

# G.R.A.C.E. At Work

## A model for transformational workplace relationships

By Eric de Nijs, EdD, PCC

A vital leadership model for today's business environment would be one based on trust and transparency that can weather the storms of outsourcing, downsizing and any "unpredictables." It would create a compelling vision that captures the hearts and souls of those engaged in the pursuit of the organization's goals, and generate mutual benefit for employer and employee.

And this approach is precisely what is missing in today's corporate culture.

Relationships died during the transition from a social contract for lifetime work to a frantic, distrustful and self-advocating work-survival culture. The organization, employer and employee may have dealings together, but relationships have been abandoned. We conduct transactions, but fail to achieve transformations.

Developing relationships is the single most critical success element for any leadership model. Leaders who develop powerful, purposeful, productive relationships with their employees are much more likely to inspire greater productivity, career



growth, innovation and overall employee performance. Leaders who excel at building relationships realize dramatic improvement in performance and productivity. These are transformational relationships, not mere transactions.

### Leading with G.R.A.C.E.

An interactive, relational model is needed in the workplace. Powerful and productive relationships emerge only through the presence and practice of five key components whose initials form the acronym G.R.A.C.E. These are Goodwill, Results, Authenticity, Connectivity and Empowerment. Based on goodwill and a mutual commitment

to shared purpose that provides affirmation, inspiration and personal transformation, G.R.A.C.E. at Work provides opportunities to build relationships and facilitate performance. It is the creation of a safe place for people to perform.

### GOODWILL: It All Begins Here

Goodwill involves assuming positive intent, suspending judgment, looking out for the other person's best interest, giving without condition, offering forgiveness, and providing support and safety in times of risk and failure. Ultimately, it's about making things right, regardless of what is happening in the re-

relationship. Powerful relationships begin with goodwill. The leader creates a “safe space” for working relationships to flourish, where people work together to achieve collaborative goals. Goodwill is closely linked to trust and creates the psychological safety net that encourages people to take the risks often associated with breakthrough performance.

**RESULTS:**

**Formula for Purpose**

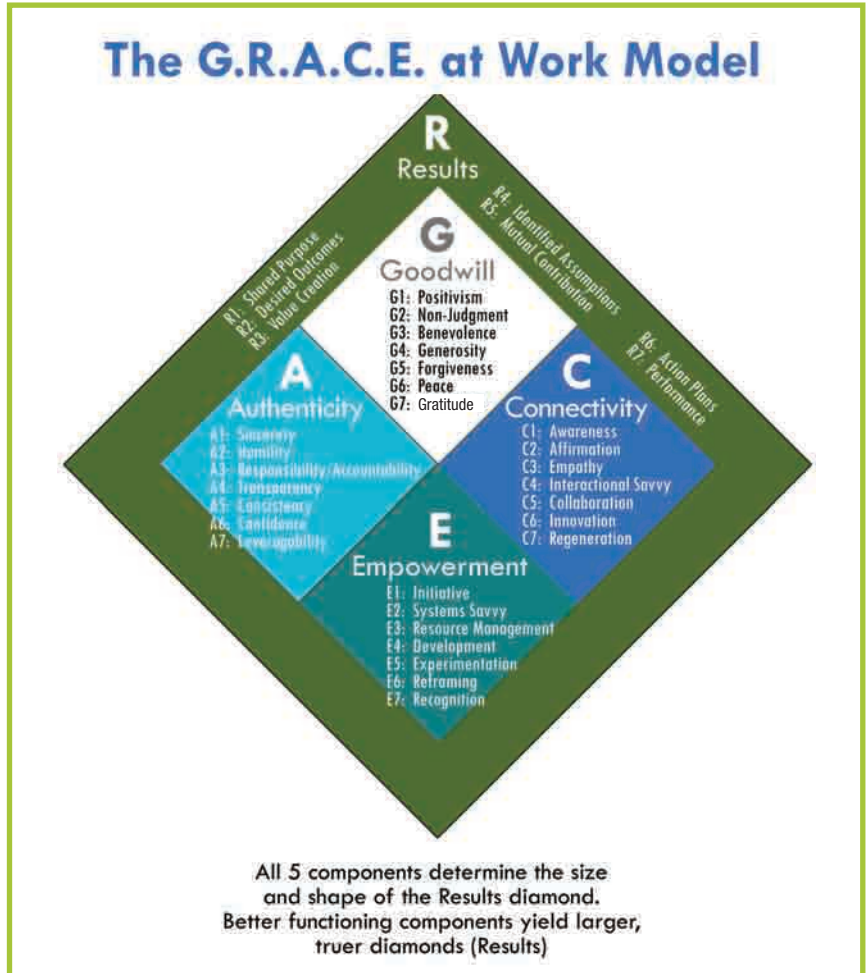
There are actually three Rs in this component: Results, Reason and Relationship. Anticipated results represent the tangible reason for the relationship. The “R” factor focuses on creating a shared sense of purpose and value that is commensurate with the mutual investments of all parties. Results focuses on desired outcomes (organizational, professional and personal), shared purpose, mutual contribution, value creation and performance and action plans.

