



Who Are You Being?  
**FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**



*The FISH! For Leaders Series is dedicated to John Gardner,  
whose belief in human possibilities  
inspired several generations to believe in themselves.*

Produced and distributed by



221 River Ridge Circle, Burnsville, MN 55337

**FISHPHILOSOPHY.COM**

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# What is FISH! For Leaders?



Early in his career, Carl Rogers, the noted psychologist, thought his job was to fix people. He asked himself, “How can I cure or change this person?”

Despite his extensive training, it didn’t work. At times his tactics seemed to produce a change in people, but it was temporary at best.

So Rogers tried a different approach. Instead of trying to mold his patients into who he wanted *them* to be, he focused on how *he* “showed up” for them. The more people saw that he cared about and believed in them, they discovered within themselves the capacity to change, mature and develop.

Rogers’ experience speaks to the heart of leadership. Effective leaders don’t try to fix or control others. Instead, they ask themselves: “How can I develop relationships with the people I lead that help them grow in confidence, commitment, skill and purpose?”

We created The FISH! For Leaders Series—of which this program is a part—to help you develop more supportive relationships through The FISH! Philosophy. These relationships are the foundation that make you more effective in every other aspect of your leadership.

## The FISH! Philosophy: Fundamentals For Leaders

The roots of The FISH! Philosophy go back to the day John Christensen first visited the Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle. Selling fish was cold and exhausting, yet the fishmongers brought so much energy, commitment, service, teamwork and fun to the job that people came from around the world just to watch them sell fish—a lot of fish.

John had always been fascinated by people who brought passion to their work, and saw the fish market as a metaphor to illustrate his belief that every workplace can be more alive and engaged. He made a film about the market to show everyone how to be more engaged in their work—and their lives. The film, FISH!, explores four simple practices that anyone, from frontline to CEO, can immediately apply:

**Be There:** Be physically and emotionally present for people, especially when they need you. It’s a powerful message of respect that strengthens relationships.

## What is FISH! For Leaders?



**Play:** Play is a state of mind that you can apply to any task. It's the spirit that fuels creativity, as in "Let's Play with that idea!" You do your best work when you are having fun doing it.

**Make Their Day:** Find ways to make people feel special, letting them know how much you value and appreciate them. Celebrate others.

**Choose Your Attitude:** No matter what life throws in your path, you alone are responsible for how you respond to it.

We call these four practices The FISH! Philosophy. Just as a tree needs healthy roots to bear good fruit, these practices nourish the roots of trust, communication, commitment and accountability. Organizations around the world are using The FISH! Philosophy to improve business results and create a higher quality of life at work. We have learned that organizations are most likely to succeed when leaders don't simply expect their employees to live FISH!, but embrace these fundamental practices in their own lives first.

Using this program, you will take your team through conversations and activities through which they will explore their leadership beliefs and style, consider their impact and learn how to lead even more effectively. Thank you for guiding them on this important journey.



|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Who Are You Being?.....    | p. 6  |
| Leading This Program.....  | p. 7  |
| Introducing the Video..... | p. 8  |
| Conversation Starters..... | p. 9  |
| Activities:                |       |
| • Find IT.....             | p. 10 |
| • Live IT.....             | p. 12 |
| • Coach IT.....            | p. 14 |
| Follow-Up.....             | p. 17 |

## Who Are You Being?



When asked how he stays so engaged in his work day after day, one of the fishmongers explains, “It’s about who you’re being while you’re doing what you’re doing.”

Effective leaders are constantly aware of who they are “being.” They know what they stand for. This commitment guides them, moment to moment, far more than the temporary ups and downs happening around them.

When you focus on who you are *being*, it influences everything you are *doing*. But if you go into a meeting or conversation *without* staying mindful of who you are committed to being, it is easy to slip into anger or impatience, only to regret later that it wasn’t who you really wanted to be.

Three steps will help you consistently “be” the leader you seek to be. The first step is to Find IT—to explore and define how you want to show up for others. Your IT may be a set of guiding principles or a passion that energizes you, leads you to make a difference and helps the organization accomplish its goals.

The second step is to Live IT. When you are clear about what is important to you, your only decision is to live it or not. But you have to make that choice as soon as you get up in the morning, and you have to constantly check in with yourself throughout the day: Am I being the person I want to be right now?

