

**DR. SARAH SUMNER**

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**LEADERSHIP  
ABOVE**

**THE LINE**



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*Leadership above the Line*

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# FOREWORD

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This is a timely book. The great cry today is for leadership formation, for the creation of a foolproof process that will ensure leadership success and shield growing organizations from leadership failure. The only problem is that this cry continues to go largely unheeded. Dr. Sarah Sumner, however, has a passion to see character-centered leadership flourish within every organization, and her book offers a fresh, insightful perspective on this topic. Several years ago I had the privilege of hiring Dr. Sumner when I was at Azusa Pacific University. Since then, Sarah has gone on to distinguish herself as an able scholar, a profound teacher, and an impressive minister. Her insatiable appetite for learning is reflected throughout these pages, as is her desire for excellence.

In *Leadership above the Line*, Sarah introduces us to the People Model and offers a parable that shows how leadership develops.

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In the midst of this model, we see real personalities spring to life, wrestling not so much with principles, but with the competing priorities of real leadership in real time with real consequences.

So many leadership books go one of two directions: either offering a didactic message that appeals to the hyperrational mind or offering a narrative approach that tugs on our emotions. The appeal of Sarah's book is that it reaches out to both mind-sets. She opens the book by offering a descriptive model to which she gives flesh and bones a few pages later. In the opening section, Sarah defines not only the principles, but also the realities that exist in every organization.

It is in this opening that we are invited to recognize that people think and act differently. No immediate value decision is made, only a simple acknowledgment that this is the way the world works

and that every person not only has multiple sides to his or her personality, but also a dominant and preferred approach. These innate tendencies guide our decisions and our participation in every organization we join. The beauty of this point is its amplification of a key theme circulating in much contemporary leadership literature: A person's instincts are central to his or her decision making.

In developing the People Model, Sarah used the three dominant archetypes of truth, goodness, and beauty, reflecting the influence of the ancient Greeks, and these archetypes guide the remainder of the book. We all have an innate sense of truth, goodness, and beauty; we just have it in different amounts and express it in different ways.

The personalities in the parable that amplify the model and form the heart of the book could be taken from any organization. Each of the five featured individuals displays character qualities we have seen in others and at times have even seen in ourselves. To help us understand these tendencies, Sarah concludes the book with several tools that unveil our tendencies personally and organizationally. These tools are meant to be suggestive, not conclusive, and their biggest role is to prod us to think about the attitudes and behaviors that dominate our interaction with colleagues and, in turn, reflect our deepest commitments.

One of the biggest challenges in any organization is to gain self-awareness as individual employees and as a company. This is often a threatening process because it reveals not only our strengths, but also the areas where we remain insufficient. But Sarah's book is helpful at just this point as it prompts us to gain self-awareness while providing tools to help us undergo the change and transformation that will make us more effective.

In Jim Collins's book *Good to Great*, he explains that what separates those outstanding executives who lead their companies to

greatness from those top-notch executives whose companies never reach (or remain at) the top is this: The former strive to serve the larger mission of their organization, while the others work hard to serve their own ego needs. In many respects, Sarah is challenging us to lay aside our dominant egos for the greater good of the organization, inviting all parties to the table to gain a deeper understanding of our companies and work together to build a redemptive community that manifests the love of Christ. Although this book is written primarily as a crossover book for leaders in all organizations, it cannot be overlooked that a key to all successful leadership is to guide from a foundation anchored to Jesus Christ. This is a priority introduced at the end, but a theme that undergirds the entire project.

As you begin to read and enjoy this book, keep one final thought in mind. We are not born fully formed. We must develop. This book is meant to stimulate such development. Not one of us is ever beyond growing or needing to acquire new skills, abilities, and understandings. This reality is driven home by the very open-ended nature of the story. Although the story has a conclusion, it is not the end of the story, but only a new beginning for the individuals who make up this mythical company. This myth is reality. Every new level of self-awareness and corporate awareness begins a whole new cycle of growth and development. To this end we should be grateful for the work of Dr. Sumner, who amplifies this reality and in turn provides possibilities for our own improvement in such an attractive and appealing way. May your own life and leadership be enriched.

