

The Great Reframe for Leadership Calibration

By Gary Patterson



“What’s in your leadership phylactery?”

Introduction: Leadership Models in a Crowded Marketplace

Over the last five years, leadership development in American business and organizational life has been shaped by a handful of particularly influential models. These frameworks show up in corporate universities, MBA programs, executive retreats, large consultancies, and internal leadership academies. They speak to courage, psychological safety, trust, collective intelligence, and long-term, “infinite” thinking.

In this article, we will briefly map five of the most prominent leadership strategies and their primary thinkers, then bring them into conversation with **Legacy Leadership®** (Sandstrom & Smith). The goal is not to compete with or replace any model, but to show how Legacy Leadership® can **integrate, contain, and operationalize** the best of them — offering leaders a unifying “factory” inside their *being* and *doing* that calibrates how they show up every day.

Five Prominent Leadership Strategies in the Last Five Years

We’ll look at:

1. **Dare to Lead** – Brené Brown
2. **The Fearless Organization (Psychological Safety)** – Amy C. Edmondson
3. **Trust & Inspire** – Stephen M. R. Covey
4. **Multipliers** – Liz Wiseman
5. **The Infinite Game** – Simon Sinek

For each:

- **What the model is and what it claims to accomplish**
- **Brief biography of the developer(s), with educational background**
- **Core principles or tenets, with short explanations**

Dare to Lead (Brené Brown)

a. What the model is & what it accomplishes

Dare to Lead is Brené Brown's courage-building leadership framework, based on more than a decade of research on vulnerability, shame, empathy, and leadership. Brown argues that **daring leadership is not about titles or control; it is about the willingness to lean into vulnerability, live into one's values, build trust, and rise from setbacks**. She insists that courage is not a trait but a collection of **four teachable, observable, and measurable skill sets**.

Organizations that adopt Dare to Lead aim to increase psychological safety, authenticity, and resilience, resulting in stronger engagement, better decision-making, and healthier cultures.

b. About Brené Brown (education & background)

Dr. Brené Brown is a **research professor** at the University of Houston, where she holds the **Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair** at the Graduate College of Social Work. She is also a Professor of Practice in Management at the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business.

Her academic training is in **social work** (MSW, PhD). For over twenty years she has researched courage, vulnerability, shame, empathy, and leadership, and is the author of multiple #1 *New York Times* bestsellers, including *Dare to Lead*.

c. Main principles / skill sets

Brown frames **daring leadership** around **four core skill sets of courage**:

1. **Rumbling with Vulnerability**
 - Leaders engage in brave, honest conversations, acknowledge uncertainty and emotion, and stay in dialogue rather than retreating into defensiveness or armor.
2. **Living into Our Values**
 - Leaders identify their core values, operationalize them into behaviors, and consistently align decisions and actions with those values.
3. **Braving Trust**
 - Trust is broken down into specific behaviors (Boundaries, Reliability, Accountability, Vault, Integrity, Non-judgment, Generosity). Leaders practice and model these trust components with others.
4. **Learning to Rise**

- Leaders normalize failure and disappointment as part of the journey, learning how to reckon with emotion, own stories, and rise with greater wisdom and resilience.

The Fearless Organization / Psychological Safety (Amy C. Edmondson)

a. What the model is & what it accomplishes

In *The Fearless Organization*, Amy C. Edmondson argues that **psychological safety—the shared belief that it is safe to speak up, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of shame or punishment—is the critical foundation for learning, innovation, and high performance.**

Her framework provides a blueprint for leaders to create cultures in which people can contribute ideas, challenge the status quo, and own errors, thereby driving adaptive learning and sustained innovation.

b. About Amy C. Edmondson (education & background)

Amy C. Edmondson is the Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at Harvard Business School.

