

PRINCIPLED MINISTRY WORKBOOK



LOUGHLAN SOFIELD, S.T.
——— and ———
CARROLL JULIANO, S.H.C.J.

Leaders must be people of vision
and leaders must have a passionate
and energizing commitment
to that vision.

—*Principled Ministry*, p.xiii

Welcome to the *Principled Ministry Workbook*. We trust that this simple tool will help you further reflect on your ministry and better integrate the leadership principles we present in *Principled Ministry: A Guidebook for Catholic Church Leaders*. Your ministry is crucial to the well-being of the Church and to its mission in the world. Our fervent hope and prayer for you is that the time you spend reflecting and writing about the questions we offer here truly enhances your skills as a leader in our Church and a Christ-bearer to our world.



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Phone: 1-800-282-1865 / Fax: 1-800-282-5681 / E-mail: avemariapress.1@nd.edu

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The Self-Defined Leader



Principle 1: *Set boundaries.*



Are you aware of a time when you experienced a leader inappropriately crossing boundaries? What effect did it have on the individual or group being led?

Since transference and counter-transference are unconscious, it will take the assistance of another to help bring them to consciousness. Where do you get help keeping aware of and attending to your unfinished emotional business?

Are you aware of any time that you have been the recipient of someone else's transference? Did you react to their behavior? How would you like to respond differently in the future?

Principle 2: *Trust your gut.*



Can you allow yourself to “feel” the communication by attending not only to the words, but also to what is being said through the silence, the symbolism, and the conveyed, unspoken emotions?

Can you recall a time when you really felt listened to, heard, and understood? What was there in the listening stance of the other that communicated this to you?

Are you as comfortable listening to your own emotions as you are applying logic?

Principle 3: *Think tenses.*



The next time you are in a group, listen to the predominant tenses used by different individuals. Can you perceive examples of the theory presented earlier?

Although it is more difficult, attempt to listen to yourself. Which of the four options would best describe you? Do you speak mostly about the past, the future, or the present?

If you tend to keep your comments about things in the present, is your basic stance one of being angry because things are not what they "should be" or are you able to accept the reality of "what is?"

As a leader how can you apply this principle?

Principle 4: *Be comfortable with conflict.*



Can you think of a recent situation where conflict emerged? How did you respond?

If a similar situation were to present itself, how would you respond differently?

Which of the five identified roles for effective leadership do you personally need to address?

Where have you acquired the skills of dealing more effectively with conflict?

Principle 5: *Avoid niceness.*



Do you know people who are *too nice*? What is it that causes you to label them as such? How effective are they as Christian leaders?

Think of a group to which you belong. What criteria did the group use for choosing its last leader?

Can you think of an example of a leader who balances niceness and integrity?

Principle 6: *Seek supervision and consultation.*



Do you have a consultant/supervisor, mentor, or peer support group? How honest and open are you within this group?

What are some of the areas where you feel a sense of inadequacy as a leader? Have you shared those areas with your supervisor or consultant? If not, why not?

Have you ever been a consultant, coach, supervisor, or mentor to another? If so, what did you learn from that situation that might be helpful to you and to others?

The Discerning Leader



Principle 7: *Act like a chameleon.*



Think about two individuals whom you are in a position to lead. Can you delineate what approaches might be helpful with each one? What approaches would be unsuccessful? What approaches would be disastrous?

Have you ever been the recipient of pastoral ministry from someone who was unable to connect with you? Could the approach the person was taking with you have been effective with someone else? What might characterize that person?

Can you identify a pastoral encounter where you believe you were ineffective? Were you attempting to utilize an approach that had been effective in a different situation? What might you have done differently in order to be more effective?

Principle 8: *Assess the desire and capacity of the other to change.*



Picture a time when someone tried to change you. Were they successful? What was your reaction? What happened to the relationship?

Think of someone whom you would label a “difficult” or “problem” person. Have you ever tried to change him or her? Can you assess your success or lack of it based on whether or not the other both wanted to change and could change?

Before you try to assist someone to grow, ask yourself the following question: as far as I can tell, do they have both a desire and the capacity to change?

Principle 9: *Think developmentally.*



Envision an individual with whom you are working. Can you identify the level of psychological maturity at which this person is operating? Do you know what you would do to help her/him move to the next level of development?

Visualize a group with whom you are working. Are you able to identify the level of group development at which they are operating? What might you do to create a climate that would encourage their growth to the next level?

Do you have concrete models of individual and group development from which you work? For example is there a conceptual framework, such as the Erikson model, that influences your work with individuals? Do you have a similar model for evaluating groups? We have described one such model in our book, *Building Community: Christian, Caring, Vital*.

Principle 10: *Facilitate, don't dominate.*



Do you believe that most individuals have the resources within themselves to solve their own problems? In your ministry, how do you specifically communicate this belief?

Can you identify someone for whom you are constantly "doing"? What about this person or about you leads you to do more than is necessary? Can you narrow the reasons to one of the four we mentioned earlier? How can you change the pattern?

Since need-enhancing behavior is usually unconscious, whom do you utilize as a consultant or supervisor to help you attain greater self-awareness?