*Gayle D. Beebe, PhD*

PRESIDENT  
SPRING ARBOR UNIVERSITY  
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**PART ONE**

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**THE  
MODEL**

CHAPTER 1

# ABOUT THE PEOPLE MODEL

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This is a book about people. It's a book about building good character and *leading* from good character. It's a book designed for people who are ready to get serious about developing into first-rate leaders. It's also meant for leaders who are doggedly determined to solidify first-rate teams.

Almost all of us agree that good character is the centerpiece of authentic first-rate leadership. Good character is the key to good leadership because people tend to follow whatever standard the leader sets. Recent studies in moral intelligence show that the level of morality exercised by a company's character consistently affects the bottom line. It takes good character to grapple with reality. It takes good character to treat people right. It takes good character to build unity among networks of people and causes.

Thus every situation that a leader might face calls for the same three attributes: humility, courage, and honesty.

Most leaders have the willingness to improve their character, but so often they are not told how to do so. How do leaders learn to lead “above the line,” so to speak? How can leaders grow in self-awareness? How can leaders learn to look inwardly? How can they keep themselves from becoming too defensive to accept the kind of feedback that they need?

These questions are important because people are important. Moreover, as research studies show, character deficits lead to financial deficits in the long run. Character deficits are very costly. Qualities such as arrogance and presumption, cowardice and people pleasing, deception and image management all weigh companies down.

Of course, no leader *wants* to lead with character deficits. Yet everyone has seen character deficits play out. I have seen them play out in various studies that I conducted while earning my MBA. I have seen them play out in magazine and newspaper articles. I have seen them in my places of employment. Most vividly I have seen them in myself.

Though by vocation I work in a private university, I wrote this book for people in a variety of fields. My primary target audience is the business community, yet the book applies to anyone in any setting—including nonprofit organizations, churches, and even families.

The uniqueness of this book is that it teaches through an instrument called the People Model. Take note: The People Model is based on Greek philosophy, yet it is original in its form and application. Like other innovations, it began as intuition. It was born from a hunch that burst into a full-blown model because logic gave it structure and meaning. Though the People

Model is not scientific or research based, it's empirical in the sense that experience confirms its validity. Essentially it's a grid that describes three sets of people: the Strategists, the Humanitarians, and the Diplomats. But the model is much more than a grid.

The People Model is a tool that can be used for practical purposes: to increase self-awareness, to make sense of confusing situations, to motivate people, to instigate changes, to establish stronger teams, to imagine new solutions, and to approach hard conversations more effectively. The People Model presents such a fresh way of thinking that its fruitfulness is hard to exhaust.

Another way of putting it is that the People Model yields three discrete types of decision-making power: *explanatory power* to interpret organizational behavior, *motivational power* to muster up people's willingness to forfeit stubborn habits that have weakened their effectiveness in the past, and *creative power* to imagine wise solutions for the future.

The birth of the People Model was intentional in the sense that I was trying to crack a code. I was trying to make sense of confusing situations I had personally observed over the years. I also was trying to learn more and better ways to respond to sticky issues in the workplace. I started my reflections—at least on a conscious level—with the premise that people usually do things for a reason; we operate from specific motivations. What the People Model shows is that those reasons and motivations sometimes can dramatically clash.

After reflecting deeply, I realized that the hardest lessons I've learned about leadership have come to me in the context of complex situations. What the People Model shows is that difficult situations can't be fairly sorted out simply by dubbing some people as "good guys" and others as "bad guys." While it's true the world

has its tyrants and its heroes, it is also true that tyrants have their good points and that heroes aren't heroic in every way.

Although the People Model itself came to me as a blast of inspiration, it only took one evening for me to see it playing out in every workplace I've been part of and every relationship I've been in. For example, I could see it in my marriage. I could see it in my family, my workplace, my church, and in every organization that I knew of. That's why I have named it the People Model. Wherever people are, the model is there as well.

