

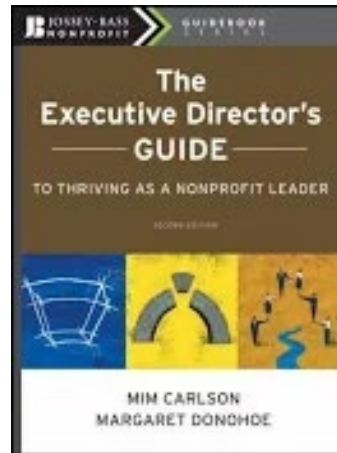
How to Thrive as an Executive Director

Or How Not to Burnout
in a Flaming Ball of Ignominy



Giving Credit

- Credit to Mim Carlson and Margaret Donohoe who wrote The Executive Director's Guide to Thriving as a Nonprofit Leader – I recommend you get a copy



Is this your life?



What is the role of the E.D.?

- Caretaker of the organization
- Leader
- Manager
- Supporter
- Relationship builder
- Visionary
- Change agent
- Community creator
- Resource wizard
- Nurturer
- Evaluator

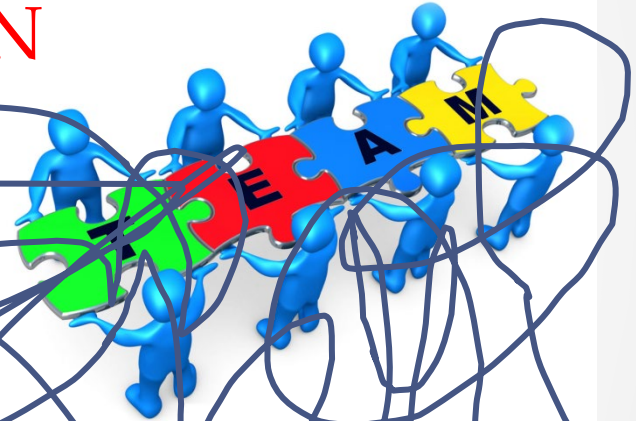


Mental Model

- LOOKS LIKE, SOUNDS LIKE, FEELS LIKE

Help me!

MIND BLOWN



Have I accomplished anything?



the end

Developing as an E.D.

- Self Reflection is KEY!
- Professional Development
- Executive Coaching
- Peer Support



Burnout



Candidate for burnout

- Hard worker who gives 110%
- Idealistic, self-motivated achiever
- Believes anything is possible if you work hard enough
- Perfectionist with unrealistically high standards and expectations

Questions

- Are you having difficulty making decisions?
- Are you having negative feelings about people at work?
- Do you isolate yourself?
- Are you avoiding tasks that need to be done?
- Are you feeling overwhelmed most of the time?
- Do you believe you need to be working day and night and weekends?
- Are you having feelings of fear and despair that you just aren't doing a good job?

•

•

When the going gets tough

- **What happens when you lose your passion, your inspiration, your fire?**
- Ask yourself...
- What inspires me? What is blocking my ability to be inspired? What can I do to remove these barriers? What can I ask others to do to help me remove them? What will keep me inspired today and in the future?



Finding Balance

“Have fun in your command. Don’t always run at breakneck speed. Take time when you’ve earned it to spend time with family and friends. Surround yourself with people who take their work seriously but not themselves.”

- GENERAL COLIN POWELL





How do I find the time?

- SET PRIORITIES – start with jotting down all the things that you think need to be done.
Group like items
- Then narrow down to 3-5 (no more than 5)
- Job description – does it match what you are doing? Are there specific benchmarks?
- Work with board and staff to align duties and ensure shared understanding
- Delegate tasks or do away with ones that do not serve a legitimate purpose

•

•

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Remember there is no magic formula
- You decide what balance looks like
- Take time for yourself

Remind yourself

Don't worry
be happy!!!



MANAGEMENT PRIORITIZING DECISION TREE – Handout 2

How do you find time for professional development? How do you decide if you can take time away for professional development?

Crisis Occurs: Is this a life or death situation for the organization?

Yes – E.D. must handle? – Yes

Examples of life or death situations than an ED probably must handle:

- A fire has destroyed much of the building
- A major natural disaster has struck the community and your organization plays a vital role to provide disaster relief
- Staff walk out or threatens to do so immediately
- Any other activity occurs that would result in all regular services of the organization coming to an abrupt halt.