The third step, Coach IT, begins by sharing your intentions with colleagues, family or friends, and giving them permission to help you live them. Your coaches may support you by pointing out when your actions are fulfilling your IT or they may support you by telling you when your actions are not in line with who you say you want to “be.”

What you do with their coaching is up to you. But if you truly want to live your IT, listening respectfully and gratefully is essential. Your “coaches” are sharing insights meant to help you fulfill your commitments.

*“First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.”*

—EPICETUS

The resources in this guide were designed to lead a session from one to two hours, but you can easily adapt them to create a session of any length.

## 1. Video

*Who Are You Being?* is 7 minutes in length. Key themes include:

- To lead intentionally, you must find your own “IT.” Your “IT” is a simple way of describing how you want to lead and live.
- Your IT is a lens that helps you see clearly if your actions line up with your intentions.
- It’s important to share your IT with “coaches” who will support you. They will let you know when your actions are consistent with who you want to be—and when they are *not* consistent.

## 2. Conversation Starters

Targeted questions, prompted by the video, help your group to begin exploring your beliefs about leadership. These questions help you to honestly assess whether the impact you are having is the impact you want to have.

## 3. Activities

Choose from several activities to help participants become engaged in their learning and take ownership of it. If you have purchased FISH! For Leaders Participant Workbooks for individual participants, we’ve provided page references so you can help them follow along during the session.

Example: *(If using Participant Workbook, see Workbook page 6.)*

## 4. Tips

If participants are not sure what to try or need more ideas, we’ve provided some suggestions.

## 5. Follow-Up

After you put your ideas into action, it helps to reflect on what you learned. What worked? What didn’t? What impact did it have on others? What impact did it have on you?

## Introducing the Video



Before your team watches *Who Are You Being?*, it's helpful to give some context. Here's one way to introduce the film:

*Who do you want to be as a leader? Picture that in your mind for a few seconds. How do you want to treat people? How do you want to react during difficult situations?*

*Effective leaders are constantly aware of who they are “being.” They know what they stand for. This commitment guides them, from moment to moment, far more than the temporary ups and downs that happen around them.*

*Today's video introduces three steps to help you “be” the leader you want to be. After the video, we'll talk about how each of us can use these steps to lead more consistently and intentionally.*



We included lots of questions to prompt discussion, but don't feel you have to get through every question in one session. You may want to choose two to three questions and if you have time for more, go for it. If a particular question really ignites discussion, don't feel you have to move on immediately to the next question. Go with the energy of the group. Keep the conversation going with statements such as, "Tell me more about that."

1. Who do you know who seems to have found their IT—even if they don't call it that—and lives it consistently? What impact does this person have on others?
2. What, if anything, is important about finding *your* IT? How might declaring an IT impact you as a person? As a leader?
3. How does it feel when you are being consistent with who you say you want to be?
4. How does it feel when you are *not* consistent with who you want to be? When that happens, what do you do to get back on track?
5. Does everyone need coaching—even CEOs? Why or why not?
6. What internal conversations do you have with yourself when you feel you are being criticized? How does this affect your listening?
7. What's the hardest thing about being coached?
8. Who would you like to get coaching from? Who do you believe you should get coaching from?
9. What are you saying or doing that lets your team know it's safe to offer you feedback?

## Activity #1: Find IT



Finding your IT is a way to keep in the front of your mind what matters to you, and how to live in a way that satisfies your commitments to the organization. For example, if your IT is Caring, you will work just as hard to do your job but do it in a way that supports the people you're working with.

Why does having an IT matter? Most people spend up to 65 percent of their waking hours working, preparing for work, traveling to and from work, or decompressing after work. If your job is just about getting through the day, 65 percent of your life is just getting through the day. If your IT is about being Caring, 65 percent of your life (and more) will reflect that.

### Instructions

Ask participants to list three words or phrases that describe how they want to show up as leaders.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(If using Participant Workbook, see Workbook page 6.)*

To help them clarify their IT, you may ask any of the following questions.