This component has two objectives: the achievement of the intended results, and the achievement of the betterment of those in the relationship. When both objectives are approached as one unified outcome, the results achieved for either are multiplied.

**AUTHENTICITY:**

**Essential Reality**

Authenticity is being honest with yourself and others, declaring your stand, holding yourself accountable, rewarding appropriately, being open and vulnerable, openly communicating needs, desires, moods, attitudes, values and feelings – even



about the other person. Being real is essential to any relationship. Open and uncompromising standards, positive attitudes and the desire to be exactly who you are, are at the heart of a fruitful relationship. Authenticity keeps the relationship balanced and healthy. Successful relationships thrive when all parties reveal exactly who they are, say exactly what they mean, and use the same standards for self and others, and do so in the spirit of goodwill. Self-awareness (in leaders first who then promote it in others) creates consistency between the walk and the talk, and provides a measure of

transparency to others that fosters trust in a relationship.

**CONNECTIVITY:**  
**Co-created Value**

Connectivity means finding ways to identify with, affirm and encourage others, understanding how they feel, identifying what is important to them, identifying and realizing differences in intention and impact on others, and creating collaborative connections. In short, it is “others”-awareness. When the components of goodwill, a reason for being in relationship, and authenticity combine, they advance the relationship to the

place of real connectivity. Connectivity is about empathizing with others, finding ways to engage them in the pursuit of mutual goals, and co-creating value. Employees perform best when they feel personally connected to their work and their organization. Leaders connect with others and essentially “team up” for shared results. When leaders and employees connect through shared motives, values, goals and understanding, the subsequent bond can yield powerful results.

### **EMPOWERMENT: Enabling Success**

Empowerment is helping others overcome obstacles and develop new skills,

and relationship. Leaders and employees need to co-create the boundaries for empowerment, learning and responsibility.

GRACE-full leadership occurs when all five G.R.A.C.E. components work together to create a purposeful, powerful and productive relationship while reflecting a capacity to create value and recover quickly from mistakes. If any one of these components is missing or exists in insufficient quantity, there is no G.R.A.C.E.

Leading with G.R.A.C.E. encourages commitment, not compliance, because G.R.A.C.E. assumes that development and high performance occur most effectively in the context of a purposeful relationship. This relationship is based

**“Relationships died during the transition from a social contract for lifetime work to a frantic, distrustful and self-advocating work-survival culture.”**

establishing a safe environment to succeed (for self and others), creating catalysts for change, helping others see potential and possibilities, being open to possibilities, allowing time for testing and learning, and seeing the larger whole but being aware of smaller components. Empowerment is enabling the success everyone desires. The leader becomes a coach through the balanced use of challenge and support, sufficiently motivating others to take risks, to see and do new things. A good coach must create a dynamic tension, a balance, which motivates employees to advance his or her skills, but still provide that safe space of encouragement and support. It is critical for the leader to create this same balance between advocacy and inquiry, and task

on goodwill and a mutual commitment to a shared purpose that provides affirmation, inspiration and personal transformation. Without G.R.A.C.E., what remains is a series of transactional interactions that neither satisfy nor inspire. In a leadership state of G.R.A.C.E., energy is abundant and performance effortless. Obstacles are anticipated, but with the expectation that they will be overcome. Failure is seen as an opportunity to learn. This does not imply that this kind of relationship is pain free or even easy. It requires effort, commitment and yes, grace. But the anticipation, and realization, of success supersede everything else. How do you ensure a mutual win for yourself and others?

## **INCREASE COACH & CLIENT AWARENESS**

Using a

### **54 CARD DECK BASED UPON THE KYBALION**

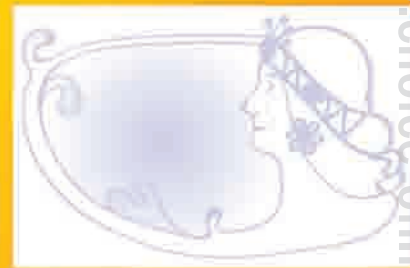
*(ANCIENT GREEK AND  
EGYPTIAN WISDOM)*



**\* BECAUSE \***

### **EXPECT TO**

- Expand your awareness
- Gain new insights
- Engage with fundamental life principles such as: vibration, cause and effect, polarity, mirror, rhythm
- Aligned with chakra energies



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**COACH@BELF.ORG**

**BELFCOACH.COM**

**WRINKLEWISDOM.COM**