Crisis Occurs: Does it have a major political or appearance and reputation repercussions? – Yes – ED must handle – Yes

- An unexpected news report on financial mismanagement involving the ED appears
- An unexpected funder (or other extremely important person) visits for a major project and demands the ED be present (negotiations with this visitor might allow the ED to attend most of the scheduled professional development activity)
- Any other activity occurs that would result in the ED being fired or organization's mission being severely hampered if the ED was absent for a day

Most of the time, there is someone in the organization who can handle minor crises to allow you to attend professional development activities. Empowering other individuals to handle the crisis for you while you are gone enhances their development. It also helps you as E.D. see that others are capable and competent.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SKILLS COMPETENCY WORKSHEET – Handout 1

Purpose: *To help Executive Directors understand and develop core competencies to aid professional development*

Credit: **The Executive Director’s Guide to Thriving as a Nonprofit Leader**

Competency	Red	Yellow	Green	Improvement Plan
Visionary: Leads with a vision, articulates it with passion, and inspires others to achieve it				
Planner: Leads organization with a mission focus; keeps mission in line with community needs				
Planner: Provides leadership to and engages stakeholders in the organization’s strategic planning process; communicates plan to stakeholders				
Planner: Understands and communicates the organization’s culture; if needed, oversees the process for changing its culture				
Evaluator: Develops organization and program benchmarks; manages evaluation and review process				
Relationship builder: Communicates regularly with stakeholders to identify community issues and needs				
Relationship builder: Provides leadership, management, and support to staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers				
Relationship builder: Ensures organization is visible and respected in the community.				

Competency	Red	Yellow	Green	Improvement Plan
Relationship builder: Creates partnerships to expand the organization's ability to achieve the mission and vision				
Advocate: Presents community and organization needs to agencies, funders, partners				
Change Agent: Leads internal change process to keep organization vital and thriving				
Change Agent: Maintains awareness of the internal and external changes needed to best serve clients				
Financial Manager: Reviews, understands, and communicates organization's financial condition to Board of Directors and key stakeholders				
Fundraiser: Develops and leads a team-based fundraising strategy with Board, staff and volunteers				
Nurturer: Defines work-life balance and ensures this value is an organizational and personal priority				
Nurturer: Has professional development plan and serves as role model to staff and Board for their professional development				

Green = Satisfaction with competency level

Yellow = minor improvement needed

Red = major improvement needed

DEBRIEF USING ORID METHOD. OBJECTIVE, REFLECTIVE, INTERPRETATIVE, DECISION

1. OBJECTIVE:
2. What do you recall from this training exercise that we did?
3. What caught your attention and why?
4. What sounds/tactile sensations do you recall?
5. REFLECTIVE:
6. How did this experience affect you?
7. What was the high point? Low Point?
8. What was the collective mood of the group involved?
9. What were your feelings during this experience?
10. INTERPRETATIVE
11. What was your key insight from this workshop?
12. What do you think was the most meaningful aspect of this activity?
13. What have you learned?
14. DECISION: Now what?
15. How has this experience changed your thinking?
16. What will you do differently as a result?
17. What would it take to help you apply what you have learned?

LIFE BALANCE REFLECTION – Handout 4

Envision the percentage of time you would like to spend on the list below adding up to 100%.

Then write down how you actually spend your time.

PRIORITIES	IDEAL	REAL	DISCREPANCY
WORK			
FAMILY			
FRIENDS			
HEALTH – includes eating, sleeping and exercising			
OUTSIDE INTERESTS			
OTHER			

Question: What are some small, realistic steps you can take to feel more satisfied and fulfilled?

What is blocking you from taking these steps? Do you have control of these or does someone else?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF – Handout 3

On a personal level...

- Do you want a change in your life, for instance, to become more conscious or competent in some area?
- Are you willing to think beyond your own mind-set or mental model to explore new perspectives?
- Are you willing to look deeply inside yourself at your values, beliefs, personal strengths, and limitations?
- Are you curious about what possibilities your future may hold? Can you be open to dreaming about and envisioning those possibilities for yourself?

On a professional level...

- Are there leadership or management skills you want to develop?
- Would you like to have greater impact in your organization or to have your organization have greater impact in the community you serve?
- Do you need individualized assistance to help your organization move through a tough change or transition?
- Are there other staff in the organization with leadership potential who could benefit from a coach?
- Would you like better communication with your Board of Directors and staff to ensure everyone is working toward a common goal?

These questions can help you decide if you need outside support either from an executive coach or a peer support group.