To be clear, the People Model applies both to individuals and organizations. Though every person and every company is a mix of all three types, there's a test that you can use informally to help you see which category most closely mirrors you. You can also use this test to assess your organization as a whole. If you want, you can take the test (beginning on page 173) now.

Okay, on to the model. My intention is to present it in three ways: (a) by explaining its basic form, (b) by illustrating its implications through a fictional story, and (c) by describing different ways to apply it. These three presentations are respectively reflected in the structure of the book.

Part 1 gives the bare bones of the model. Part 2 shows in detail how the model plays out and elaborates on its endless implications. Part 3 deals with practical application, putting the model to use. Part 4 includes a test and a workbook. Though the workbook is designed for small group discussion, you can use it privately if you like. Since the People Model applies to virtually every situation, you as the reader are left to decide how deep you want to go in your self-examination and assessment of your team or organization.

Now let's dive in and see what kind of impact the People Model has on you.

**PART TWO**

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**THE**

**NARRATIVE**

CHAPTER 4

# THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE MODEL

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“Nathan just doesn’t get it,” John Mark said to his wife.

Cynthia looked at him sympathetically as she rubbed her weary feet.

“I have tried and tried to talk to him,” he said. “I tried again today, but as usual, I couldn’t get anywhere with him.”

She sighed. “You sound disappointed again.”

“I *am* disappointed again. What will it take to get this supervisor of mine to understand that I’m on his team—that I’m actually trying to help him?”

“Are you feeling unappreciated?” She put her nursing shoes in the closet.

“No. I feel frustrated,” he answered. “I’m bothered because I can’t tap into his wavelength. I don’t know how to get through to him. It’s almost as if he can’t hear me.”

“What do you want him to hear?”

“I want him to hear that he’s sabotaging himself,” said John Mark.

“Is he willing to hear that?” said Cynthia, motioning to her husband to follow her downstairs into the kitchen.

“Maybe not, but he needs to.”

“Why do you have to be the one to tell him?” she asked.

“Because I see the problem,” said John Mark. “When you’re watching someone play with fire, you speak up and warn them. That’s the only right thing to do.”

“What kind of fire is he playing with?” asked Cynthia.

“He’s ignoring reality.”

“What do you mean? From what you’ve told me in the past, Nathan seems to be aware of a number of things.”

“Like what?”

“Like the customers. Nathan knows all the major customers by name. He’s really very good at meeting people.”

John Mark countered, “I agree that Nathan is adept at public relations. My point is that while Nathan makes an effort to learn our customers’ names, he doesn’t really care about them as people. His big concern in business is to make a big name for himself.”

“And that’s frustrating to you,” she said.

“That’s what drives me crazy,” he confirmed. “Nathan can’t appreciate good advice. Take today, for instance. I couldn’t have made myself any plainer. During our weekly team meeting, he told us he was planning a few changes to make us more competitive. But you know what he wanted to do? His idea was to violate our marketing schedule! He wanted us to start promising services to potential new clients that we aren’t even capable of providing yet. We have strict company guidelines in place to prevent such misrepresentations.”

John Mark pulled a bar stool away from the counter and sat down.

“What did you say to him?” asked Cynthia.

“I told him there’d be a boomerang effect if he fudges too much on the rules. That it will come back to haunt him if he makes misleading claims to our customers.”

“Why would Nathan want to break the rules?”

“Because he doesn’t believe in following rules,” said John Mark. “He likes for others to follow rules, so that he will have an advantage when he breaks them.”

Cynthia looked at her husband skeptically.

“Believe me, this is par for the course for him. From Nathan’s perspective, the sky is the limit because no rules have the power to hold him back.”

“So how did he respond when you told him that the company can’t implement his plan?”

“He got this silly grin on his face. I don’t know how to describe it. It wasn’t sinister, but it wasn’t innocent either. I guess that you could say it was peculiar. His mouth gaped a little and that peculiar grin set in, and then he said flippantly, ‘Why?’”

Cynthia replied, “He wanted to know why it’s wrong to break company rules?”