- What does the organization or team that I am leading do for people? (You can start with your company's mission, vision or values statement, but don't be afraid to go beyond it. For example, Rob Gregory of Rochester Ford Toyota says his service team has made the connection that when they fix someone's car, "We're helping them go on vacation, we're helping them spend time with their family, we're giving them peace of mind.")
- How does what I do contribute to our organization?
- What brings me joy at work? What energizes me, no matter the job or situation?
- What impact do I want to have on people?
- SUPER BONUS QUESTION: If I could be a superhero, who would I be? What would my special powers be? What impact would I have on people?

## Activity #1: Find IT *(continued)*



To help participants identify their IT, you may also mention: “Your IT could be a few words like Support, Service or Listening, or a phrase such as The Most Encouraging Boss My Employees Have Ever Had. You can draw your IT from The FISH! Philosophy, such as To Always Be There for Others or Playful. You might restate a practice, such as Make Their Day, into a phrase like Valuing Others. Your IT may evolve as you learn new things about yourself, decide you have something new to contribute or because you want a new challenge to live up to.

## Activity #2: Live IT



When you are clear about your IT, that lens gives you an increased awareness of whether your actions line up with who you want to be. For example, if part of your IT is to Be There for people, it's more difficult to be impatient or upset with people. You can see clearly that those choices are *not* being there.

Your IT should naturally call you to actions that fulfill it. If your IT is Making a Difference for Others, and you see a coworker who seems upset or exhausted, you will want to ask if there's anything you can do to help. If your IT is Helpful, the decisions you make about team members will demonstrate your genuine concern for them.

You will also see that living your IT is not dependent on what others do. We have heard people ask, "Why should I try to live my IT when my organization doesn't live what it is supposed to stand for?" The organization may indeed have a vision or values that some of its members are not living—but the only person you control is *you*. If you are living your IT, the organization is at least living it through you. And you experience the satisfaction of living with integrity.

### Instructions

Ask participants to answer these questions:

- In what areas of my life am I living my IT already and where am I not?
- What gets in the way of me living my IT?
- What will I do to overcome these obstacles?

*(If using Participant Workbook, see Workbook page 7.)*

### Tips

- To Live IT, you may have to change some things in your life. You may need to ask yourself, "Are there things I am doing that don't fit my IT? Are there things I need to be doing to live IT?" Choose two situations that might challenge you to live your IT. Write how you handled it before. Then write how you would handle the same situation when you are living your IT. For example:

**Situation:** A colleague complains to me about Bob.

**How I did it before:** I'd join in and blast Bob, or say nothing while the other person complains.

## Activity #2: Live IT *(continued)*



**Living my IT:** Because my IT is Respect, I say, “I don’t want to complain or gossip about someone who’s not here because it’s not respectful. If you have a problem with Bob, why don’t you talk with him?”

- Put a picture, quotes or symbol in your workspace that reminds you why you do what you do. For example, workers at a blood transfusion service keep a picture in their offices of Robbie, a boy who depends on weekly transfusions to stay alive. It helps them remember who they want to be when serving all of their clients.

## Activity #3: Coach IT



Inviting others to help you live your IT doesn't have to be complicated. You might say to a colleague or friend, "You know, I've learned that what's important to me is to encourage people who work for me. If you see me not doing that consistently, please do me a favor and let me know."

Be as specific as possible about what you want your IT to look like. For example, the statement "I want to be a better leader" is vague and open to many interpretations. On the other hand, you might say, "I'm trying hard to Be There. One of the ways I'm going to do that is to have open office hours from 9 to 12. During that time you can approach me with anything, and I'm going to Be There for you. If you see me not doing that, please coach me on it." This is more likely to lead to insightful feedback and suggestions you can actually use.

It's important to let employees at all levels know they can coach you. If the only people you ask for coaching sit above or next to you on the organizational chart, you may not get the honest feedback you need. The people who report to you are often in the best position to recognize when you are NOT being IT. Do you want false praise, or do you want them to help you live with integrity?

### Instructions

Tell participants: "List three people you will ask to keep you accountable for living the words you listed in the Find IT exercise."

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(If using Participant Workbook, see Workbook page 9.)*

Answering the following questions may help participants to identify their "coaches":

- Who should I ask for coaching? Why?
- What message would it send my team if I share my IT with them and ask them to coach me?
- How can I share my IT with my boss? How does my IT help me achieve my organizational goals and responsibilities?
- Is there anyone I am afraid to ask for coaching, but who could help me live my IT? Why? How might it change our relationship if I ask them to coach me?