Principle 11: *Feed and frustrate.*



Are you aware of times when you have tended to err on the side of either too much feeding or too much frustrating in your leadership position? Are you aware of why that occurred? How would you do it differently in the future?

Can you recall a time when someone spontaneously affirmed the gifts he or she saw in you? What effect did that have on you?

Are you aware of a time when someone validated your feelings? What effect did that have on you? Are there certain feelings and emotions that you find particularly difficult to acknowledge within yourself? Are there feelings that produce a sense of guilt or shame when you acknowledge them in yourself?

Principle 12: *Consider multiple causes and multiple responses.*



Have you ever been with others in a situation that was potentially dangerous? Did everyone react the same way? Can you visualize the myriad ways in which people reacted to the same situation? Can you see how this reflects the principle, *consider multiple causes and responses*?

Picture times when you have been angry. Can you identify the many different reasons that produced this emotion?

Develop a greater capacity for thinking more broadly. The next time you are in a leadership role, focus on the other and ask yourself, "What are some of the reasons why he or she may have done this?"

Principle 13: *Think needs.*



Recall a time when others were confused by your behavior. Are you aware, now, of what needs you may have been trying to address by that behavior?

Consider the behavior of another that you have found inexplicable. Think needs. What need might have influenced that behavior?

Tasks, Functions, Roles, and Skills of Principled Ministry



Principle 14: *Avoid ambiguity.*



Can you remember a time when you experienced ambiguity about a task you were asked to tackle? How did you feel during that time? What helped to clarify the ambiguity? What effect did the clarification have on you?

Think of an individual or group with whom you are working. Can you clearly articulate the purpose? Is that purpose clear, realistic, and shared? Do you revisit that purpose on occasion to help focus and evaluate progress?

When you are in a leadership role, do you establish clear expectations regarding confidentiality? How do you accomplish this clarity?

Principle 15: *Create a climate that fosters dialogue.*



Recall a time when you experienced a climate where you felt safe enough to share beyond a surface level. Can you recall who or what helped to create that climate?

How does it help build a relationship when the other communicates the desire to listen, hear, and understand? Conversely, what effect does it have when you do not feel understood by the other?

Recall a time when you were sharing a personal experience and the listener responded by informing you that because she or he had had a similar experience, he or she understood exactly what you meant. Did you feel listened to, heard, and understood at that time? Can you suggest a different response?

Principle 16: *Be direct, gentle, and consistent.*



Recall a time when you felt a responsibility to share something that would be difficult for the other to hear. Can you recall and evaluate how direct you were?

Were you also able to say what you believed in a way that communicated concern and care for the other?

If you believe you were weak in either of these two dimensions, can you identify what fears or expectations may have influenced your weakness?

Principle 17: *Model and challenge.*



Who are the leaders in your life who have been most influential? Are they individuals who modeled and challenged? How does their behavior influence the way you lead?

Visualize an individual or group that you are trying to influence as a leader. Apply the two criteria of modeling and challenging to the situation. What behavior are you attempting to change? Is there anything that is interfering with your ability to challenge the other? How do they witness you as modeling what you are advocating?

What is your favorite passage in the scripture that depicts Jesus as someone who both challenged and modeled?

Principle 18: *Avoid triangulation.*



Are you aware of a time when you involved another in triangulation? How was the situation resolved? What long-term effects did resolving the situation through triangulation have on your relationship with the other parties?

Have others tried to triangle you, as a leader, into their conflict? Were you manipulated into being triangled? If so, what was the need or vulnerability in you that allowed this to happen?

Can you identify some of the more subtle ways in which triangulation occurs in your relationships and groups?

Principle 19: *Collaborate.*



What criteria do I use to evaluate myself as a collaborative leader?

Can I identify specific ways in which I see collaboration in my ministry?

Am I aware of times when collaboration has not worked? Do I know why it didn't?

Principle 20: *Learn to deal with difficult people.*



Identify someone whom you have labeled a “difficult person.” Can you think of that person in terms of the principle of multiple causality? Can you identify a number of possible reasons for his or her problem behavior? Does that provide you with any new insights as a leader in terms of working with that person?

Reflecting on that same individual, or another person with whom you have had problems, look at the individual through the principle of multiple lenses. Which of the three possibilities listed might be operative?

There are probably individuals who find you difficult. Can you identify the areas where you may have to change to become less difficult to others?

Principle 21: *Be a vision maker.*



How clearly can you articulate your vision as a leader? Does that vision continue to change as circumstances change, or has it become a static vision?

Are you aware of times in your own life when you have followed leaders because of the exciting vision that they espoused?

Are you willing to ask a few friends or coministers if they would be able to articulate the vision that drives you?

The Leader as Change Agent



Principle 22: *Stay with the pain.*



Visualize someone in pain with whom you are working. Can you identify your honest reaction to that pain? Are you aware of any tendencies to take the pain away?

Have you ever had a helper or leader who has attempted to remove your pain? What was your reaction—to resist their attempts or to passively allow the other to attempt to remove the pain? Was the situation a growth-producing one?

The next time you are working with someone who is psychologically or emotionally hurting, attempt to get in touch with your own emotions and tendencies. What are some of the reasons why you would choose to try to eliminate their pain?

