helping people to think differently about leadership and will be facilitated by individual coaching and app-based coaching groups. Individual coaching and app-based coaching groups will be delivered by affiliated professionals for a cost.
- The Leadership Tools Showcase will occur monthly and will be delivered by a single affiliated professional. This will serve as a prompt to get professionals to create a tool, so that 11 professionals will make a new tool each year. Showcase attendance will cost $30 per attendee, with discounts for groups such as UofL employees. Professionals will receive a nominal payment, until attendance is good enough to increase their payment.
- Leadership tools, and videos about how to use them from showcases, will still be available on our website and YouTube channel.
- We will serve as a de facto speaker/consultant warehouse for people who just want our affiliated professionals to do coaching, speaking, or consulting jobs for them on their own.
- The Tyra Family Distinguished Conversations Series will become a workshop (monthly), initially hosted by Ryan, but eventually taken over by interested professionals, for using positive leadership to address problems collaboratively as teams and in networks.
- Our most expensive programs will be setting up and running Local WorldChanger Teams, which will involve extensive team design, and incorporate elements from most of the other offerings as well.
Marketing and Outreach

- We will set up appointments with as many gatekeepers and influencers are possible, inside and outside the university, to let them know about the ways they can engage with us.
- We will do a “roadshow” with various professional societies or organizations around the Louisville area to give them a taste of the value we can offer and let them know about the ways they can engage with us.
- We will continually update our new website, invite people to use it, invite people follow our LinkedIn page, and invite people to view our YouTube channel. Every event should include an invitation for people to do these things.
- We will continue to foster, support, and encourage social media outreach among our affiliated professionals and their networks.
- We will work with experts to optimize and market our web presence.
- We will publicize good news and acts of leadership, especially when they involve our tools and leadership development programs.

Research

- We will offer fellowships for research on positive leadership internationally within the constraints of our budget. We may tailor the request for proposals to reflect the current trends in our strategy.
- We will design our assessments and Leadership Amplifier to collect data that we can use to conduct and publish research.
- A committee will judge proposals for research and select people to whom to award fellowships. Affiliated professionals will be the first to be asked to be on these committees.
- Fellowships must be completed within a year.