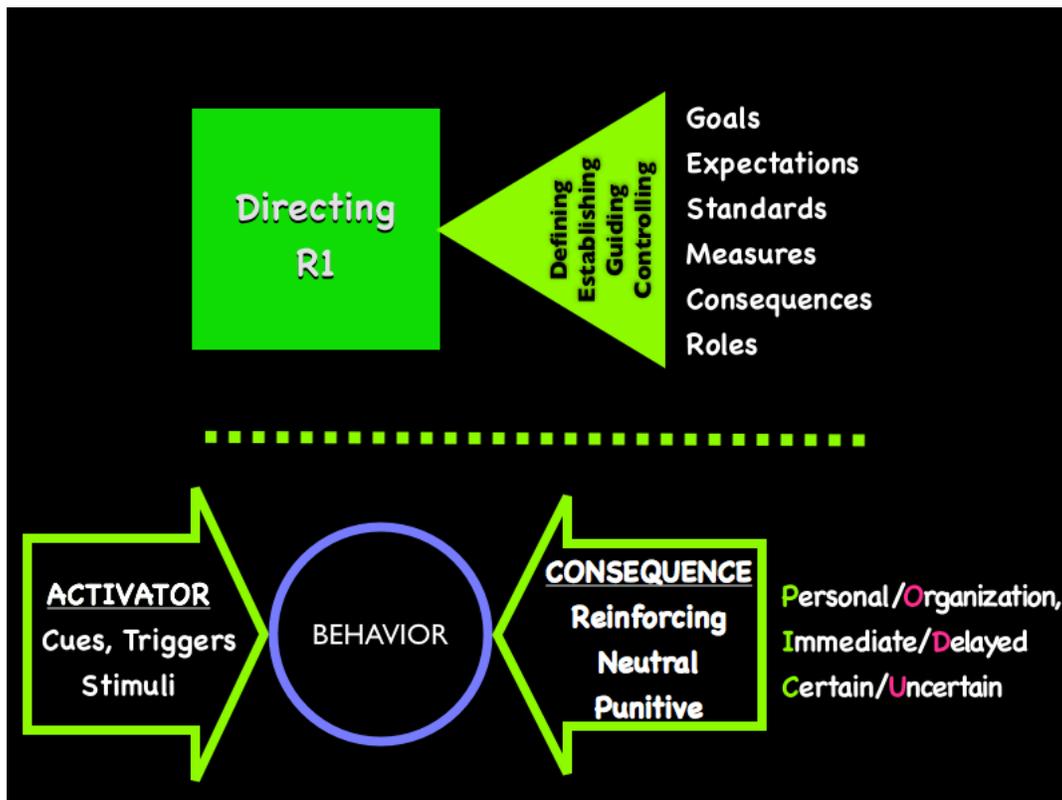

Directing:

High Task Focus, Low Relationship Focus

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Directing

“Hey, can you please help me find...”

Ever been lost or directionally challenged? When is the last time you asked someone for directions? By the time we ask for directions we have admitted that we don't have the ability, knowledge or experience to get where we want to go (low ability). I don't know about you, but when I'm asking for directions I'm also typically dealing with some icky affect: anxious, apprehensive, stressed, etc. I am certainly NOT feeling confident, or assured (low willingness).

At the moment of our asking for directions we are having a pristine Follower Readiness Level I Experience. What we need at that moment is someone familiar with the area and willing to help.

Help, what does help really look at this RI moment? At this level of readiness what the follower requires is Direction. The follower needs the leader to sufficiently; define, establish, develop, prescribe, control and instruct them in the areas of; goals, objectives, expectations, standards, processes, measures, roles and consequences. Clearly, at this stage leaders need to be active and deal primarily in the Task focused space. This helps the follower become clearer and through clarity their affect goes down and learning can begin.



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In LSSD, participants define the following boundary conditions for their directive approaches in the following ways.

Direction	
Do / Be	Careful Not to Do / Be
Prepared & organized technically/procedurally.	Wing it.
Clear and concise	Be inconsistent in any way (do as I say, not as I do)
Accessible	Leave RI to sort it out on their own.
Alert- RI followers may struggle a long time before asking for directions.	Assume their knowledge or understanding
Check frequently for understanding	Be vague or non committal
Keep it simple	Overwhelm, get off on tangents, prove how much you know
Use visuals / diagrams	Be condescending, abrasive or abrupt
Break activity down into smallest parts	Critical
Provide clear milestones which allow follower to self check progress.	Intrusive
Praise and affirm even the smallest progress or approximation	Too involved or focused on RI's affect.

Before a leader can begin to provide effective direction they have to set the table for success. Leaders' that either don't have or use clear goals, with clear standards, effective measures, aligned roles and responsibilities will struggle to help followers at the R1 Level of Readiness. This is also not the time to "hope" that emerging performance issues will "take care of themselves". From a performance trajectory standpoint, the R1 is on the launching pad. Small deviations from acceptable standards will probably only result in larger and more difficult gaps down the road.

In our Leadership Skill & Style Development Program (LSSD) we help leaders take a hard look at the task focused aspects of their "motivating performance systems". We have leaders compare the elements of their performance systems with the elements that can be found in the motivating performance systems found at work in most sports. Most sports have wonderful, intricate and aligned motivating performance systems at play. Assessing and improving in these areas can help make it easy for R1's to make progress and productive contributions quickly.

Within the Directing module of LSSD we train leaders to analyze performance related behaviors (not attitudes) and to appreciate the role that consequences play in reinforcing all behavior. We start by helping leaders appreciate the ABC's of behavior; Activator (signal/cue), Behavior (what the follower does) and Consequences (what the follower experiences after the behavior).

When smart followers persist in unproductive practices we as leaders must look at the consequences. It is totally possible that a follower may be experiencing predominately reinforcing consequences for engaging in unproductive behaviors. Alternately, it is also possible that a follower may be experiencing predominately punitive consequences for engaging in productive or desired behaviors. Attempts to modify the followers behavior without understanding, aligning and modifying the consequences the follower experiences will only result in mutual frustration.

A leaders' attempts at providing effective direction will be effected by **how** they provide direction (see table above) and **when** they provide direction.

Providing direction to a follower in the R3 or R4 readiness level will lead to frustrating disconnects. Again, imagine driving and being lost. This time instead of getting some helpful directions the person gives you a 101 lesson in driving. You are probably an R4 driver and these same directive and instructive practices focused on your R4 driving skill set will likely frustrate you to the point of wanting to drive off the nearest cliff edge. This is a prime example of the problems that can occur when leaders mismatch their approaches.