"Could it be that . . . ?"

A Peer-to-Peer Consultation Exercise

Consultation Session Instructions

You will work in a small peer-to-peer consultation group on the leadership challenges you and your peers submitted.

Preparation
To prepare for the session, please re-read the leadership challenges submitted by you and the other members in your consultation group. Consider the following questions:

- Re-reading your leadership challenge, are you thinking about it differently now? Why? How?
- Re-reading the challenges of your group members, formulate two types of questions:
  - Clarifying questions: What do you really need to know before you can respond to each peers' challenge? For example, to probe an issue around building a team, you may want to ask: "How many people report to you?"
  - Diagnostic questions: What would help your colleague think about the problem differently and identify strategies to solve it? A helpful framing of diagnostic questions is starting each question with *"Could it be that . . . ?"* For example, you may ask: "Could it be that this is an opportunity for you to delegate work to your team?"

Process
After a short introduction by your facilitator, your group of three to five participants will convene to discuss their challenges. Each person will have fifteen minutes to present their challenge and receive feedback. Each group has a designated timekeeper to ensure the group follows the schedule below:

- **Present (three minutes):** Present your challenge, including any new insights gained on how you are thinking about the problem. Avoid going into too much detail and *focus instead on the essential leadership issue. End the presentation with a clear question or dilemma.*
- **Discuss (two + eight minutes):** Next, the group will ask you questions and provide feedback. The first two minutes are for clarifying questions and the remaining eight minutes are for diagnostic questions and suggestions that help you consider the challenge differently and identify strategies to solve it. *Note that presenters should simply listen and take notes during the time that peers are posing the diagnostic "Could it be that . . . " questions.*
- **Respond (two minutes):** Outline what you have heard and request clarification on any advice.

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- **Repeat:** Repeat these steps until each person has presented and received feedback.
- **Results**: Share what you intend to do differently given the feedback from the session.

See the reverse of this handout for a "quick guide" graphic of these instructions.

Quick Guide Session Instructions

Step 1

Invite the first participant in the group to spend 3 minutes presenting his or her challenge. The participant should end with a question or dilemma.

Step 2

Participants should refrain from giving advice – instead, they should ask clarifying questions about the presented challenge to get just enough detail to be able to respond.

Step 3

Allow 8 minutes for participants to ask diagnostic questions. Encourage them to start their questions with “Could it be that…?” The presenter should not respond to specific comments or questions but should save their thoughts for the end of their allotted time.

Step 4

Invite the presenter to take 2 minutes to respond to the feedback they received. Repeat this process for each person in the group.

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