

# Developing a Leader Growth Model (Part 1): Growing Leaders Beyond Lecture

## CONTEXT

Historically, leadership development has had a consistent focus on the transmission of ideas—share ideas through a presentation and/or readings and then the participants will know. These “ideas” can be new ways of thinking, new facts, new models, etc. To engage the learners, a leader or teacher will often tell stories and to help the ideas stick in the mind. Yet many are also looking to put ideas into practice. They like hearing new ideas, but they don’t like the intellectual evaporation that too often occurs. Further, they want to put things into practice and build new habits.

Share your thoughts in the comments in the space provided, or contact me at [rjs@andrews.edu](mailto:rjs@andrews.edu)

## KNOWLEDGE

New and usable knowledge is an essential ingredient in the human growth process. While it is not in itself sufficient to produce growth, it is essential. New ideas are found through books, presentations, conversations, etc. and must be connected to previous knowledge to successfully be connected to practice and integrated into life.

## PURPOSE

To promote leaders who are whole people—physically, mentally & spiritually—there is need for a variety of components in the growth process. A model of learning is needed, one that is consistent with how leaders grow. The purpose of this project is to develop a leadership growth model for individuals, organizations, consultants, and beyond.

## PRACTICE

Intentional practice is the act (and eventually habit) of trying out new ideas. These ideas may often come in the form of an action, skill, or specific process. The experience of intentionally implementing ideas into one’s own experience is a significant form of building a stronger understanding of both the practice and the knowledge.

## MODEL DESCRIPTION

Part 1 of this model describes five critical components of the learning and growth process for leaders. The visualization of the model and each component are shown in the associated graphic. Also included are brief details regarding each of the components. Part 1 of the model includes:

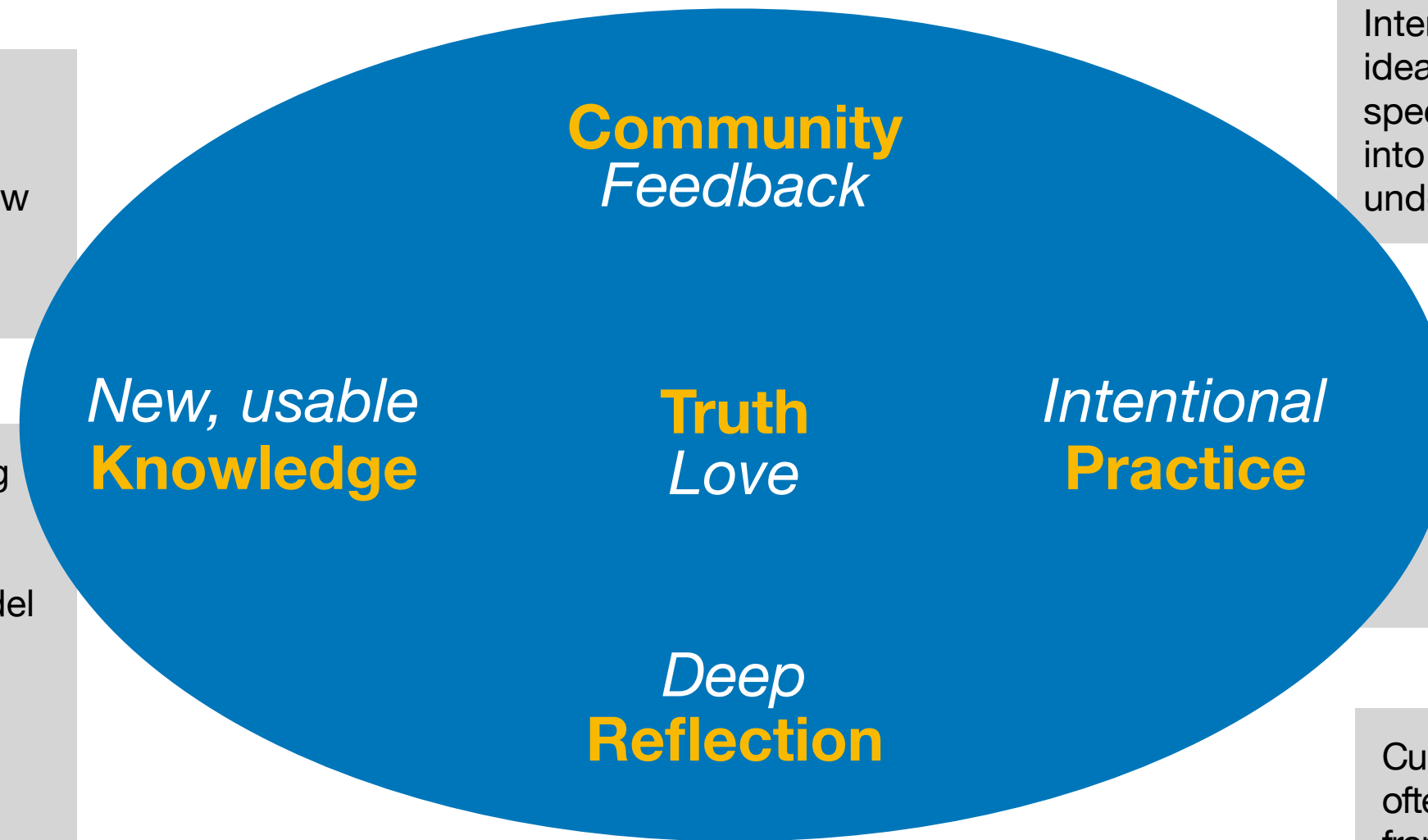
**Knowledge.** New, usable knowledge

**Practice.** Practice with the intent to learn

**Reflection.** Reflecting on one’s knowledge and experience

**Community.** Engaging with trusted friends and/or colleagues and gaining additional perspective through feedback.

**Truth.** Building one’s experience on true principles and practices that lead to a more loving and caring community.



## REFLECTION

Deep reflection is the personal practice of thinking, of making connections between ideas and events. Often, reflection connects ideas to each other thereby building a more elaborate neural network for idea recall and implementation. Yet reflection also can build stronger connections between ideas and practice and between practice and ideas.

## COMMUNITY

Cultivating a learning community that builds trust and openness does not often come easy or quick. However, as I have worked with diverse groups from across the globe, it seems that when people experience an environment where they feel safe, even feedback is received with open arms.

## FUTURE STUDY

While each of the areas of the model have been studied well, it seems that the integrated use of these components need additional study. I look forward to working with others to better understand the way in which these components work together and ways in which a variety of program participants from different parts of the world experience them in similar and unique ways.

## TRUTH

As the parable of Jesus in Matthew 7 illustrates building on Truth as a Rock. This clarifies that as strong as the components of Knowledge, Practice, Reflection, and Community are in helping people grow, only growth based on Truth (built on the Rock) will bring true growth for leaders in all areas of their life.

## IMPLICATIONS

Leadership development programs, health care education, schools, universities, church services, professional development activities, etc.