



Ed Stern Leadership: The Course



It's what you learn after you know it all that counts.

- John Wooden

This course is what I call an ongoing culmination, if there can be such a thing. It is the result of years of hands-on experience as a leader, a leadership coach, facilitator, culture builder, and ongoing observer and learner. I have also not been shy about borrowing good things from others.

The last few years I have immersed myself in the study of leadership, partaking in everything from formal education to everyday witnessing. The Course (as I like to refer to it) is the culmination of everything I have seen, experienced, learned, read, and been a part of as both a leader and a follower.

And then there is the "ongoing" part.

Today is different than yesterday. Tomorrow? Who knows. Our world is not static and no discussion on leadership can be final. So, while this course will follow a curriculum, we will also zig and zag to accommodate what is going on in both the macro and micro environment.

Here in the 21st century, we seem to want to make things more complex than they need to be. Leadership has fallen into this trap. I will share more when we meet. For now, just know our focus in this program will be on the foundational elements of leadership. Things like self-awareness, being clear about our purpose, taking the time to know our people, co-creating an inspiring vision, and inspiring a culture of psychological safety. Do the foundational things right, every day, and everything else will take care of itself. If there is such a thing as advanced leadership development, it simply means mastering these foundational aspects. And, mastery happens one moment at a time.



Is this for you?

Who will benefit most from The Course? The answer is yes.

What do I mean by that? When I first pondered the curriculum I thought mostly about reaching established leaders. I wanted to support people who were already in positions of influence. This thinking has not changed. After all, one of the most important competencies shared by effective leaders is their insatiable appetite for learning. The best leaders have a great deal of humility and appreciate that they can never know everything.

So, if you have been standing in front of others for years or even decades, The Course is for you.

And, also...

Today, knowledge is available at the click of a laptop or smartphone. The old idea of having a single leader who is always the right person for every situation is no longer how leadership works best. (Not sure it ever was!) Today, in the strongest organizations, communities, and even families, different people rise at different times. When it is your turn and time, it is important to be ready.

Even if we do not see ourselves as leaders, people are watching. It might be our kids, a co-worker, a friend. The Course will connect you to who you are at your best and when you live as your most authentic self, everyone benefits.



What are the takeaways?

Why do this? Because it will absolutely make a difference in your work and your life.

By doing The Course you will:

- Gain a clear understanding of why you choose to lead and why knowing this is critical.
- Learn to be an Essentialist in your choices.
- Understand the responsibilities that come with leadership. (Beyond what may seem obvious.)
- Recognize how it is the small things you do every day that create empowering environments.
- Learn that successful team cultures are not about peace and love, but the ability to tell the truth while providing a sense of belonging and safety.
- Learn to value relationships and conversations with people who you often do not agree with.
- See how a focus on making sure your people have what they need to be successful results in meeting organizational goals including growth, profitability, retention of talent, innovation, and continuous process improvement.
- Add useful tools to your management and leadership toolbox that support solving problems and reaching desired outcomes.
- Learn and practice the art and science of coaching as a method for individual and team development.
- Be stretched.



For your organization...

What's in it for the place you work?

This is the "all boats rise" scenario and more. When one person rises, we all rise. When one team rises, the organization rises.

One of the principle jobs of a leader is to develop good leaders. What's more, good leaders know when to follow. They know when to step aside and empower someone else on the team to take the reins. To be successful in today's Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) world, organizations must be flexible and innovative. They must create safe environments where innovation has an opportunity to thrive.

When someone in your organization goes through The Course, it's not like you have to wait for the benefits to kick in six months or a year later. The impact is immediate as participants bring back new tools, communications strategies, and plenty of culture building ideas. The impact is felt immediately.

And when you have an entire team do The Course together, the benefit is exponential. Theory quickly gives way to solving current organization challenges, paving the way for sustainable growth.



The curriculum.

The Course focuses on key elements that make the best leaders the best leaders and the best organizations the best organizations.

We will cover:

- Self-awareness
- Emotional Intelligence
- Values and Associated Behaviors
- Purpose (your Why)
- Essentialism & Time Management
- Your Leadership Shadow
- Communicating as a Leader
- Psychological Safety & Belonging
- Establishing a Team of Rivals
- Influencing (up, down, and sideways)
- Building Trust
- Multi-directional Feedback
- An Alternative to Drama
- The Use of Mission, Vision & Goals
- Inspiration & Motivation
- Strategic Planning
- Coaching as a Tool
- Decision Making
- Leading Change
- Stress & Adversity
- Gratitude



Tools.

