

LEADIAGRAMS

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BROTHERS ANDY AND CHRIS FROST SHARE TWO CHAPTERS OF THEIR NEW VISUAL RESOURCE FOR LEADERS: LEADIAGRAMS (LEADERSHIP DIAGRAMS)

Over their Christian leadership journeys, brothers Andy and Chris have regularly traded newly created or discovered leadership diagrams. They consistently found that in our visually-based and time-poor culture, diagrams are indispensable for effective communication; they summarise principles that remain memorable. When they discovered that no Christian leadership book existed based upon diagrams, the idea and commitment was born to create the book 'Lediagrams: 52 visuals to help you thrive in your faith and lead effectively'.

What follows are two free preview chapters on diagrams about discipleship from the 52 found in Lediagrams.

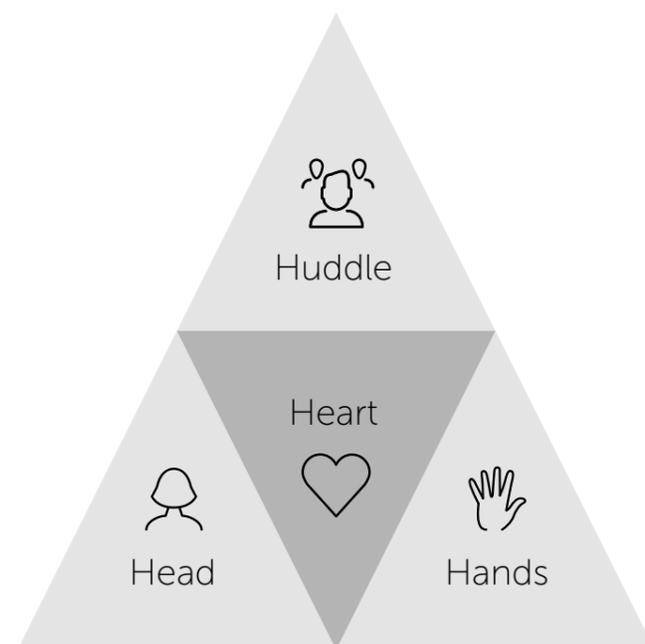


Andy Frost (left) and Chris Frost (right)

CHAPTER 2 HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY

THE HEART, HEAD, HANDS
AND HUDDLE TRIANGLE

CHRIS



SETTING THE SCENE

'The Combination Person' is a fun drawing game we used to love playing as kids. The first player starts by drawing a head and neck; they fold the paper over and the second player draws a torso and makes another fold. Then the third draws some legs and folds, before the fourth draws a pair of feet. The paper is then unfolded to reveal the combination. The result - a person with a distorted design and shape - often elicits much laughter. To this day, I can still remember the thin, but oversized, butler-cum-surfer we once created!

Sadly, this disjointed picture can also be reflective of our spirituality. Jesus wants to be loved with 'all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' (Matthew 22:37). And we are encouraged to work out this relationship with God in a Christian community (Hebrews 10:24-25). But we often emphasise one or another of these elements at the expense of others. The result is an odd combination of spirituality, that if unfolded, would likely make us balk.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

A single triangle contains four identical triangles that together represent essential building blocks for a holistic, or healthily integrated, Christian spirituality. These are:

Heart. The Heart represents a core connection with Christ, a deep knowing of him. It's related to your emotions but goes even deeper than that, into your will. It's expressed through activities such as personal worship, Scripture meditation, prayer, retreats, counselling, spiritual direction, silence, solitude and reflection. This is the central triangle, demonstrating that all the other triangles flow out from this. It's also the only inward-pointing triangle, primarily representing the inner life.

Hands. This represents the use of your body in service to Jesus. It's expressed through what may naturally come to mind when we think about being the hands and feet of Jesus. It's doing what Jesus did: caring for the sick, embracing the poor and grieving, feeding the hungry and healing the broken.

Head. In reading this book, you're actively practising the Head of spirituality as you're engaging your brain in an attempt to become a more mature disciple of Jesus Christ. Anything that helps strengthen your understanding of God comes into play here. Examples would be personal study through things like books, talks and pilgrimages, which centre on topics such as Scripture, doctrine and church history.

Together the Heart, Hands and Head represent the foundation of and flow into the ...

Huddle. This is about coming together with other followers of Jesus. It represents a closeness of community life with other disciples. It will include activities such as communal meals, breaking of bread and wine, prayer, teaching and worship. As the top triangle, it demonstrates how an individual's Heart, Head and Hands act as a gift, in service to the communal Huddle.

The holistic idea is that the four triangles are interdependent, and only through their combined strength does the structure stand firm. If one triangle is removed, or is disproportionately sized, the structure's stability is compromised. The complete triangle together points outward, towards mission, and upward, towards glorifying God.