John Mark answered, “No, he was telling me that since it doesn’t seem wrong to *him*, then the company shouldn’t think it’s wrong either.”

“Are you sure that’s what he meant?”

John Mark replied, “It adds up with everything else. Think about it. Nathan lives in his own world. He can’t see the difference between his own imagination and reality. In fact, I believe that Nathan sees the company as an extension of himself. And let’s face it, Cynthia, Nathan has unusual self-regard.”

“You couldn’t get through to him today at all?”

“Not on the main point that I was trying to make.”

Cynthia sighed. “Well, I can see why you feel upset.”

“It’s annoying,” said John Mark. “I mean, I’m trying to help the guy. But he elevates himself so far above the rest of us that he simply can’t conceive of needing to make changes in himself.”

“Does anyone else see a problem in Nathan?” Cynthia asked.

“Almost all of us who work for him see the problem in spades. We talk about it openly. Unfortunately, I’m the only one who has confronted Nathan personally. The others are too afraid. Nathan can be so intimidating. He drops these little hints about not wanting anyone to be fired.”

“Yeah, that scares me too. I hope you don’t lose your job,” said Cynthia.

“I’m not worried about that,” said John Mark. “I’m worried about the mess that is likely to ensue. My fear is that Nathan will stay in the company just long enough to create a disaster, and then he’ll move to another company. I’ll be left there, along with a few others, to sort through all the debris.”

“How long has Nathan been a part of the company? About six or seven years?”

“Yes, and as far as I can tell, he still has no interest in studying reports, or holding anyone accountable, or paying due respect to the budget.”

“But he’s the executive vice president. How can he get away with that?”

“Because Nathan was promoted from the PR department by none other than Max,” said John Mark. “He’s ‘Max’s boy,’ and Max is the CEO.”

“Max must see something valuable in Nathan.”

“There’s no doubt that Nathan is talented. You’ve seen him,” said John Mark. “He’s long-winded at times, but he can make an excellent first impression.”

“Yeah,” said Cynthia. “I remember how excited you were when Nathan first got the job. You said he was going to be a great role model.”

“That’s another disappointment,” said John Mark. “While it’s true that I can learn something from Nathan’s way of uniting people, mostly I have learned from him what not to do. How not to lead.”

“What makes Max think that Nathan holds promise for the company?”

“Max looks at Nathan, not the facts.”

“What do you mean?” asked Cynthia.

“I mean just what I said. Max looks at Nathan, and Nathan looks good. His hygiene is immaculate, and his level of self-confidence is exceptional.”

Cynthia replied, “I must admit that Nathan is rather impressive when he speaks. Didn’t you tell me that WeServTech was awarded exclusive servicing rights by the state’s university system after Nathan made a pitch at their board meeting?”

“Yes . . . after the rest of us had been meeting and planning our approach for months on end.”

Cynthia raised an eyebrow as she looked at John Mark.

“Look, I’ll admit Nathan’s got charisma. He’s convincing to those who watch him,” said John Mark. “He looks good and sounds good as long as you don’t listen to what he says.”

“How can he sound good to people who aren’t listening?” asked Cynthia.

John Mark tried to explain. “It’s the tone of Nathan’s voice that sounds good. That is, his voice sounds good if you listen to

nothing more than its sound. When you listen to the content of what he says, you notice right away it's a bunch of hollow words."

"So what do you think is going to happen?" asked Cynthia. She opened the door of the oven to check if their dinner was hot.

"I don't know because I don't see the numbers firsthand," said John Mark, bouncing his heels. "But I do see Nathan's habits, and I'm telling you—the numbers have to be down. You can't spend money the way that Nathan does without compromising the final results."

"Well, if things go awry, it won't be your fault," said Cynthia.

"What do you mean 'if'?" said John Mark. "Things have already gone awry. If you ask me, we're taking the scenic route on a quiet collision course headed steadily and directly for a crash. I wish someone could communicate that to Max."

"I'm surprised that you haven't tipped him off yourself." Cynthia thought for a second. "Have you talked to Max already?"

John Mark nodded.