She holds **BA, AM, and PhD degrees from Harvard University** and is widely recognized for groundbreaking research in psychological safety, teaming, and organizational learning.

c. Main principles / tenets

While Edmondson's work is more conceptual than "steps-based," key tenets include:

- 1. Psychological Safety as a Learning Condition**
 - People must feel safe to speak up, ask naive questions, and share half-formed ideas if the organization is to learn and adapt.
- 2. Frame the Work as Learning, Not Execution Alone**
 - Leaders emphasize uncertainty and interdependence, clarifying that everyone's input is needed to figure things out.
- 3. Acknowledge Your Own Fallibility**
 - Leaders model humility, admitting that they don't have all the answers and can make mistakes, opening the door for others to contribute.
- 4. Model Curiosity and Ask Lots of Questions**
 - Leaders practice inquiry, invite perspectives, and actively listen to create an environment where voice is expected.
- 5. Respond Productively to Bad News and Mistakes**
 - When errors surface, leaders focus on learning and improvement rather than blame, reinforcing safety.
- 6. Support Structured, Respectful Voice Channels**
 - Mechanisms (meetings, huddles, feedback systems) are deliberately designed to make speaking up a norm, not an exception.

Trust & Inspire (Stephen M. R. Covey)

a. What the model is & what it accomplishes

Trust & Inspire is Stephen M. R. Covey's answer to what he calls the "leadership style crisis" of our time: organizations still largely operate with **old "Command & Control" leadership**, even though today's workers need trust, purpose, and inspiration. In *Trust & Inspire*, he argues that **modern leaders must see people as whole (body, heart, mind, and spirit), trust them, and inspire them**, creating high-trust cultures that unlock human potential and performance.

The model claims to produce greater engagement, innovation, and agility, as people feel trusted, respected, and connected to meaningful work.

b. About Stephen M. R. Covey (education & background)

Stephen M. R. Covey is a leadership thinker, consultant, and author best known for *The Speed of Trust* and *Trust & Inspire*. He is the son of Stephen R. Covey (author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*).

He holds an **MBA from Harvard Business School** and previously served as President & CEO of Covey Leadership Center, where he led significant revenue and profit growth.

c. Main principles / core beliefs

Covey articulates **core beliefs and practices** of Trust & Inspire leadership. Representative tenets include:

1. **People Have Greatness Inside Them**
 - Leaders see, communicate, and develop the potential in others, assuming capability rather than deficiency.
2. **People Are Whole People (Body, Heart, Mind, Spirit)**
 - Leaders address not only tasks and intellect but also meaning, emotion, and purpose.
3. **There Is Enough for Everyone**
 - Leaders adopt an abundance mindset, elevating caring above competing and collaboration above internal rivalry.
4. **Leadership Is a Stewardship, Not a Position**
 - The leader's role is to serve the people and the mission, not to control or dominate.
5. **Trust Is the New Operating System**
 - Trust is treated as a measurable competency; leaders extend smart trust, clarify expectations, and create accountability in the context of trust rather than fear.
6. **Inspiration Is a Learnable Skill**
 - Leaders inspire by who they are (their character), by how they lead (their behavior), and by connecting work to a meaningful "why."

Multipliers (Liz Wiseman)

a. What the model is & what it accomplishes

In *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, **Liz Wiseman** describes two kinds of leaders:

- **Multipliers**, who amplify the intelligence and capabilities of others, and
- **Diminishers**, who unintentionally (or intentionally) drain capacity and stifle others.

Wiseman's research shows that Multipliers effectively get far more from people — sometimes **twice the capability** — without burnout, by creating growth, challenge, and ownership. The model offers five key disciplines leaders can practice to become Multipliers and build "Multiplier cultures."

b. About Liz Wiseman (education & background)

Liz Wiseman is a researcher, executive advisor, and CEO of **The Wiseman Group**, a leadership research and development firm. She has served clients such as Apple, Google, Microsoft, Nike, and Tesla. She has been ranked among the world's top management thinkers and was recognized as the #1 leadership thinker by Thinkers50 (2019).

