

# THE **WISDOM DISCIPLINES** OF LEADERSHIP

## **EXPERIENTIAL GUIDE**

Burke Miller, Founder,  
Executive Wisdom Institute



# THE WISDOM DISCIPLINES

## A BLUEPRINT FOR **CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP**

What if you consistently operated as a conscious leader—100% responsible for the life you create, and the quality of your impact in the world? What if you had an internal compass that you could rely on to keep you focused on the core elements of being responsible for how you lead?

The Wisdom Disciplines are that internal compass.

### **WHAT IS WISDOM?**

Wisdom is knowing what is needed in order to more effectively be responsible for your world.

### **WHY DISCIPLINE?**

Wisdom is not something you have. Rather, wisdom shows up as a result of cultivating your relationship with a core set of disciplines and practices. Wisdom is something you become a student of, or apprentice to. As you grow in your relationship with each discipline, wisdom shows up more easily and more often.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT**

On the next 5 pages is a simple self-assessment.

Just to be clear, the assessment is not about figuring out where you come up short. The purpose is to shed light on your relationship with each of the four Disciplines; and to experience the kinds of self-inquiry the Wisdom Disciplines open up, and the growth areas and edges they invite you to explore.

On each page are 10 statements.  
Score each statement from 1-4, based on how true it is.

- 1 = hardly ever true
- 2 = occasionally true
- 3 = very often true
- 4 = almost always true

**PLEASE PRINT OUT THE NEXT 5 PAGES TO TAKE THE ASSESSMENT.**

Score each statement from 1-4, based on how true it is.

**1 = hardly ever true**

**2 = occasionally true**

**3 = very often true**

**4 = almost always true**

I maintain a conscious connection to my life purpose.

I am generally optimistic.

I believe in myself, even when things are not going well.

I know what I want to be, do, and have in life.

I have a strong ability to imagine and envision what could be.

I know what I stand for.

I am not arrogant.

It is important to me to feel part of something larger than myself.

I generally feel alive and enthusiastic (whether it's quiet or outgoing).

I am confident in the gifts I bring to my work and my relationships.

**TOTAL**



**Score each statement from 1-4, based on how true it is.**

**1 = hardly ever true**

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**4 = almost always true**

\_\_\_ I tell myself the truth when dealing with challenging situations.

\_\_\_ I am highly organized and efficient.

\_\_\_ When I make commitments to myself, I keep them.

\_\_\_ I keep my agreements with others.

\_\_\_ I hold myself accountable.

\_\_\_ I align my actions with what's most important.

\_\_\_ I am rarely controlling or manipulative.

\_\_\_ I am an action-oriented person.

\_\_\_ I am responsible with my diet and fitness.

\_\_\_ I maintain beauty and order in my physical environment.

\_\_\_ **TOTAL**



**Score each statement from 1-4, based on how true it is.**

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\_\_\_ I trust my intuition in important decisions.

\_\_\_ I am compassionate toward difficult people.

\_\_\_ I trust myself enough to let most people see the real me.

\_\_\_ I don't get defensive when criticized.

\_\_\_ I don't stuff my emotions, OR let them take over.

\_\_\_ I am adventurous in my approach to life.

\_\_\_ I recover quickly when triggered into fight or flight mode.

\_\_\_ I easily and often express appreciation.

\_\_\_ I am emotionally available for connection.

\_\_\_ I appropriately share feelings of vulnerability.

\_\_\_ **TOTAL**



**Score each statement from 1-4, based on how true it is.**

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\_\_\_ I seek out perspectives and points of view different from my own.

\_\_\_ I am good at shifting beliefs that limit my effectiveness.

\_\_\_ I remain open and flexible even when I have a strong opinion.

\_\_\_ I speak my truth without making others wrong.

\_\_\_ I give constructive feedback without criticizing or judging.

\_\_\_ My self-talk is empowering, versus self-defeating.

\_\_\_ I use language precisely when communicating my views.

\_\_\_ I am more interested in mutual discovery, than in being right.

\_\_\_ I examine and challenge my perceptions and interpretations.

\_\_\_ I make clear choices even when I'm uncertain.

\_\_\_ **TOTAL**



## BALANCE AND INTEGRATION

Each discipline is an essential element of conscious leadership. Together, they help you become a more balanced and integrated human being and leader.

One of the ways of connecting with each discipline is to connect with its underlying natural element. For example, being on “purpose” is like being “on fire” and connected to your “spirit.”