"What did you say to him?" she asked.

"I told him that I don't trust Nathan."

"What did Max say in return?"

"He said that Nathan is on a learning curve, and he asked me to help him out as much as I can."

"When did that happen?" asked Cynthia.

"About three months ago."

"You've been trying to help Nathan for three months?" she said incredulously. "No wonder you feel frustrated."

John Mark agreed. "I don't like having a boss who breaks the rules."

"Well, if it's any consolation, Max has always been good to you. I guess the best we can do is trust his judgment."

John Mark couldn't stand to hear this, so he got up and left the room. Soon Cynthia heard the sound of a newspaper being whipped open a bit too loudly and abruptly.

Cynthia peered into the living room. "Honestly, I was trying to console you. Can I get you something to drink?"

"It doesn't console me to know that you trust Max's judgment more than you trust mine."

"What?" said Cynthia. "You don't think I trust your judgment? What gave you that idea?"

"I told you my assessment of the situation at work, and your response, in effect, was to say that I'm probably wrong."

"I didn't say that you were wrong."

"Think about what you *did* say," John Mark replied.

Cynthia recounted the conversation. "I asked you about Max, and then I said that the best thing we can do is trust . . ."

It dawned on her now what she had said.

Trying to win back her husband, Cynthia said, "First your frustration was with Nathan, then it was with Max, and now it is with me." She paused for a second. "My intention was to make you feel better."

John Mark loosened up. "I know. I'm sorry for losing my cool."

---

The next morning at the office, as John Mark was checking his e-mails, he heard his secretary greeting Nathan.

"Good morning," she said.

John Mark looked up from his computer. There was Nathan smiling at the secretary as if she were taking his photo. His suit was immaculate and his shirt pocket monogrammed. Indeed, every article of his clothing was perfect. Nevertheless, he paused

to straighten his jacket before tapping his manicured fingers on John Mark's open door.

"How are you?" asked Nathan, extending his hand.

"Good," said John Mark, standing up. The two of them shook hands.

"What's up?" said John Mark.

"There's a special opportunity," said Nathan. "It's very prestigious, in fact. We need someone, someone trustworthy like you, John Mark, to take charge of a new initiative. The plan is to set up a formal system of leadership development within the company. Max loves the idea, and he's excited that I've selected you as the leader to jump-start it."

"You're asking me to do this on top of my regular job?"

"Not exactly," said Nathan. "We would divvy up a portion of your current responsibilities, so that a third of your time would be freed up during this quarter, and then half of your time from then on."

"Am I failing to measure up in my current role?"

"Just the opposite," said Nathan. "You've made a unique contribution as the vice president of sales. Your team seems to love you, and you've brought in some solid new customers. There's a lot to be said about your success. But I think I have identified the next step for you, John Mark. Granted, we'll have to change a few things here at headquarters in order to accommodate this important transition, but it's time to shuffle the cards."

John Mark responded, "I have more responsibility in my current role full-time than I would have in starting a new program for fledgling leaders."

"There are perks to this opportunity," said Nathan. "To begin with, you'd have a nice office on the other side of the complex looking out at the company pond. The work pressure on you

would be lightened, so that you would have plenty of time to innovate new ideas for upcoming leaders. There are countless benefits to taking this job. Perhaps the most significant one is that you would be given the chance to demonstrate your exceptional abilities in a context that will highlight your achievements.”

Nathan placed a paternal hand upon John Mark’s shoulder and concluded with the remark, “John Mark, one of your distinctions as a third-tier leader is that you have expertise in both operations and sales. You’re a treasured hybrid. That’s why you’re the man for the job.”

“Would I still be the vice president of sales?” John Mark lowered himself into his chair.

“Yes, for at least six months, you would. But the ultimate goal, of course, would be for you to transition into the other role full-time.”

“Who do you have in mind to replace me?”

“I haven’t gotten that far,” said Nathan.

He seated himself, mirroring John Mark’s posture.

“I want to honor you in this process. This is your moment, John Mark, and I’m not willing to detract from the celebration of your stepping out in fortitude to seize it. You have that pioneering spirit, and Max and I want to take advantage of it.”