Wiseman holds a **BS in business management** and an **MA in organizational behavior** from **Brigham Young University**. She is a former Oracle executive, where she served as Vice President of Oracle University and led global HR development.

c. Main principles / five disciplines

The **five disciplines of Multipliers** are:

1. **The Talent Magnet**
 - Attracts and optimizes talent by seeing and using people's native genius; people want to work with this leader because they grow around them.
2. **The Liberator**
 - Creates an intense yet safe environment where people feel permission to think, speak, and take ownership; standards are high and so is trust.
3. **The Challenger**
 - Issues stretch challenges that push people beyond their comfort zones with strong belief that they can rise to the occasion.
4. **The Debate Maker**
 - Fosters rigorous, fact-based debates where many voices contribute to solving the right problems; decisions are well-informed and broadly owned.
5. **The Investor**
 - Gives ownership and accountability, ensuring that people own results, not just tasks, while the leader stays available as a resource.

The Infinite Game (Simon Sinek)

a. What the model is & what it accomplishes

In *The Infinite Game*, Simon Sinek argues that many organizations are playing an “**infinite**” game (no fixed endpoint, ever-changing players, and evolving rules) with a “**finite**” mindset (short-term wins, quarterly numbers, beating the competition). This mismatch breeds toxicity and instability.

Sinek proposes that leaders adopt an **infinite mindset** to build resilient, purpose-driven organizations that endure and thrive over time—focusing on a just cause, trusting teams, worthy rivals, existential flexibility, and courageous leadership.

b. About Simon Sinek (education & background)

Simon Sinek is an author and speaker known for *Start With Why* and *The Infinite Game*. He holds a **BA in cultural anthropology from Brandeis University** and studied law at City, University of London.

He began his career in advertising at agencies such as Euro RSCG and Ogilvy & Mather before founding his own firm. His TED talk “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” helped popularize his “Why–How–What” Golden Circle framework.

c. Main principles / five practices

Key tenets of the **Infinite Game mindset** include:

1. **Just Cause**
 - A future-oriented, inclusive, service-driven cause that is so compelling leaders and followers are willing to sacrifice for it.
2. **Courageous Leadership**
 - Leaders are willing to do the right thing for the long term, even when it is uncomfortable, unpopular, or costly in the short term.
3. **Trusting Teams**
 - Teams where people feel safe to be vulnerable, admit mistakes, and ask for help—similar to Edmondson’s psychological safety.
4. **Worthy Rival**
 - Instead of obsessing over “beating” the competition, leaders treat others as worthy rivals whose strengths reveal their own opportunities to improve.
5. **Existential Flexibility**
 - The capacity to make a profound strategic pivot to advance the Just Cause, even if it means disrupting one’s own business model.

How Legacy Leadership Reframes and Integrates These Models

Now we turn to the comparison and contrast with **Legacy Leadership®**.

The integrative stance of Legacy Leadership®

Let us begin with framing:

The beauty of Legacy Leadership is that it **builds on the foundation of any and every other leadership strategy** on the market — both those that have emerged over the last five years and those that have shaped the field over the last thirty years. Sandstrom and Smith have advocated that the **15 elements of Legacy Leadership** (the five *BE* elements and ten *DO* elements) are able to *encapsulate or contain* all other leadership models and strategies, and in a way **holistically patch holes** that may exist in some of the others.

The advantage for a consultant or coach who walks into an organization is that Legacy Leadership® does **not** require them to argue against or tear down what is already in place. Instead, it emphasizes the unique opportunity to come alongside and apply a model that is more integrative and can be tucked into the leader's **being-and-doing apparatus** — their inner "*phylactery*" — to serve as the calibration center for all of their leadership practice. Legacy Leadership® can be intellectually understood, but more importantly, it is to be **practiced, administered, and reproduced** in others.

That is the heart of this "Great Reframe."

