

Leadership By Design

Personal and professional development works best when you start with a foundation of being yourself, understanding yourself, and embracing yourself. Any other starting point has you build your skills on a shaky foundation. It is all about being who you are, not who you think you should be. There is a huge, huge difference between these two points of reference.

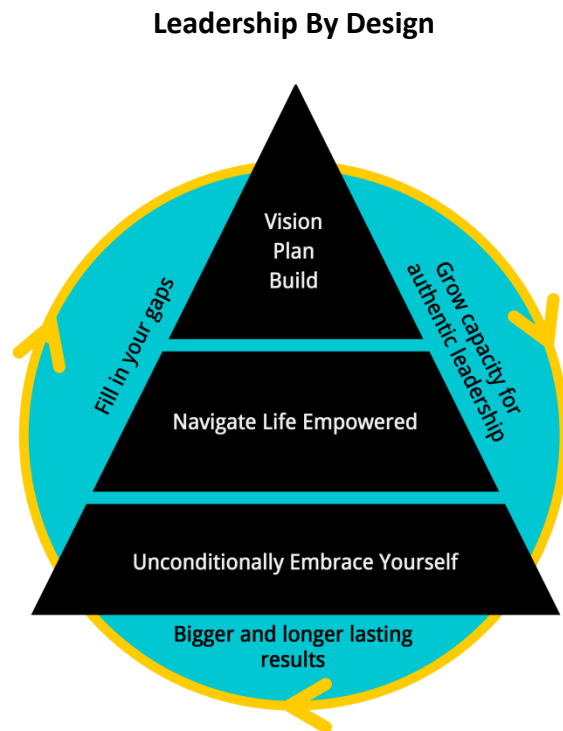
When professional and personal development is based on who we truly are this is a path that always rings with the sincerity of authenticity. Who we are... and what we do... and how we do it... are congruent. Authenticity and congruence in a person create a powerful experience for those they lead, meet, relate to, partner with, and parent.

When we build on the premise of who we think we *should* be, we can never truly own it. It is always, to some extent, a mask. We, who we are being and how we are being, can never rise to the same level of authenticity.

Do people progress this way? This path of following *should*? Sure. Some people accomplish a lot going this route. And while some people can reap success being who they think they should be (but at what cost?), many more people get stopped in their growth and seem to be perpetually stymied and thwarted from obtaining the level of success and accomplishment that they desire.

How do you distinguish who you are from who you think you should be? Who are we really? Most people don't see themselves well or accurately. If you ask people to describe who they are, they have a tendency to report out on what they aren't! What they aren't good at, what they don't do well, the flaws they are painfully aware of. Most people can't report out, fully, on their essential, positive, inner qualities.

We can get information by taking personality and skill assessments. There are many assessment instruments to choose from. They can be interesting to take and often reflect back information that makes sense. But from my perspective, instruments of this type have 2 drawbacks. One, they assess who we are in this moment which is always a combination of our inner qualities *and* our adapted self-preservation behaviors. So we aren't getting a true picture of who we are without any of our life scars.



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And two, they tell us things about ourselves but don't necessarily give us information on how to live life being 'that'.

For these reasons, when I found the Human Design system I was immediately intrigued. Human Design has a way of getting to who you are at your very core: who you are at your essence, without any protective posturing. And, Human Design provides an instruction manual! The subtitle might read, "How to Be Successful Being You." For me, this is a game changer.

Human Design gives us insight as to who we are and informs us on how to operate day to day. Some examples:

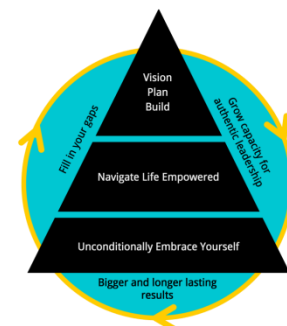
- Should you make decisions in the moment, or should you take time to get clear before choosing.
- Are you an inherently emotional person or are you picking up on the emotions of others.
- Should you be making choices from your mind only, or should you be bringing in awareness from other parts of your body.
- Are you wired to be highly active and always busy, or do you need to pace yourself and stop before you get tired.
- Are you here to be a big contributor by being in action, or are you better suited to leading, guiding and mentoring.
- Should you be the one to approach people and initiate all the interactions, or is it better to sit back a bit and respond to what comes towards you.

The entire list is quite long. But you can see even from this short list how impactful this information can be. And, it helps create a solid foundation for all subsequent learning and growth.

Let's take a look at my leadership diagram on the first page.

The first dimension is always to make sure that you unconditionally embrace who you are. This provides you the best foundation on which to grow yourself personally and professionally. Any place where you don't embrace yourself fully is simply a place where you don't understand your design and how to work with it.

Empowering your authentic self is the second dimension. Empowerment is how you put your life and career in action. Empowerment skills include such things as: owning your self-worth, being 100% responsible, trusting in yourself and others, an ability to make requests and demands and transparent communication. Empowerment supports us to engage fully and to bring our ideas out into the world. Without empowerment it is hard to make a difference. To the extent that you are not able to create change and generate momentum, there is a likely correspondence in your capacity to be self-empowered.



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Now we get to the final dimension which is to choose what we want to be doing, what it is we want to create. What dreams for our self, our family or community do we want to manifest? What do we want to have happen? This is where we envision, plan and build. As we build capacity in the first two dimensions, the ability to make things happen is far easier. Where we may have been getting blocked before in our progress is no longer an issue. This is the dimension of acquiring knowledge and skills.