John Mark responded, “Nathan, if you start rearranging the organizational chart without processing your ideas with anyone else on the team, you’re setting yourself up for a windstorm. When you move people around, you’re asking whole families to make adjustments. What’s your rationale for this plan?”

Nathan looked smugly at John Mark as if to say he felt no obligation to answer the question.

John Mark broke the silence. “I don’t believe you *have* a rationale. If I can speak candidly with you, Nathan, my observation

is that you routinely operate without plans, rationale, or any clear processes by which to communicate your ideas to the team.”

John Mark braced himself to hear a long defense from his wordy supervisor. But to John Mark’s surprise, Nathan responded as if he were accepting an award. He leaned against the file cabinet and answered nondefensively.

“That’s probably fair for you to say,” said Nathan in a reflective, self-congratulatory tone. “I’m more fortunate than most. Since I run on intuition, I don’t have to grapple with all the data that tends to bog down other leaders. Instead I have the advantage of being endowed with a sixth sense; you know, a natural feel for things. I get hunches of what needs to be done, and then I wait until the time seems right to do it.”

Cutting the conversation short, Nathan stood up and disingenuously expressed a large measure of appreciation for John Mark’s willingness to volunteer for the new role. Then he bid John Mark good-bye and walked away.

John Mark sat motionless until the moment that Nathan’s foot stepped out the door. Then he swiveled his chair around and composed an urgent e-mail to Max:

Dear Max,

I’m writing to explain to you in no uncertain terms that I declined Nathan’s offer this morning to lead the start-up for leadership development within the company. I am fully committed to my role as vice president of sales.

John Mark

Later that day, John Mark received an e-mail back from Max.

John Mark,

It was my understanding that you had expressed to Nathan an interest in the leadership development initiative. If you prefer not to lead the charge, I will honor your request.

Thanks for being such a hard worker.

Max

---

That evening before bed John Mark recounted the episode to his wife.

“Can you believe that Nathan ended the meeting by thanking me for *volunteering* for the job? I’m telling you, Cynthia, he’s deluded.”

“I hope he doesn’t try to get you fired,” said Cynthia. “It scares me to think of what Nathan might do when he finds out from Max that you declined his special offer. It’s probably going to embarrass him, John Mark.”

“No need to worry,” said John Mark. “Nathan will spin his way out of it. He’ll probably tell Max that I misunderstood our conversation.”

Cynthia shook her head in disbelief.

John Mark added, “I won’t lose my job. I may lose my sanity, but I am quite securely positioned. I now have it in writing that Max has agreed to honor my request.”

“Is that why you e-mailed Max? To get something back from him in writing?”

“I’m not stupid,” said John Mark.

“I know you do things for a reason,” said Cynthia. “But I missed it on this one. I thought you wrote him because you didn’t want to duke it out with Nathan.”

“You’re projecting,” said John Mark. “You’re the one who’s always avoiding conflict.”

“Well, I must say that was very clever,” said Cynthia.

John Mark smiled. It felt nice to be admired by his wife. Ever since Nathan had become his supervisor, John Mark had felt less and less admired in the workplace. Though his colleagues still looked up to him, he didn’t feel their appreciation quite as much. He had become the conscience of the company, and the others made him pay a price for that.

It took him hours to fall asleep that night. His mind kept bombarding him with questions. *Why am I becoming so critical? And why do I feel so alone? Why can’t I just do what Cynthia says and trust Max?*

He tossed and turned in bed, but still his thoughts kept racing. *Why can’t Nathan hear me? And why won’t the others speak up? Why does Max believe in Nathan? Why are all these problems so obvious to me? And why do I feel stirred to sort them out?*

Though eventually John Mark fell asleep, at a subconscious level, he remained in a state of consternation. Over the next several weeks, he effectively assimilated almost every observation that he had. He did this apart from any conscious realization that he was innovating a revelatory idea. Soon he would discover that a fresh new way of thinking, a fruitful paradigm, had outcropped on the landscape of his mind.

