



## ENERGY LEADERSHIP IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

What kind of leadership does your organization demonstrate? Everyone is a leader either by choice or default, and every interaction presents the opportunity to lead and have a positive impact on others.

Energy Leadership™ is an innovative philosophy that allows you to develop and hone your authentic and effective style of leadership. When applied to your organization, it increases your ability to create positive shifts for yourself, your team, and your organization's culture. You and your team will feel more inspired and motivated with a greater sense of purpose, get more done with less effort and stress, and attract positive people and success to your culture and mission.

### TWO TYPES OF ENERGY IN THE NONPROFIT WORKPLACE

Empowering Anabolic Energy is constructive, expanding, and growth-oriented. It moves you, your team, and your organization forward by achieving positive, long-term results. It offers a more complete and mindful view of situations which allows for creative solutions to flow easily.

Disempowering Catabolic Energy is draining, resisting, and contracting. It acts as a blinder only allowing a limited view of the situation, offering fewer choices. It

takes tremendous physical and emotional tolls that can be destructive individuals, teams, and organizations.

Research shows that the most successful and fulfilled leaders are those with higher levels of energy. *In the nonprofit sector, our leadership approach is integral to meet changing demands and evolving roles. Where do you, your team, and your organization fall within the following seven levels of energy?*

### NONPROFIT ENERGY LEADERSHIP LEVELS AND WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

#### Catabolic Leadership Level One: Victim

"Why does this always happen? What did we do to deserve this? This is a major problem."

**Nonprofit leaders** are working in crisis mode, which makes it hard to plan. They are dealing with problems focused on what they "don't" want. There is a great deal of stress within the team.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on basic needs, survival, and are at risk of implosion. The underlying, unspoken philosophy for organizations here is, "I lose," or "We are losing."

### Catabolic Leadership Level Two: Fighter

"This is wrong, and it's not our fault. We will overcome this problem at any cost."

**Nonprofit leaders** believe they know the right way to do things and focus on what's "wrong," tending to blame. Staff often work longer hours, taking on more work than they can handle.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on survival through the fight, winning any cost (often to the detriment of others). The leadership philosophy at this level is, "You lose."

### Anabolic Leadership Level Three: Rationalizer

"This sucks but everybody meant well. It is what it is... maybe we should just let it go, or better yet, ignore it. We can probably get past this problem."

**Nonprofit leaders** are positive and productive team players who tolerate their circumstances to keep the peace or stay productive. They rationalize, "we did our best," or "they meant well."

**Nonprofit organizations** are more visible in the

community but are focused mostly on short-term goals. The philosophy is, "We win or I win, but if you win, too, that's great!"

### Anabolic Leadership Level Four: Servant

"How can I help you? You can fix this problem. I'll help!"

**Nonprofit leaders** are givers. They are supportive and trustworthy, forming deep connections with their team and stakeholders creating loyalty.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on their role in the sector, are creative, and focused on improving their constituents and those serving them. The philosophy for these organizations is, "You win."

### Anabolic Leadership Level Five: Opportunist

"There are many positives from this situation. What opportunities are available to us? How can we turn this problem into a win-win?"

**Nonprofit leaders** are inspiring and skilled at maximizing opportunities. They draw out positive attitudes, foster teamwork, and create strong partnerships and alliances.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on their people and achieve organizational success. Work environments are fun and expansive. Creating "win-win" situations is the philosophy.

### Anabolic Leadership Level Six: Creator

"This is unfolding exactly as it was intended. What new perspective does this problem present? Let's enjoy the process."

**Nonprofit leaders** are role models who are looked up to as wise and fair. They are powerful, humble, intuitive, and deeply connected to the mission and its people.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on harmony between the mission and bottom line. They create teams utilizing each team member's gift to the fullest extent. "We all win," is the philosophy

### Anabolic Leadership Level Seven: Visionary

"This is not a problem. This is an experience meant to be enjoyed."

**Nonprofit leaders** tap into this energy to gain access to truth and to engage their inner genius. They see opportunities in all experiences and create the world they choose.

**Nonprofit organizations** focus on moving quickly towards outcomes. Constantly creating new ideas and new services, they are always reinventing what's possible. The philosophy at this level is "There is no winning or losing.

### NONPROFIT ENERGY IN ACTION

Imagine that you are in the midst of an intense project and have a full workload. A co-worker stops by your office and lets you know how buried they are. They ask you if you can take one of their projects from their plate. You want to help. You are just as busy as they are, if not more, and you really want to fix their problem, so you say yes (Level 4).

Immediately, you regret your decision and begin to think about how terrible you feel now that you have accepted this project because now you are sunk, and you are stuck doing their work and yours (Level 1). Then you get angry—first at yourself, "It's my fault, I always do this to myself." Next, towards your co-worker, "How dare they ask me to take this

on, they know I am busy, too!" (Level 2)

Many people stay stuck here, alternating between Level 1 and 2, and pull an all-nighter or three to finish their work and our own. You might shift and let some of that anger and resentment go, "They didn't know how busy I am. I'll just get it done. It's fine." (Level 3) And yet you still overextend yourself to get it done.

With Energy Leadership, you choose courage and vulnerability and stop by their office to let them know that while you realize that you offered to help and after further thought, aren't seeing a way to get it all done. You let them know that you still want to help (Level 4) and want to make this work for both of you (Level 5). You suggest that you both check around to see if a few others might be able to step in to divide the project up among the broader group (Level 6). The project gets completed with increased team involvement, less stress, and less effort by all.

This is one of many examples of how Energy Leadership create opportunity, choice, and collaboration transforming a situation from "I lose" to "we win."

Are you interested in learning exactly how much of each energy level you exhibit within your leadership role and the interplay among them? Do you want to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each level and how to leverage anabolic empowering leadership? Will it benefit you to let go of stress, identify the choices available to you, and shift challenging relationships into empowering alliances?

The Energy Leadership Index Assessment was recognized as a top strengths tool on Forbes.com and only takes 17 minutes to complete. Your results are delivered in a 10-page report, and the eye-opening debrief only takes 60-90 minutes in person or over the phone.

*This piece contains my interpretation of the copyrighted work of Bruce D Schneider and the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching (iPEC).*