THINKING BIBLICALLY

Like the Pharisees, we often practise some commands but neglect others: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23). When it comes to the four Hs, there's a biblical emphasis on practising all four:

Heart. Jesus didn't die just to get you into heaven one day but to get heaven into you *today*; he wants to be known in your heart. In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, like a forceful footnote, he explains what it is to have eternal life: "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). This type of knowing is intimate. The same word is used to describe how Mary didn't 'know' Joseph before she gave birth (Matthew 1:25), revealing that they had not been intimate as husband and wife.

It follows then that Jesus wants us to love him with all our hearts (Matthew 22:37), having our hearts undefiled (Matthew 15:18) and soft towards him (Mark 8:17). Therefore, we follow Jesus from our hearts (Romans 6:17, Ephesians 6:6), and we may find them burning within us (Luke 24:32), as we connect with him from there (Ephesians 5:19).

Hands. It was probably the sixteenth-century reformer Martin Luther who said, 'We are saved by faith alone, but that faith is never alone.' It's a great summary of James 2:14-26, which argues that a true and alive faith in Jesus will result in good works, or, in the diagram's terms: Heart will lead to Hands. Indeed, James makes the argument, 'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world' (James 1:27). Pragmatically, this means using our bodies, aka Hands, to do godly things and not do ungodly things.

Head. Romans 12:2 says, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' We're encouraged to do this through growing in our knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18) by letting the Word of God dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16).

Huddle. There are fifty-seven 'one another' commands in the New Testament, such as loving one another (John 13:34), bearing with one another (Ephesians 4:2 ESV) and not lying to one another (Colossians 3:9). It's impossible to obey these in a silo, so we're also commanded to not give up meeting together (Hebrews 10:25). Indeed, Acts 2:42-47 paints an aspirational picture of a thoroughly committed and unified Huddle.

HOW DO I APPLY IT?

To grow in knowing, understanding and obeying Jesus in a Christian community, this three-phased circular process should help.

Review: Have a think about how you're doing at each H triangle. Ask those close to you how they think you are at each one. Try taking a week to log your practices under the four H triangles.

While it's perfectly normal to have one or two triangles stronger than the others, you've hopefully discovered some room for growth in the weaker ones. Perhaps one triangle doesn't even exist for you, and like a three-wheeled car, you're moving forward but not effectively.

Learn: Explore how you can grow the H you want to work on. The Knowing God: Divine Connections diagram on the following page will help with that. Ask others for their insights. Create a plan.

Practise: Put the plan into action, and then review again.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Draw four triangles proportionate to the size of how you think you are doing at each one. What stands out to you?

What weekly practice could enlarge your smallest triangle?

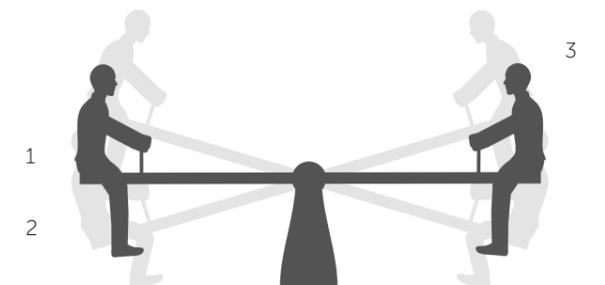
Who do you know who excels in each of the four Hs? Why do they excel in them?

GO FURTHER

To take a survey on your Heart, Head and Hands strengths check out wearemakingdisciples.com. (N.B. The Huddle is not distinct in this test but is incorporated into the other Hs.)

CHAPTER 18 RELATE, LISTEN AND THEN SHARE

THE FEEDBACK SEE-SAW CHRIS



SETTING THE SCENE

The Emperor's New Clothes, written by Hans Christian Andersen, finishes with the emperor walking proud in a procession before a whole town, completely naked. The problem? The emperor's clothes were made from a fabric that was supposedly only invisible to those who were unfit for office or unusually stupid.

The result? Everyone was afraid to give the emperor the feedback he desperately needed. When a child eventually points out that he's naked, and the whole town finally agrees, it's too late and the emperor carries on regardless.

We often dis-serve others by failing to give the critical feedback they need, usually out of fear. Conversely, we allow our blind spots to evolve if others are afraid to give us the feedback we need.

When I worked on my first media job, I was abruptly sat down by a senior journalist. For nearly half an hour she shredded my report to pieces, only eventually stopping when she saw tears well up in my eyes. My confidence was knocked for weeks, if not months.

By contrast, a fellow pastor once made me a coffee, asked how I was, and then gently brought up a couple of blind spots he'd seen in my preaching. It wasn't easy to hear, but I still heed those corrections today, and I'm a better leader as a result.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Giving and receiving honest feedback with those who you live and work with is essential to ensuring continued improvement. Without a culture of feedback, errors are repeated and frustrations are allowed to fester. The See-Saw diagram outlines a simple and memorable three-step process for giving effective feedback.