Many of us start with this dimension first. This is what we do at school, college or when we learn a specialized skill. When people get stuck in their life and careers, one of the first solutions people turn to is to get more knowledge and skill. But unless a person is working in alignment with who they are and have some measure of empowerment, gaining another degree or getting another certification is not necessarily going to get to the root of their issue. It won't fully resolve their problem and relationship to creating success.

When smart people use these tools, in the correct order, it opens up a whole new world. This work is transformational in nature. The brick wall or the glass ceiling melts away and momentum and vigor is restored. We get into a more productive cycle of personal and professional growth. As we grow our capacity for authentic and empowered leadership and then fill our knowledge gaps, the results we create are more significant and longer lasting.

If you find this approach intriguing, please contact me. I am more than happy to sit down and talk with you about your interests and needs. I promise to answer all of your questions and we can take a brief look at your Human Design so you can experience how powerful it can be to understand yourself from this perspective.

I work with people locally out of my office in the Marston Center in Lacey, or via conference call or Skype worldwide. You can contact me in a variety of ways:

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I look forward to speaking with you. Cathy

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CASE STUDIES

Jeff, a technology consultant, was looking for a new job in the industry. Jeff is one of those professionals that can span the tech world and is also very adept at connecting with people and creating relationships. He reads all the latest books by leadership gurus and was in high action in his job search. Twice, he had great job offers fall through at the last minute. He was getting very discouraged and family finances were reaching a critical state.

Jeff, a job seeker, was following the advice of our national leadership gurus, but it was the opposite of what was correct for his design. When he followed his design guidelines, he was offered a job from his next interview.

Jeff was doing all the 'right' things in his job search: reaching out, staying in contact, and asserting himself during conversations and interviews. But when I looked at his Human Design, he was going about his search backwards. Yes, he should be reaching out. But once he was engaged with a potential employer, he needed to switch gears and not try to drive the process by being assertive. For his design, which is somewhat rare, he needed simply to be clear about his own value and be in the mode to respond with his brilliance. Asserting his brilliance would backfire.

While this may sound completely counter-intuitive, it worked. Jeff now has a great job with a ton of potential. We continue to deepen his understanding of his design and use that knowledge to navigate interactions and situations at work.

Another client, Dave, was in that mode of believing that the only right decisions were snap decisions. He was continually putting pressure on himself to get things done and then being critical of himself when he would 'goof off'. This client runs a very successful service business. But he wasn't making the changes needed that would get the business up to a higher level of revenue generation. Dave needs a particularly long time to process decisions and choices. So the way we work together is very unique. Our consultations are not focused deadlines and deliverables. We spend the majority of our time talking about the what's and not the how's. I support him to get clear about his vision for his business and then encourage him to percolate on the how's and the next steps. When he does get clear and chooses to be in action, the results have been phenomenal. His business has broken through that revenue barrier and business is expanding in exciting ways. And, as a huge bonus, he is no longer 'goofing off' but truly enjoying life.

Dave's revenues are soaring to new heights, by taking away the pressure to make snap decisions and focusing on the big picture first, details second.

When I support and train people and professionals in communication skills, Human Design has streamlined the entire process. There is always the tendency to think that 'our' way of communicating is the way that everyone else communicates this same way as well. So when others confuse us by their actions, not acting like we think they should, the tendency is to put the focus and blame on them. When what is more true, is that there are a number of valid ways to communicate and navigate life. When we

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can understand our own valid approach and appreciate another person's valid approach, a new understanding and spirit of collaboration can arise.

Pam and Joe are a great example. Married for over 25 years, they both work a business that involves their property. Daily communication became critical in a way that wasn't as necessary as before. Pam makes decisions quickly and then leaps into action. Joe has energy that never ends, he can work all night long, literally, but his decision making process is thoughtful, methodical and takes time. Let me tell you, they were having less and less fun working together. Simply supporting them to understand the difference *and* the validity *and* the value of each of their decision making styles was enough to get them into a renewed state of harmony. Pam stopped trying to speed Joe up. Joe stopped trying to block all of Pam's suggestions. End result: progress has sped up and they have more balance back in their relationship.

Pam and Joe have completely opposite decision-making styles. They have moved from being in massive conflict on how to get work done to a place that is supportive & leverages each of their strengths.

I work with a lot of professionals that are high energy, able to accomplish a ton of work in one day, but still experience not moving forward in ways that are most important to them. One example is Cindy. Cindy's design is for maximum energy. Her life force is incredible and this woman is constantly in action. And, she is always creating results. But for all the action and results she was generating, she was frustrated with herself and her progress. She was not confident in the quality of her decision making. She was both 'gun shy' about making decisions at all (based on some previous poor outcomes) and at the same time, harsh with herself for not deciding and moving forward.

Many high-energy people assume that all facets of their life should unfold at top speed. But many high energy people have a slower decision making style. When they learn to shift gears in terms of decision making, they actually get further faster in the long run.

When we looked at her design, she is certainly someone who should be in high action on a daily basis. However, she needs to slow down when it comes time to making decisions (especially new and big decisions) and let herself get clear over time. She needs to give herself permission to savor the decision-making process. For Cindy, the best formula is to be fully engaged and active with those things she is already clear about while giving new decisions the chance to percolate over time. Cindy has taken on this practice and as a result, the quality of her decision making has increased and she is off on a new career adventure from a place of confidence she hasn't experienced before.

Check out the testimonials on my website and the articles in my blog to read more stories about how this work is making a positive change in people's personal and professional lives. www.CatherineRivers.com