## FINAL INSIGHTS

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Having lived with the People Model for eighteen months, I can say from experience that it continually provides new insights. Most recently I realized that conflicts between people of different categories are not mere clashes of values. Rather, they are conflicts over values in which people take security.

For instance, the Strategists want the organization to be authentic because they take security in other people's authenticity. When someone fails to be authentic (i.e., true to the company's mission), the Strategist may react—not because the Strategist can't handle other people making mistakes per se, but rather because the Strategist's personal security is threatened. For a Strategist, it makes no sense even to have a company unless its members are committed to its primary purpose for existing. It's all about the mission for the Strategist. So when someone breaches

the mission, the Strategist may question whether that person rightly belongs on the team. Of course, a Humanitarian or Diplomat may also be concerned if someone disregards the mission routinely. But for the Strategist the problem is more visceral. It bothers the Strategist—at an emotional level—because the Strategist takes security in having everyone be true to the company’s purpose.

Humanitarians, by contrast, want the organization to be a comfortable community because they take security in other people’s comfortable feelings. Said in reverse, Humanitarians feel uncomfortable when others are outside their comfort zones. That is not to suggest that Humanitarians can’t handle it when members of the company complain or withdraw. The point is, rather, that Humanitarians’ sense of security is bound up with the feelings of others. So when a team member feels hurt, a Humanitarian may react by becoming too protective of that person, even at the expense of the organization’s mission. Of course, a Strategist or Diplomat may be overly protective of particular individuals as well. But, relatively speaking, the Humanitarians’ protectiveness of hurt people in the company runs deeper. The reason why, as we now know, is because Humanitarians take security in having others feel accepted and at ease.

As for the Diplomats, they want the organization to be impressive because they take security in the projection of positive images. That is not to say that Diplomats can’t handle unpolished coworkers. It’s rather to point out that negative projections shake the Diplomat’s sense of security. For a Diplomat, it’s useless for an entity to be well-known if its public reputation works against it. It’s useless to work hard if no one is impressed—or if no one knows the company exists. So when someone is perceived as being a threat to the organization’s image, a Diplomat might react

by undervaluing that person's contribution, even if he or she has a solid track record of forwarding the company's mission. Of course, a Strategist or Humanitarian would also be concerned if someone regularly embarrassed the organization. But for Diplomats, the problem is more upsetting since it rattles them internally and causes them to feel too vulnerable.

So what does all this mean? It means that value clashes are emotionally loaded because people's sense of security is at stake.

I am confident, therefore, that emotionally charged value clashes can be well managed when people take pains to respect and understand the basis of their security, and especially when they choose to place their ultimate security in God.

If you think about it, all three values I've described are legitimate. All three deserve to be respected and pursued. All three are reflective of God. God cares about authenticity because God himself is truth. He cares about people's feelings because He is compassionate and good. He cares about harmony and order (the very elements that make things impressive) because he is a God of beauty. Heaven and earth alike attest to that.

I've noticed something else. The People Model serves as a marvelous grid for generating insights from the Bible. Take just one example, 1 Corinthians 13, the famous love chapter in the New Testament. In effect, it says:

*If I speak with the artful tongue of a Diplomat and can dazzle those around me by building unity between groups and exhibiting great charisma and finesse . . . but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

*And if I am a masterful Strategist who can analyze complex issues, think clearly in a storm and act boldly*

*and decisively with integrity . . . but do not have love,  
I am nothing.*

*And if I am heroic, a tireless Humanitarian who sac-  
rifices everything for the sake of other people, even to the  
point of laying down my life as a martyr . . . but do not  
have love, it profits me nothing.*

The wisdom of this passage is reflected in the People Model chart. Tacitly the chart says you can think you're above the line—but unless your motives are unselfish, you're actually in the basement being self-righteous or self-serving or self-absorbed.

