Solution Leadership

You provide the leadership for your actions and leadership is the creation of a solution. **Solution Leadership** is a model for addressing solutions that make a difference.

Solution Leadership might be considered a “problem solving” process. As we seek solutions to life situations, we often have difficulty focusing on the core of situation (the actual problem) and often spend too much time imagining potential responses that may or may not happen. This creates an image of the situation that is more complicated and difficult to influence. Solution Leadership does not provide a magical answer, but provides a much clearer focus as to the “what” – exactly what you are trying to resolve? **Solution Leadership** allows you to design solutions through your natural way of thinking and creativity.

**Solution Leadership** is grounded in the principles of Positive Psychology, specifically, using the PERMA theory – created by Martin Seligman. The PERMA Theory is originally intended for people to examine their sense of well being. Solution Leadership aids establishing focus while creating a solution to “something.” Below are the steps for using the PERMA Theory in creating solutions.

**PERMA**
The practice of Solution Leadership is a process for thinking about and designing solutions to various situations through the eyes of PERMA – (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments) adapted from the work of Marty Seligman in the area of **Positive Psychology**.

The five elements of **PERMA** serve as a guideline for thinking and designing, by providing a process for focusing on the problem at hand. This is how we “put our mind to it.”

**How PERMA elements relate to creating solutions:**

**Positive Emotions** – does the desired solution address a situation in need of repair, or is it an opportunity to advance an existing condition to an even greater level of evolution?

**Engagement** – is the situation related to a level of personal or organizational engagement?

**Relationships** – does the situation affect relationships with other individuals or the environment in which you live?

**Meaning** – does the situation relate to a sense of meaning that connects to your values or morals?

**Accomplishments** – is the situation based on how to best advance an existing or newly gained accomplishment?
Before you use Solution Leadership to resolve a situation, take a moment to consider your state of well being using the measure below:

**Imagining Your Well Being**

Take a moment to self-measure your level of well being. There is no correct score for this self-measure and no person will see it but you, so be as honest as possible.

**Positive Emotions**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
From an overall perspective, how satisfied are you with the state of your well being? Is it in need of repair and nurturing in some areas, are you very satisfied with the ways things are, are you ready to advance an existing asset to a higher level of development. You will need to make the determination based on your interpretation. Mark a number or a range of numbers on the scale that best represent your perceived quality of life.

**Engagement**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
We cannot be fully engaged in every aspect of our life. At what level do you generally become engaged with the different aspects of your life? Do you finish what you start, do you intently listen to people when they speak, do you express passion in your work and activities. Mark a number or a range of numbers on the scale that best represent your perceived level of engagement.

**Relationships**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
How significantly do relationships affect the nature of your being? Are your relationships plentiful, honest, nurturing, difficult, minimal, counter productive, diverse, numerous, minimal. Mark a number or a range of numbers on the scale that best represent your perceived level of relationships.

**Meaning:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
At what level do you permit yourself to consider the concept of meaning? Do you carve out time to examine the meaning of things, be them practical, physical, world views, spiritual, or curious. Mark a number or a range of numbers on the scale that best represent your commitment to understanding meaning?

**Accomplishments:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
At what level do you acknowledge the significance of your accomplishments? Do you politely accept them, do you study them to better understand what they mean or do you use your accomplishments to advance existing skills and circumstances? Mark a number or a range of numbers on the scale that best represent your commitment to understanding accomplishments.

**The design process:**

1. To begin the Solution Leadership process, review your responses in the above self assessment. Note where you see your strengths and where you see lesser strengths that may influence the design of your solution. Keep these influences in mind as
you move through the design process.
2. Most solutions affect others in some way. Imagine the personal characteristics of those being affected in your solution and anticipate how they may respond to your approach.
3. Identify one or two of the PERMA elements that best relate to the nature of the situation you are trying to solve.
4. Begin the solution design with these PERMA elements as the focus of your thinking:
   • This focus will serve a guide for identifying the most significant elements of the situation and assist in “putting your mind to it.”

Example: if the situation directly connects to “engagement and meaning,” design the solution with an emphasis on how to nurture and support a level of engagement and meaning throughout the design process and solution. A perspective of optimism greatly enhances possibilities of success in the design process.

THE SOLUTION:
As noted, Solution Leadership does not, in itself, provide a solution. Solution Leadership creates a focus for your thinking. It is up to you to provide the personal leadership to address the solution.