

## RELATIONAL MATURITY: DETACHED INTERDEPENDENCE

ARTICLE

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Relationships are hard work! Yes, the synergy of more than one is exponential and the camaraderie of many is fulfilling. However, the ying to that entire positive yang is the challenge of being in relationship with people.

It's more than clashing with egos and navigating strong opinions. It is also evidenced in the way we make conscious or sub-conscious choices to set boundaries or ignore the boundaries of others which leads to emotional enmeshment, co-dependency, and failed expectations.

To rise above the challenges takes a high level of emotional maturity, and if a group makes that choice collectively, extraordinary things are likely to happen. It's called detached interdependence. Here's how it looks practically...

Consider Phil Jackson, NBA coach with eleven (11) championship rings. How did he manage the relational challenges? He writes in *Sacred Hoops*, "Yet even in this highly competitive world, I've discovered that when you free players to use all their resources – mental, physical, and spiritual – an interesting shift in awareness occurs. When players practice what is known as mindfulness – simply paying attention to what's actually happening – not only do they play better and win more, they also become more attuned with each other. And the joy they experience working in harmony is a powerful motivating force that comes from deep within, not from some coach pacing along the sidelines, shouting obscenities into the air."

Robert Quinn, professor at the Ross School of Business – University of Michigan, notices in his book, *Building Bridges as You Walk on It* that Jackson “paints two contrasting pictures.” One picture is the frenzied coach who tends to be the “model of good, hard-nosed leadership,” even though he/she looks a bit emotionally unbalanced. The other picture is of a group with large egos who seems to have surrendered their egos and have become “inner-directed and other-focused.” That may seem like a picture from the dream world instead of the “real” world until you consider the legacy of a coach like Jackson. How many rings?

Detached interdependence means that I transcend my need to be control, to become emotional enmeshed with others, having every little circumstance dictate my feelings, and remain on the verge of rage. In short, being a reactive person.

Instead, it’s about adopting a process whereby we can be both humble and strong. When we are in the state of detached interdependence we have clarity of purpose and we are not defined by our relationships. I often use the phrase: confidently humble. Again, inner-directed and other-focused; experienced by others as relational maturity.

### ***What if...***

**...we pursued such relational maturity?**

**...we know our mission; having a clear purpose?**

I would propose we would not only be true to ourselves we would also model a life of authenticity and credibility to others!

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