

"Leading from the Second Chair"
Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson
Dave Kraft

Second chair leadership is a paradox of being a leader and a subordinate; having a deep role and a wide one, and being content with the present while continuing to dream about the future. Some first chair leaders are missing the benefit and support of a capable 2nd chair because they are hesitant to allow the latter to lead. *A second chair leader is a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.* 2nd chair leadership is unique because it is not strictly based on the power and authority of positional leadership (2)

Second chair leaders need to be in place and allowed to lead if a church is going to have enduring success. (6) Lack of a broad effective core of leaders contributes to church stagnation. The potential 2nd chairs who are waiting in the wings need to step forward and the 1st chairs need to encourage and empower them. Second chairs can lift the leadership burden from the 1st chair without usurping authority. We need to increase the depth of our leadership bench. (8) For 2nd chairs, long-term, successful leadership is based on influence that is developed through strong relationships and wise decisions in ministry (12) Building credibility requires patience, consistency and persistence. Influence is the most important leadership building block in a 2nd chair's toolkit (13) Influence is evident in people's readiness to follow you and their desire to include you in key decisions and initiatives (14) Successful 2nd chair leaders must excel at relationships (15) The habit of looking across the broader organization is a distinguishing trait of 2nd chair leaders (16)

Those with a leader's temperament have a strong desire for the ministry to reach its fullest potential and they always work toward that goal (18) If you are not on a continuous learning curve that helps you see your ministry through leadership lenses, this is the first and most important choice (20) It is paramount that you possess this attitude of a submissive heart. When you are asked to do something that is not in line with your agenda, gifts, or calling, are you glad to help or annoyed? As a 2nd chair leader, you should always keep a servant's towel over your arm (23)

FIRST PARADOX; SUBORDINATE-LEADER

The interaction between 1st and 2nd chairs is fluid and does not lend itself to a static job description (27) Leaders must be willing to serve; they should not consider any task to be beneath them (29) What happens when you disagree with your 1st chair? Loyalty is displayed by a tame tongue in public and a practice of dealing with those disagreements in private (31) Subordination does not mean giving up; it means staying engaged and working through differences while accepting the ultimate leadership role of the 1st chair in the organization. Being deeply involved and not being insubordinate, even in disagreement, is the tension of the role of 2nd chair (33) Trust is more than a characteristic; it is the foundation for an effective partnership between 1st and 2nd chair. (36) Be 100% sure that you know the 1st chair's vision and be totally committed to it (37) Finding the lines that set your boundaries is a crucial part of the subordinate-leader paradox (45)

Be willing to carry out special assignments at the request of the 1st chair. This is often a significant part of the 2nd chair's job. As a 2nd chair leader, you expect—and are expected to be an initiator (46) Through intentional observation you can learn much about your 1st chair's style and preferences. If you are in doubt about the location of the line, ask for clarification. How the line is defined with one 1st chair may not be applicable to someone else (48) If #1 has a healthy ego and is not threatened, #2 won't feel constrained (49) 2nd chair leaders need to learn to read and manage the 1st chair's ego. Differences of opinion are acceptable in staff meetings, but significant disagreements over future direction are best resolved one-on-one (50)

Having a disagreement of opinion with your 1st chair is not crossing the line; telling others about the disagreement is (55) 2nd chair's should be willing to consider solutions other than the ones they envision (58) How often do you command rather than seek consensus? Making decisions by consensus and permitting increased autonomy are the kinds of changes that reduce the gap and turn your subordinates into true 2nd chair leaders (62) Poorly defined lines can sap the energy from your ministry. Trusting leaders give people the freedom to innovate and take risks. If trust is not extended,, 2nd chairs cannot lead and the organization cannot reach its full potential (63) 1st chairs need to know what makes their 2nd chairs tick. (64) As 2nd chairs, we should look to how the 1st chair models his faith, and we cannot question his motives. Authentic faith is a 1st chair's greatest leadership asset. Do you want true 2nd chairs in your organization? Encourage them to be leaders. Clarify your role and theirs. Give them the freedom to lead, to take initiative, and to make some mistakes (65)

