

Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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Are you an Anticipator or an Avoider?

While watching a recent car race on television, I was impressed by the new technology racing teams are using to improve performance.

Advanced technology now allows crew chiefs to monitor nearly every aspect that affects the performance of their cars. With all of the technology, race cars are set up so much alike that very little difference should be observed on race day. Yet, some cars continue to do better at winning than others.

New research is now grouping leaders into two types that show promise of predicting fruitfulness:

**Anticipator
or
Avoider.**

The difference, of course, is the driver. Even though technology allows for very little difference in race cars, each driver is a unique person. Technology is used to monitor a driver's heart rate, but it cannot measure his or her heart to win! Nor, can technology measure how well a driver puts his or her skills into action, only the winner's circle shows the results.

Likewise, new technology has been employed during the last fifty year to determine what causes churches to grow, plateau, and decline. Computer models, statistical graphs, random surveys, analysis of sermons, and other aspects of church life and ministry have been evaluated. We now know more about growing churches than we've ever known in the history of Christianity. One might conclude that, since most churches have access to this abundance of information, they would all be flourishing. Sadly, however, that isn't the case.

The difference, of course, is the driver, that is, the leader.

After a half century of analyzing churches, it's clear that one variable is crucial-the leader. It's important that each congregation acknowledge Christ's leadership of the church through prayer and actions. Yet, Christ appointed human leaders to guide his people. Whether we call such leaders pastors, elders, or bishops, it is evident that Jesus Christ works through earthly leaders to accomplish his purposes on earth.

There has also been a great deal of research on the personality types of leaders, such as the DISC Profile. However, a new way of thinking about leadership is helpful in predicting how fruitful a pastor will actually be in leading a growing church.

Check out Dr. McIntosh's new website for additional articles.

New website address:

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Leaders have a motivational focus.

Christ works through earthly leaders.

New research is now grouping leaders into two types that show promise of predicting fruitfulness: Anticipator or Avoider. Psychologists and researchers refer to these as motivational types, that is, what motivates a leader.

The Anticipator

Anticipator types concentrate on the future and on taking action that accomplishes a goal. They play to win, take chances, make quick decisions, dream big, and think outside the box. Of course, this means they are prone to make mistakes, often unprepared, and do not always think things out. However, to the anticipator type, these are mere annoyances, as it's worse to miss an opportunity to advance the group into the future.

The Avoider

Avoider types focus on the present and on taking action that keeps things safe. They play not to lose, take few chances, make slow decisions, worry about what might go wrong, and move cautiously. Of course this means that while their work is accurate, precise, and carefully considered, they also hang on to the past, maintain the status-quo, and are adverse to risk. To the avoider type, moving slow is necessary, as it's important to avoid mistakes at any cost.

Most leaders have a dominate motivational focus on anticipation or avoidance. It affects the dreams we have, the values we espouse, and the actions we take. It is a major factor in determining how we lead a church. Which motivational type are you? Here are some indicators to think about where you fit.

Anticipators . . .

- make quick decisions
- work fast
- are open to new opportunities
- are optimistic
- are future-oriented
- take action
- are comfortable with praise
- expect things to go right

Avoiders . . .

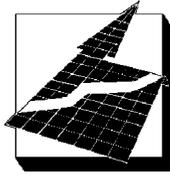
- make slow decisions
- work deliberately
- want things to stay the same
- are prepared for the worst
- are present-oriented
- are slow to take action
- are uncomfortable with praise
- are worried things will go wrong

Which motivational type do you identify with as a leader? Identifying your own motivational type will help you understand your strengths and compensate for your shortcomings.



Gary L. McIntosh is editor of *Growth Points* and speaks at several leadership events each year.

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Overcoming the Darkside of Leadership

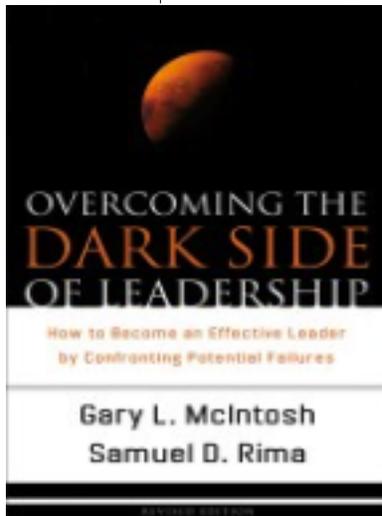
The Christian world has been rocked by the number of prominent leaders, in both church and parachurch organizations, who have been compromised by moral, ethical, and theological failures. This pace-setting volume addresses this alarming problem and offers Christian leaders valuable guidance in dealing with the inherent risks of their work.

Dr. McIntosh and Rima's book, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction*, offers interesting insights on why leaders fail. The authors suggest that successful leaders, like everyone else, are deeply influenced by childhood events and experiences. These experiences provide the motivation for their work and success as adults, but paradoxically, can have a negative impact on their personal and professional lives. The *dark side* emerges when the personal dysfunctions inherent in human life are allowed to remain unaddressed.

This provocative volume unpacks the paradox that the very personal traits that drive individuals to succeed have an accompanying shadow side with potential to destroy a person once he or she is in a leadership position. The book helps readers recognize their dark side and take specific steps to overcome and prevent being blind-sided by it.

Using biblical and current examples, the authors describe the characteristics of leaders and the problems that are most likely to develop.

Each chapter concludes with summaries of key points, plus follow-through projects. A testing questionnaire helps readers gain self-understanding. In the concluding chapters, McIntosh and Rima offer a series of steps for leaders to consider so they can overcome their dark side and learn to harness its creative powers.



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