Take your scores from the preceding 4 pages, and place them in the appropriate places. (see the photos at the bottom right of each page to guide you)

**Which discipline do you have the most developed relationship with?**

**Which score was lowest?**

**How balanced are you?**

**Any surprises?**

# NEXT

FOR EACH DISCIPLINE  
YOU'LL FIND A BRIEF:

- ◆ SOMETHING TO CONSIDER
- ◆ SOMETHING TO DO

The Discipline of

# PURPOSE

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

When you write a purpose statement for yourself, and live by it, you are doing two things:

- ◆ Acknowledging that your presence in the world is important and makes a difference.
- ◆ Articulating—and committing to deliver on—the particular nature of the difference you are here to make.

A purpose statement is only as good as the discipline with which you hold yourself to it each day.

## SOMETHING TO DO

Purpose is **the confluence** of what you're '**built for**' + what you '**stand for**.'

**Built for**—your gifts, strengths, passions

**Stand for**—what you know in your heart must change or get better in the world.

Consider taking some dedicated time to reflect on these two core aspects of your purpose, and how to express their confluence.



The Discipline of

# INTEGRITY

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Integrity is first about **truth**. And second, about **excellence**.

It is **being true** to your purpose, your values, and your agreements with yourself and others.

It is **excellence** in the realm of form—artistry, finely-ordered systems, ingenious architecture, physical fitness and grace.

Integrity is the discipline of making things real in the world through structure and accountability.

It is essential for anything worthwhile to come into form. How is this true in your experience as a leader?

## SOMETHING TO DO

**Get out your journal**, or a pad of paper.

Describe in a few words one area of your life or work in which you are not getting the traction, or the results, that you want.

**Ask this question:** In this area of your work/life, what are you not quite telling yourself the truth about?

Write the truth. No one else has to see it.

Now look again at this area of your life. What do you now know is needed in order to get greater traction or better results?



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# COURAGE

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

**COURAGE** is being willing to engage with the riskier, more vulnerable aspects of life—to swim in strong emotional “currents” and wade into “deep water.” Courage is the willingness to have the difficult conversation, or face the thing you fear—while keeping your heart open.

Courage enables **emotional fluency**—which is not avoiding intense emotion (positive or negative), while also not letting it overwhelm or hijack you..

## SOMETHING TO DO

Three things that take courage and build trust:

**Appreciate** someone for how they are showing up—not what they did or accomplished, but a quality you see them bringing to the table.

**Apologize** to someone for a moment in which you reacted in a way you’re not proud of. Say what you did, and how you would have liked to show up differently. It not only helps repair the relationship, but lays down neural pathways for doing it differently next time.

**Forgive** someone for something you have been holding resentment about. Do what is necessary to genuinely re-open your heart to that person.



The Discipline of

# CLARITY

## **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER**

How many leaders question their own assumptions? How many challenge their own perception of an issue, their own interpretation of an event, their own beliefs about someone else?

The discipline of clarity is keeping your mind open and flexible, while still being discerning, still having a point of view, and still making clear choices and decisions.

The discipline of clarity is also knowing that our experience—of ourselves, and the people and events in our lives—is largely determined by the stories we tell about it (whether out loud or to ourselves). The discipline, then, is to be aware of the story you're telling, and make it an empowering one.

## **SOMETHING TO DO**

Think of an event or circumstance in your work that you have been seeing in a negative light.

Ask the question, “How can I frame and talk about this event/circumstance (whether to yourself or out loud) in a way that empowers me and/or others?”



# WISDOM DISCIPLINES CORE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

There are 12 leadership practices,  
3 for each Discipline, RANDOMLY PLACED ON THIS PAGE