Principle 23: *Avoid preaching and teaching.*



Have you been part of a group where the leader began preaching or teaching when the group needed dialogue? What impact did it have on you? What was your response or reaction to that person? What was the group's response?

Are you aware of the times when you revert to being a teacher or preacher? Can you identify whether the cause is anxiety? If so, are you aware of what causes such anxiety in you?

How do you deal with individuals who believe their purpose in life is to preach to or teach you?

Principle 24: *Focus on others as allies, rather than adversaries.*



Are you aware of a time when you sensed antipathy in another even though the words did not convey this? What effect did it have on you?

Picture the person with whom you have the most difficulty working with collaboratively. What is your basic stance toward this person? Is it adversarial or positive? Are you willing to consider changing this stance if it is interfering with your ability to be a more effective leader?

Leading any group, especially angry, hostile ones, often produces anxiety. Anxiety often precludes an ability to see the positive aspects of the other. The next time you are leading a group, ask yourself, "Do I see these individuals as allies or adversaries?"

Principle 25: *Recognize resistance as a normal dynamic.*



Think of a time when you were being invited or forced to change. What was your reaction? How did you express your resistance? Was anything done that helped you to be open to consider the change?

What have been your most positive and negative experiences of change? What can you learn from both?

What helped you to move beyond your initial resistance to change? What does this say to you as a leader?

Principle 26: *Explore the why behind the what.*



Have you ever been asked to explain the reason why you feel so strongly about a particular situation? What was your reaction to the request? Did you find it helpful? If so, why?

Recall someone who has been helpful to you in a one-on-one situation. What did that person do or say to create a healing climate for you?

Recall the last time you were in a conflictual situation within a group. Can you get in touch with what was happening within you? Were you able to listen and respond in a coherent manner? What could the leader have done to create a climate that would be conducive to both individual and group growth?

Principle 27: *Recognize parallel process.*



Are you aware of any times when you felt overwhelmed by some emotion after working with an individual or group? Can you recall who composed the group, what issues the members were facing, and how your feelings may have been a reflection or projection of their emotions? How might you respond to such a group in the future?

Can you identify times when you were having difficulty in a relationship with an individual or a group? Are you aware now of how you may have unconsciously involved another in parallel process to help find a solution to the problem?

How would you explain the dynamic of parallel process to someone else?

Principle 28: *Think culture.*

Think of a time when you were in a situation with someone of a different culture and experienced a sense of alienation. What were your cultural values and beliefs? What were the cultural values and beliefs of the other? How did these values come into conflict? What was done to help bridge the gap and produce meaningful dialogue?

Are you aware of any time a leader helped to effectively bridge the gap between cultures? What was it that he or she did to bridge that gap?

Look around your own neighborhood. Make note of the variety of cultures that are there. Have you ever considered asking some of these neighbors to explain their culture to you?

Principle 29: *Avoid labeling.*



Have you ever been labeled by another? What effect did it have on you? How did you respond to the labeler or label?

How does your perception of yourself, the way you have labeled yourself, restrict your ability to acknowledge and utilize the fullness of your gifts and talents?

Have you ever labeled someone or some group by a single characteristic of their total personality, for example, "an angry person" or "a dysfunctional group"? Did the label restrict your ability to see the other positive dimensions of those labeled?

Principle 30: *Be competent and compassionate.*



What have you done recently to strengthen your competency as a leader?

Can you recall a time when you experienced someone ministering to you? What was going on in your life? Who ministered to you? In what ways? Did you experience compassion?

Think of a recent encounter you had with someone in your role as leader. Would the other person or group involved describe you as compassionate? What do you have to do to grow more compassionate?

Personal Reflection

As you read through *Principled Ministry: A Guidebook for Catholic Church Leaders*, there were probably a few of the principles that spoke to you in particularly poignant ways. These may be especially helpful to you in your continued growth as a leader in the Church. We encourage you to reflect on the following questions and write your responses below.

1. What, if anything, surprised you in this book? How can you incorporate these newfound realizations into your ministry?

2. Which of the principles presented in this book would you consider the most important and why?

3. Which three principles from this book do you think you utilize most effectively in your ministry of leadership?

4. Identify three principles that you now believe are important for you to develop to improve your effectiveness as a Christian leader.

5. What additional principles would you add to our list of thirty and why?

Tracking Your Progress

We encourage you to use your responses to the third and fourth questions in the personal reflection as a jumping-off point for keeping a log of your progress in incorporating what you have learned from this book. We recommend spending time at the end of a day, reflecting on how you did as a leader that day. Keep a log to track the experience.

- Start with one or more of the principles about which you are already well disciplined (as identified in question 3 in the previous section) and then examine what other principles you used well that day. Describe the learning that occurred.

- Then, do the same with a principle you noted in your response to question 4 and examine how well you are improving in those areas.

- Repeat this simple exercise each day for a number of days or weeks that seems most helpful to you. Another alternative is to examine each week, rather than each day, but over a number of months.



See pages 137-138 in *Principled Ministry: A Guidebook for Catholic Church Leaders* for a sample log.