1. Relate. The see-saw starts flat. You (on the left), and the person or persons you are giving feedback to (on the right), are level. This must be the foundation of feedback: One human, created in the image of God, is speaking to another human(s), also created in the image of God. Too often feedback is given instantly and/or irritably, doing more damage than good.

2. Listen. The see-saw beam first lowers left on the pivot. You (on the left), bend your knees, to allow an elevated position to the person(s) you want to give feedback to. This is the most critical yet most forgotten stage. Before providing feedback, even if you have been directly asked to give it, first ask for the other person's perspective on the issue at hand.

3. Share. The see-saw beam now switches, and the right side lowers on the pivot. Having had their perspective listened to, the other person(s) is now more receptive to your perspective. Here is your opportunity to share those things that will ultimately strengthen that person(s).

After this three-step process, you're ready to repeat the process until the conversation is satisfactorily finished. Specifically, you Relate again, Listen to the other person's perspective, then Share your feedback appropriately, before repeating if necessary.

THINKING BIBLICALLY

To some extent we are all 'pleaseaholics'; we care about what others think of us, and so crave, in some measure, for them to be pleased with us. The root of this is good. What kind of person would want everyone to be displeased with them? Indeed, Paul said, 'I try to please everyone in every way' (1 Corinthians 10:33). However, this becomes a problem when this desire to please prevents us from taking valuable action, such as giving feedback. Therefore, the first hurdle to applying the Feedback See-Saw diagram is getting on the see-saw.

Knowing that appropriate feedback is a service to others (Proverbs 26:24-28, 27:6, 28:23, 29:5) helps us get onto the see-saw, break through our 'pleaseaholic' status and paradoxically say with Paul, 'If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ' (Galatians 1:10). Scripture also helps inform our approach in the three-step process.

1. Relate. When Paul wanted to confront Peter for the way he refused to eat with Gentiles, he 'oppose[d] him to his face, for what he did was very wrong' (Galatians 2:11 NLT). To relate well, we need to follow suit and, as a general rule for serious feedback, give it face-to-face.

When Jesus confronts Peter's denial on the shore of Galilee, he first cooks him a fish breakfast, before taking him to one side and raising the issue (John 21:9-17). Good leaders intuitively do the same; they ensure the basic needs of their followers are met before offering feedback.

2. Listen. Rushing straight into your feedback can make you look stupid: 'Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions' (Proverbs 18:2). By genuinely listening first, you may find there's a 'plank in your own eye' (Matthew 7:4) or a different perspective that you hadn't yet seen. No wonder Francis of Assisi prayed, 'O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek ... to be understood as to understand.'

3. Share. 'Wounds from a friend can be trusted' (Proverbs 27:6) and even desired because 'iron sharpens iron' (Proverbs 27:17). Therefore, by 'speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ' (Ephesians 4:15).

HOW DO I APPLY IT?

Once you're on the see-saw, it's a case of intelligently applying the see-saw process.

1. Relate. Seek to relate to the other person by affirming their value. Separate the behaviour or issue you want to address from them as a person; they are more than this mistake.

2. Listen. By raising the subject, but asking for the person's perspective first, helpful outcomes can follow, such as:

- The person raises their mistake, saving you the awkwardness of having to raise it yourself. It's amazing how aware people can be about the mistakes they make.
- You find you have misread the mistake and failed to appreciate mitigating circumstances.
- You discover you're somewhat to blame, and there's some helpful feedback for you to take on board.

It's important to apply active listening here, as outlined in the Passive Listening Curve diagram (see page 74). Once complete, like a see-saw, the conversation should naturally bounce back to you, and you're ready to share.

3. Share. This isn't your turn to let loose; it's time to gently and specifically feed back on the issue you want to address, so thinking beforehand about what you're going to say is helpful. This can obviously be updated to incorporate any new information you've gleaned. You may want to use the following framework: 'I now understand that you did w because of x. However, when you did w, it made me feel y. In the future I'd appreciate it if you did z.'

If you're giving more general feedback, it's obviously important to highlight the positives as well as the negatives. But beware of relying on the 'praise sandwich', where you cushion the issue with positives, as this can often camouflage the issue and cause confusion.

Unless feedback is encouraged by creating time and space for it to be shared, you can find yourself trapped in a positive feedback loop, much like the emperor in the story, in which no one feels at liberty to be honest with you.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What feedback have you received that has served you well?

How did you feel about it at the time? And now?

Is there someone you could serve by arranging to give them feedback using the See-Saw process?

GO FURTHER

Read *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson.

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