### Tips on asking for coaching

- The more specific you are about the kind of coaching you want, the safer people will feel about coaching you. Create a “coaching permission slip” for people that lists your IT, along with a few details on what living IT looks like and what IT doesn’t look like in your daily life. Hand them out. If people see you not living your IT, they can present you with the permission slip and offer their thoughts.
- Post your IT (in words or even with a picture) outside your door, along with a sign, “Ask me about my IT.”

### Tips on receiving coaching

- Ask yourself, “What can I learn from this? How will this help me live my IT more consistently?” If life is about learning, being coached is an opportunity to grow. Remember: the person who is offering the coaching is sharing their perception of your impact. Are you willing to see yourself through their eyes?
- As you put the coaching into action, check back with the person and ask, “How am I doing? What can I do better?” Restate what you are hearing to confirm your understanding. Ask clarifying questions to gain more useful insights from those who coach you. For example: “When you say the team didn’t feel I supported them, can you give me specifics about what I said or how I said it that had that impact?”
- Sometimes coaching hits home and you immediately know what you need to do. Other times the coaching may not seem relevant. Don’t disregard it entirely. Put the coaching on the shelf, and if you hear it again from someone else in a similar form, you’ll know you should pay attention to it. After thinking it through, if you believe the coaching was *not* helpful, you may need to reconnect with the person and clarify your IT and the particular coaching you’re looking for. You might say: “I appreciate you sharing your feelings with me. As I go forward, I’m really looking for help in (specify the area). If you see me not being that, please let me know.”



### Tips on giving coaching

- When someone asks you to coach them, it is an honor and responsibility. You have been given an opportunity to offer powerful insights at a vulnerable moment in that person's life. Pay careful attention to the IT they share with you, focusing on who *they* want to be—not who you want them to be. Be clear about what they want you to coach them on, and how and when they would like to be coached (for example, privately versus publicly).
- First point out actions that were consistent with their IT, then the area in which you noticed inconsistency. Resist offering opinions about how they should “fix” the situation, unless they specifically ask for ideas. Ask questions that help them come to their own conclusions.
- When coaching, it's important to let people know how their actions impacted you, not to speculate on how you *think* others were impacted. For example: “Joe, you have told me you want to be caring. Yesterday when you just dismissed Karen's idea, it didn't come across to me that you cared.”
- When the person you are coaching stumbles, as we all do, continue to see the best in them. “Hold” them in your mind as the person they are trying to be. Focus on the future, helping them to be that person and they will be better able to hear and use your coaching.



1. If your team has a regularly scheduled meeting, check in with participants next time you get together. Review what they wrote in their action plans/commitments. Ask:
  - What new things did you do?
  - What happened?
  - What was the impact on others?
  - What was the impact on you?
2. To remind participants of your Find IT, Live It, Coach IT conversations and their action plans, send them occasional emails of the Tips from the end of each section.



The FISH! For Leaders Series consists of six programs, each of which helps leaders to be more effective by applying one aspect of The FISH! Philosophy. Use any combination of these six thought-provoking programs to create the leadership training that fits your team's needs.

FISH! For Leaders programs include:

### **It Starts with Me**

The secret to outstanding leadership is not in what you command others to do for you, but what you inspire them to do through your example.

### **Be There**

People may admire your talent, charisma and business skill, but they will not really trust you until you make the effort to be present for them, emotionally as well as physically.

### **Play**

You can't just order creativity like a lunch special or install happiness like a program. To enjoy the many business and human benefits of Play, leaders must first nurture an environment that is full of trust and respect, and free of fear.

### **Make Their Day**

One of the best ways for a leader to make someone's day—or month, or year, or life—is to value them. Simple gestures, such as appreciation and giving people a voice, fulfill emotional needs that are too often ignored on the job.

### **Choose Your Attitude**

Your attitude has a powerful effect on the people you lead. What impact do you want to have on others? You alone are responsible for choosing the attitude that will achieve that impact.

### **Who Are You Being?**

Great leaders are guided by what they stand for, not by the temporary ups and downs happening around them. To lead more intentionally, you must define your purpose, recommit to it every day and ask others to help you be the person you say you want to be.