THE SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP

Q & A with Mike Hawkins

Why did you decide to write the SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP?
Workplace studies and employee surveys consistently find leadership is the primary attribute impacting organizational performance. So for good reason there are many courses, books, and articles on leadership. Yet there is little year-over-year improvement in leadership by most measures. The quality of leadership continues to go down. Clearly there is a need for better leadership and we have yet to figure how to improve it. Our workplaces, governments, and families need great leaders. Our future depends on it.

How is your view of leadership different from others?
The issue with most leadership programs and resources is they don't take into account how people learn. There are many great ideas on leadership, but they are provided in an ad hoc manner. There are many pearls of wisdom, but they are not provided in an organized framework. Most accept and justify current leadership development approaches since most leadership competencies are soft skills and intangible. The **SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP** treats soft skills as domain skills and makes them tangible. The **SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP** also applies to current neuroscience findings that make learning leadership more effective and sustainable.

In your coaching experience, what is the #1 issue with leaders today?
Leadership is situational, complex, and multi-dimensional. The issues that leaders face are almost as varied as the number of leaders. But if I had to pick one recurring issue that seems to plague leaders at all levels it is *letting go*. Leaders struggle with empowerment and delegation. They feel the need to control people, tell people what to do, and be in the middle of everything. Or worse, they try to do the work themselves. The antidote for this is a coaching approach to leadership. Great leaders add value to their teams by motivating, encouraging, guiding, enabling, and coaching them – not controlling them or telling them what to do.

What role did failure play in your own leadership journey?
My first experience with leadership was while working during college. I was promoted to a manager, but failed miserably. I had no idea how to lead people. I went back to being an individual contributor. My next promotion to management went much better, but I was still more of a manager than a leader. It wasn't until I had been in management for probably ten years that I figured out the difference between managing and leading people. The key change was realizing I was in the *people business* and developing a *coaching style rather than a telling style.*

How do the principles in your books apply outside of work?
There are common core principles to leading people regardless of the context. Whether leading children as a parent, teaching students, leading as a public servant, pastoring a congregation, leading a small team, or leading a large organization, there are common underpinnings. For example, telling people what to do is the least effective approach to gaining buy-in regardless of the situation. Influence and persuasion requires shaping people's thinking. Not in a manipulative way of course, but in a way that helps them become the best they can be. The **SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP** is based on the five categories of leadership competencies consistently found in successful leaders at all levels, in all industries, both at work and in the community.

What is the most important advice you seek to share in your books?
Embrace leadership and learn how to become a coach. There are many other elements included such as how to foster innovation, shape culture, think strategically, communicate effectively, and work productively, but the key attribute of great leaders is their ability to coach. Great leaders as coaches know how to develop their people. They know how to bring out the best in people. They are great communicators but not just in their ability to speak. They know how to ask questions, listen, understand, and lead people in a very different way than the *command and control* managers of the past. The **SCOPE OF LEADERSHIP** provides a roadmap and practical approach to learning to lead and in particular leading as a coach.