TAKE THE QUIZ

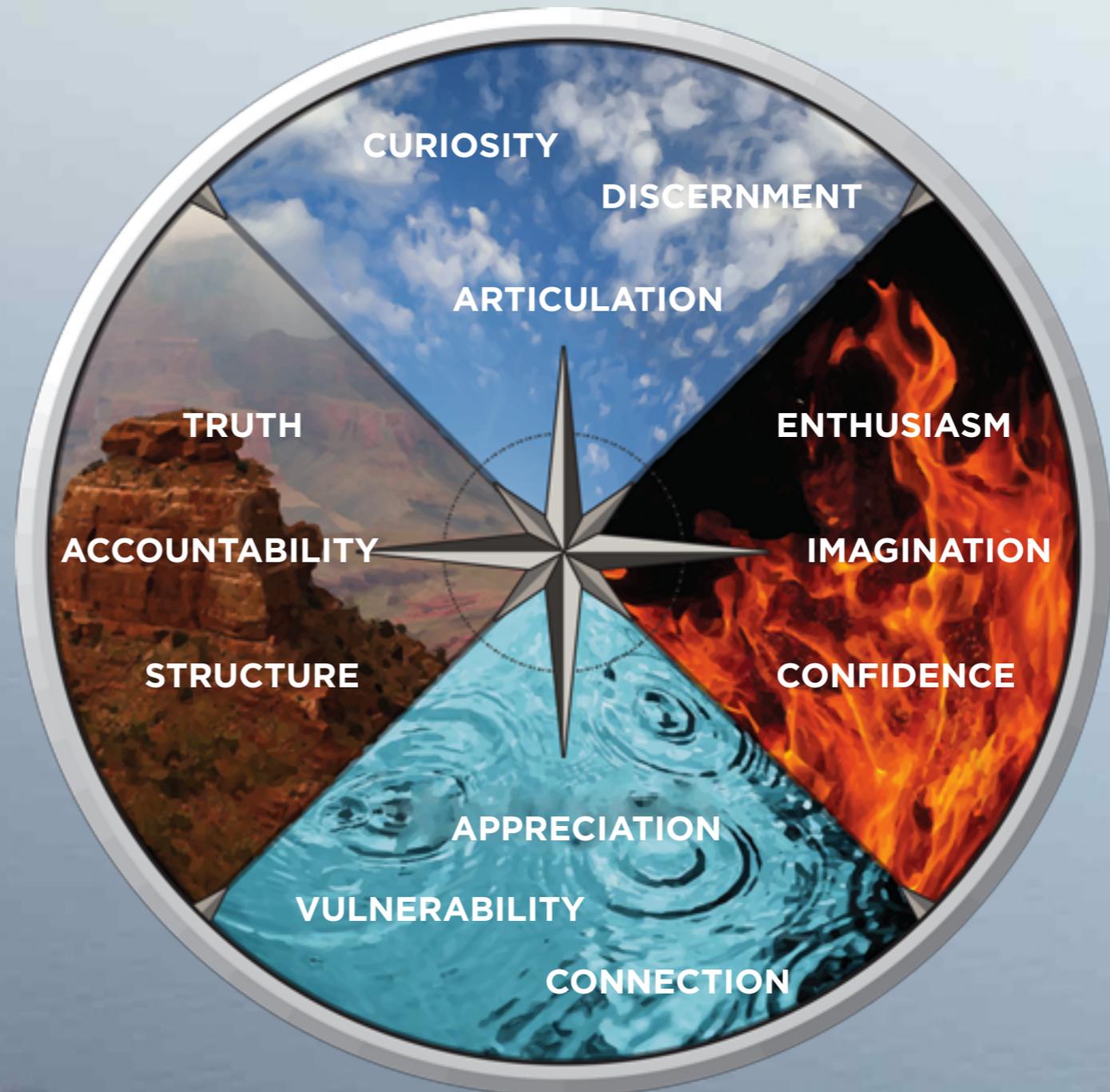
Have some fun. See if you can place the practices in the correct quadrants of the compass.



**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ANSWERS**

WISDOM DISCIPLINES

# CORE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES



## SHADOW BEHAVIORS

# DISTORTIONS OF THE REAL THING

Leaders often deal with the shadow side of leadership by excusing it, ignoring it, or trying to beat it into submission. Here's what works better:

### **Tell the truth**

Tell the truth about shadow behaviors, and normalize them as part of the human condition. They must be acknowledged in order to be transformed. Use a 360 feedback process, interviews with colleagues, or a leader's own self awareness to uncover distortions. Identify the costs of the shadow. Reflect on the potential benefits of engaging the wisdom disciplines.

### **Redirect to transform**

Know that the shadow aspects of wisdom are actually attempts at the real thing. They usually are not bad-intentioned. They are often warped good intentions. For example, arrogance is usually an attempt to take your place in the world, and to own your gifts. Albeit an overblown attempt, often fueled by insecurity. So rather than shame yourself, redirect the distorted energy of arrogance into the healthy expression of purpose and inspiration.





## **BURKE MILLER**

Burke is the Founder of the Executive Wisdom Institute, and creator of the Wisdom Disciplines™ Leadership Operating System.

Burke has been coaching and training executive leaders and teams for 20 years in the Americas, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, China, Russia, India and Japan; working with small fast-growing companies to multinational corporations including Owens-Illinois, Kellogg, P&G, and Accenture.

Burke is fiercely and compassionately committed to supporting leaders in creating a better world, from their brand success, to their core relationships, to their most far-reaching global impacts.