In other words, if you think you're above the line in the Strategist category, but you don't have love, you're actually being presumptuous and self-righteous. Likewise, you can think you're above the line in the Humanitarian category if you're patient and kind and loyal. But if you're motivated by people pleasing rather than genuine love, then really you are being self-serving. In the same way, you can think you're above the line in the Diplomat category if you're uniting everybody and finagling your way out of problems. But if you're doing so without love, then in truth you're self-absorbed.

Love, by definition, is unselfish. It takes love to produce a humble Strategist, a courageous Humanitarian, and an honest Diplomat. Love is the key to leadership above the line.

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If you want more information,  
feel free to check out the Web site  
**[www.leadershipabovetheline.com](http://www.leadershipabovetheline.com)**.

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**SARAH SUMNER HAS BRILLIANTLY CAPTURED THE HEART OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GREAT LEADER . . .**

and where and why many of us fall short. The People Model provides readers unique insights into our individual personality styles, what traits truly work for us, which ones don't, and most importantly, what we need to do if we aspire to become what we were created to be. Her ability to incorporate spiritual truths in a modern-day format is especially distinctive. I strongly encourage anyone who wants to be a more effective leader and lead a more personally fulfilled life to read this book . . . it is life changing!

**RICHARD ANDERSEN**

Executive Vice President  
San Diego Padres Park

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The People Model is an excellent tool kit for everyday usage, whether in business or social settings. The self-awareness it creates is refreshing, powerful, and meaningful. After reading *Leadership above the Line*, you'll be motivated and prepared to hone your style for greater effectiveness.

**MIKE HUGHES**

Senior Vice President  
Safeco Insurance

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Sarah Sumner's People Model is a valuable contribution to the literature on leadership. While many books on the subject acknowledge the importance of self-awareness, this one offers a useful tool for actually achieving it. She presents her concept in an understandable and highly readable format that will engage almost any reader.

**JOHN C. KNAPP**

President  
The Southern Institute for Business and Professional Ethics  
Senior Scholar and Professor of Ethical Leadership  
Kennesaw State University

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*Leadership above the Line* provides a thought-provoking and practical approach that can be applied in virtually any organization. It helps managers better understand personal leadership styles and avoid "below the line" tendencies that may undermine leadership effectiveness. I highly recommend this book. It can lead to constructive dialogue among those already in leadership, as well as train and develop future leaders.

**LUELLEN LUCID**

Global Quality Leader, Human Capital Group  
Watson Wyatt & Company

**IF YOU LEAD LEADERS, PUSH OTHER BOOKS ASIDE—AND MAKE THIS THE NEXT ONE YOU READ.** *Leadership above the Line*

is 60 percent story, 100 percent breakthrough insights on leadership formation. Dr. Sarah Sumner’s character-based model is clear, her story is compelling, and her application tools are transformational. Highly recommended!

**DAVID SANFORD**

President

Sanford Communications, Inc.

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Do you lead? Do you work with leaders? Do you want to be a leader? Then get a firm grip on the People Model and gain a better understanding of what drives people to make decisions, whether good or bad. Learn from it. Grow with it. You’ll be glad you did.

**JAMES M. STOCKHAM**

Director of Marketing, Category Management and Field Sales  
Farmer John (Clougherty Packing, LLC)

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The ancient philosophical categories of truth, beauty, and goodness find a fresh flowering of relevance in the inspired hands of Dr. Sarah Sumner. Serious attention to the People Model will result in better people and better organizations. Her metaphor of operating “above the line” is becoming my favorite for describing sound ethics applied in the hard-scrabble realities of modern life. Dr. Sumner offers us not only a worthy *end*—character in leadership—but also a *means* for developing it.

**LARRY R. DONNITHORNE**

Author

*The West Point Way of Leadership: From Learning Principled Leadership to Practicing It*

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*Leadership above the Line* is a great book to give friends and colleagues. It offers profound insights into the behaviors, motives, and fears associated with different leadership styles. You’ll recognize immediately the value that this book will bring on a day-to-day basis. I’ve embraced the model and already achieved positive results.

**JANICE TROEGER**

Director

Clinical Planning and Operations, Medication Delivery  
Baxter Healthcare  
Board of Directors, Willow Creek Community Church