SECOND PARADOX; DEEP-WIDE

2ND chair leaders are not looking to be solo performers; they want and need the support of a team (68) Adding value throughout an organization is not a function of position; it is a matter of perspective. Effectiveness as a 2nd chair requires that you see the big picture (71) You don't want to be labeled an unproductive dreamer, a person with great ideas but with no ability to follow through (72) You can be a 2nd chair leader rather than a 2nd tier leader by answering the following: Was your advice sought out? When you speak on a major issue, are your comments heard? Your influence can be broader because of your ability to step outside your role and relate well with a variety of leaders in the church (73) We need more 2nd chairs to rise above their silos and help see and shape the organization-wide perspective (74) You cannot be an effective 2nd chair and your ministry will not excel, if you spend all your time trapped inside your silo (75)

The ability to think systemically is a key difference between 2nd chair leaders and those in the 2nd tier. The true 2nd chair must think organization first, specific ministry assignment second (82) A staff member who cannot lead through influence should not be given additional authority (83) When something is less than optimal in any part of the organization, they cannot help but be concerned (84) Rank is less important than relationship. Successful cooperation is more important than winning a competition (90) When you as a leader are trying to establish a real team, this means allowing dissent. It means allowing time for everyone to contribute ideas, and valuing those contributions.

Build the habit of clarifying the group's purpose and the expectations you have for each member (93) Much of your ability to achieve your full potential as a 2nd chair does not depend on title or position; it depends on the voluntary cooperation of coworkers and other constituents in the organization (96)

An effective 2nd chair must demonstrate depth and competence in his assigned ministry (98)

1. **Pulse Taker**-Knowing what others are thinking and feeling is valuable information for you and the 1st chair. Your role places you in a unique position to keep a finger on the pulse of the organization
2. **Vision Amplifier**-The 1st chair is the primary vision caster in the organization, but a 2nd chair has many opportunities to repeat, clarify, and reinforce the vision. As a 2nd chair, you must be proactive in helping other leaders understand and implement the organization's vision

3. **Leader Multiplier**-For the 2nd chair, identifying and recruiting other leaders who can help achieve the vision should be an ongoing priority. A 2nd chair can expand a ministry by tapping into the underused potential of its existing people. Every organization has people who are not maximizing their potential. Without leadership opportunities, people lose interest in the vision. 2nd chair leaders can translate a wide vision into deep opportunity for new leaders
4. **Gap Filler**-If there is no other leader who can serve in a critical role, the 2nd chair should be prepared to fill the gap. The 2nd chair is the ultimate utility player

(100-106)

Allowing a 2nd chair to participate in the big picture means allowing them to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and suggest alternatives (111) 2nd chairs need to be given the freedom to point to the specific ways in which they can spend part of their time to add more value to the organization (114)

CONTENTMENT-DREAMING

Joseph is our biblical example in this section. He was able to serve with excellence while waiting (119) 2nd chairs need to learn to practice a Joseph-like contentment and at the same time never lose sight of their dreams (120) Contentment in the 2nd chair is your choice to stay and grow and excel, for a season, regardless of current circumstances (124) If I feel a tension between a dream and my position, I have to trust God will resolve it. As you seek to thrive in the 2nd chair, your calling will always be at the heart of your contentment (131) As a 2nd chair, you must be willing to wait your turn and go through God's development process (133) 2nd chairs need to cultivate the attitudes and behaviors of a leader who trusts God as he dreams.

Be a good steward with whatever He entrusts to you. Leave your ego behind; it is God's dream (140) As it relates to Joseph, God was in the details from the beginning; He just chose to conceal many of them at the outset (142) 2nd chairs support their 1st chair's vision with positive attitudes and effective action (146) If you are not learning and growing, you are likely to see your influence diminish. Seek contentment, but not comfort in your 2nd chair (155) Each person has a duty to God to use their gifts and not accept a situation where their gifts are not being used (157) If your own understanding of God's preferred future for your ministry cannot be clearly explained to others, it will never be shared (164)

Leaders envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. They dream of what might be, and they passionately believe that they can make a positive difference. What do 2nd chairs hope to experience in their career? How has God wired them? What unique gifts do they have? How do they describe their understanding of God's call on their life? (165)

When you carefully, you find that most "visions" are one person's vision imposed on an organization. Such visions, at best, command compliance—not commitment. A shared vision is a vision that many people are truly committed to, because it reflects their own personal vision. There is a world of difference between compliance and commitment (166)