Mapping the Five Contemporary Models into Legacy Leadership's 15 Elements

Recall the **five Best Practices of Legacy Leadership**:

1. **Holder of Vision and Values** (*BE*: Holder; *DO*: Vision, Values)
2. **Creator of Collaboration and Innovation** (*BE*: Creator; *DO*: Collaboration, Innovation)
3. **Influencer of Inspiration and Leadership** (*BE*: Influencer; *DO*: Inspiration, Leadership)
4. **Advocator of Differences and Community** (*BE*: Advocator; *DO*: Differences, Community)
5. **Calibrator of Responsibility and Accountability** (*BE*: Calibrator; *DO*: Responsibility, Accountability)

Taken together, these **15 elements** (5 *BE*, 10 *DO*) create a kind of **meta-framework** into which other leadership models can be nested:

- **Dare to Lead** (Brown)
 - *Rumbling with vulnerability* and *learning to rise* map strongly into **Influencer of Inspiration, Creator of Collaboration, and Advocator of Differences**, because vulnerability and resilience are required for trust, inclusion, and inspiration. Living into values flows directly into **Holder of Vision and Values**.
 - Legacy Leadership doesn't replace courage work; it gives leaders a **daily, structured way** to carry courage into vision, values, collaboration, and accountability.
- **The Fearless Organization** (Edmondson)
 - Psychological safety is a core requirement for **Creator of Collaboration and Innovation** and **Advocator of Differences and Community**. Without safety, collaboration, innovation, and genuine community simply do not happen.

- Legacy Leadership “contains” psychological safety by embedding it in **Critical Success Skills** around listening, inviting voice, honoring differences, and fostering trust.
- **Trust & Inspire** (Covey)
 - The Trust & Inspire mindset deeply aligns with **Influencer of Inspiration and Leadership** and **Calibrator of Responsibility and Accountability**. Trust is a DO expression of holding values and building community; inspiration aligns with being an Influencer and Creator.
 - Legacy Leadership can adopt the Trust & Inspire language for **how** leaders relate to people, while using the Legacy practices and skills to define **where** that trust and inspiration must show up (vision, collaboration, responsibility, etc.).
- **Multipliers** (Wiseman)
 - Multipliers are essentially **Creators** and **Influencers**: they create conditions for others to think and lead, and influence by drawing out people’s best.
 - The five disciplines of Multipliers can sit under multiple Critical Success Skills in Legacy Leadership, especially in Creator of Collaboration and Innovation and Influencer of Inspiration and Leadership, giving more granularity to how leaders grow others.
- **The Infinite Game** (Sinek)
 - A Just Cause is about **Vision and Values**; trusting teams are about **Collaboration, Differences, Community**; worthy rivals and existential flexibility are about **Innovation and Responsibility**.
 - Legacy Leadership can incorporate the Infinite Game as a way to frame **time horizon and purpose**, while its own practices ensure that long-term thinking is translated into daily behaviors, accountability, and culture.

In short, **Legacy Leadership harmonizes** with all five models, offering a **single, coherent structure** (5 Best Practices + 50 Critical Success Skills) into which each of these newer or popular frameworks can be integrated and expressed in concrete behaviors.

Where Legacy Leadership “*patches holes*”

No model is complete. Each tends to emphasize certain dimensions:

- **Dare to Lead** – inner courage and vulnerability, but less explicit on long-term accountability systems.
- **Fearless Organization** – team climate and psychological safety, less detailed on accountability/ROI structures.
- **Trust & Inspire** – philosophy of trust and inspiration, less granular around collaborative innovation or diversity/community structures.
- **Multipliers** – how leaders amplify intelligence, but less explicit about values/vision stewardship or community advocacy.
- **Infinite Game** – time horizon and purpose, but less detailed on micro-level behaviors and operational accountability.