One way to simplify the art and science of this thing we call leadership is to have tools at your disposal. The Course will offer up a full repertoire. You can pick and choose the ones that work for you. The tools:

- **Personal Insights** - A tool to help you better know your people.
- **Why - How - What** (from Simon Sinek) - A tool to help you set priorities and connect what you do with your ultimate purpose - and recognize when you are out of alignment.
- **Team Norms** - A contract that keeps teams together.
- **Psychological Safety** - A checklist that will help you create a culture of trust, shared accountability, and innovation.
- **Difficult Conversations** - A tool to get yourself centered before a tough conversation
- **Strengths** - A tool to highlight and acknowledge skills and abilities (yours and the people on your team).
- **Values & Behaviors** - A way for teams to reach agreement on what is most important.
- **Drama - Empowerment** - A framework to help teams focus on outcomes and not get caught in a "problem" cycle (from David Emerald).
- **Leadership Model** - A one-page reminder of the most important aspects of leading.
- **Focus** - A tool to lock in priorities and check on them daily.
- **Purpose Discovery** - A tool to help individuals and teams drill down to discover their most fundamental purpose (from Greg McKeown).
- **Diversity** - A simple and powerful tool that helps your team uncover the things you have in common and celebrate what makes you different.
- **Goals & Intentions** - A matrix that makes goal-setting work beyond just talking about it.
- **Vision Development** - A way to make sure individual and team visions are aligned with the organization's vision.
- **Competencies Checklist** - A one-stop check on the skills leaders are continually striving to improve.
- **Leadership Declaration & Shadow** - A tool to keep you focused on your leadership reach.
- **Strategic Planning** - A template that makes planning less intimidating and more effective.



The cohort.

The Course uses a cohort approach. Your cohort will consist of no more than eight people. Each one of you brings experiences, ideas, passions, and perspectives that are uniquely yours. And yet, no matter the differences, it is how much we have in common that is often most remarkable.

Whether you are new to leadership or you have been living the role for some time, the collective “you” share a desire to grow, to experiment, to challenge yourself, and to stretch.

It is the discussion around the table that makes The Course relevant and especially timely. Even though every leader faces his or her own situations, it never seems to fail that what is going on for you is also going on for someone else. By sharing your stories, your frustrations, and successes, you gain different perspectives and learn new best practices.

One of the most important aspects to The Course is peer coaching. You will be matched with another cohort member and support one another using a coaching framework we will review together. Partners will switch during the program so everyone has the opportunity to experience different connections and coaching styles.

When smart, committed, passionate, and open leaders sit around a table, amazing things happen.



How it works.

I agree with Simon Sinek when he says that some things cannot be rushed. Building relationships. Forming trust. Establishing a fulfilling career. In the same way, the best leaders learn their art over time. Sure, we can all pick up a tip or two in a four-hour workshop, but it is when we immerse ourselves in the study and practice - especially the practice part - that leadership becomes a beautiful thing.

For this reason, The Course is designed to give you the space to take in content and then live in your world and try things out. This is, without a doubt, an experiential approach to learning and developing. We meet twice every month for six months. The meetings will be scheduled once the cohort is formed so that your demanding schedule can be taken into consideration. We will meet virtually (using Zoom) and/or in person, depending upon where everyone works and lives and the responsibilities we all must keep. When we meet as a group we will keep it to no more than two hours. Not only is this more schedule-friendly for everyone, it also allows us to maintain focus on a principle or two and have time for discussion. Again, the best things happen over time.

Most importantly, it is the in-between time when the real learning happens. The weeks when we are not meeting are the times when you are taking the tools we discuss into your workplaces, communities, and families. It's where you do your homework, stretch your leadership. It's also where you get to breathe and reflect.



Let's do this.

When we invest in ourselves and our people, everyone feels the energy.

The Course is for individuals and teams. It is for those who see something out there and want to get after it with purpose and joy. It is for people who are alive, passionate, and curious. Tuition is \$3,900 per participant and includes all materials and books. Tuition for multiple participants or teams from the same organization will be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

I am sure you have questions. This brief introduction to the program is just that, a brief introduction that only touches the surface. Please call or write with questions, thoughts, ideas, musings.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to have you participate in the next cohort.

Best,
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