Legacy Leadership, by design, insists that leaders be:

- **Holders** (vision & values)
- **Creators** (collaboration & innovation)
- **Influencers** (inspiration & leadership)
- **Advocators** (differences & community)
- **Calibrators** (responsibility & accountability)

— and then breaks each down into **ten Critical Success Skills** that keep leaders from living only in one dimension (e.g., courage without accountability, psychological safety without standards, or trust without calibration).

Thus, Legacy Leadership doesn't criticize these models; it **absorbs them** into a fuller way of being and doing. It fills the gaps between **heart and metrics, people and performance, values and systems**.

A Coach's Strategic Advantage: Integrating, not Replacing

The advantage for a **coach or consultant** is crucial:

- You **do not need to fight** against Dare to Lead, Psychological Safety, Trust & Inspire, Multipliers, or The Infinite Game if an organization already uses them. In fact, honoring what they have already ingested builds trust.
- You can frame ***Legacy Leadership® as the next evolution:***
 - “You already speak Brené Brown’s language of courage. Legacy Leadership helps you carry that courage into how you hold vision and values, collaborate, innovate, and hold responsibility and accountability.”
 - “You already value psychological safety. Legacy Leadership helps you embed that safety into your collaboration and innovation practices with explicit skills.”
 - “You already believe in trust and inspiration. Legacy Leadership helps you align that belief with concrete responsibilities, accountability, and succession of other leaders.”

In other words, **Legacy Leadership is the great integrative container:**

- It **reframes** existing models, so they are not stand-alone “programs,” but **threads woven into one fabric**.
- It gives leaders a **being-and-doing factory** — the inner “phylactery” in the middle of the mind — where all these strategies are sorted, aligned, and transformed into daily patterns of behavior.
- It offers organizations a way to achieve **alignment in vocabulary, behavioral expectations, and implementation with measurable results**.

Conclusion: Legacy Leadership as the Great Reframe for Leadership Calibration

It is worth noting that this short survey has **not** included long-standing giants of the leadership literature:

- **Robert Greenleaf** (*Servant Leadership*),
- **Stephen R. Covey** (*7 Habits and Principle-Centered Leadership*),
- **Kouzes & Posner** (*The Leadership Challenge*),
- **Nanus** ("*Visionary Leadership*")
- **Ball** (*DNA Leadership*)
- **Oakley and Krug** (*Enlightened Leadership*)
- **Ken Blanchard** (*Situational Leadership*)

and many others whose work has shaped the last 25+ years of leadership development.

The five contemporary families of models we *have* highlighted — Brown, Edmondson, Covey (Stephen M. R.), Wiseman, and Sinek — are, in many ways, making **the same core point** that Sandstrom and Smith were making over two decades ago:

- Leadership is **relational**, not just positional.
- Leadership is about **how you show up**, not just what you achieve.
- Leadership must be **values-based, trust-centered, psychologically safe, growth-focused, and long-term**.

What Sandstrom and Smith added, with **Legacy Leadership®**, is a **unified, easily teachable architecture** — those **15 elements and 50 Critical Success Skills** — that can **contain and propagate** all of these ideas in a way that is:

- **Holistic** (covers being and doing, people and results)
- **Calibrating** (aligns vision, values, collaboration, innovation, community, responsibility, accountability)
- **Reproducible** (simple enough to be taught across all organizations)
- **Measurable** (behavioral skills that can be observed, coached, and assessed)

For leaders and coaches, this is the **Great Reframe for Leadership Calibration**:

- You are not asked to abandon your favorite frameworks.
- You are invited to **nest them inside Legacy Leadership®** as a coherent, living system.
- You can help organizations see that nothing they have done is wasted; instead, everything they have adopted can now be **better contained, aligned, and leveraged** for consistent, sustainable propagation of servant leaders who produce other servant leaders.

In the end, Legacy Leadership is not a rival — it is a **grammar** or container for leadership. It gives syntax and structure to all the words, concepts, and strategies leaders already cherish, so that their daily leadership — moment by moment, conversation by conversation — becomes calibrated, coherent, and capable of leaving a living legacy in the people they touch.