

**Gagen  
MacDonald**  
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**Presents**

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**LET GO & LEAD**

LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION GUIDE



**AWAKENING LEADERSHIP  
AT ALL LEVELS**



Perspectives from **BERNARD TYSON**  
President and COO of **KAISER PERMANENTE**

## Ideas for Application

In conjunction with the video clips from the conversation with Bernard at [letgoandlead.com](http://letgoandlead.com), you can use this guide to spark thinking on leaders' role in:

- Organizational mission and focus
- Participation and leadership in the workplace
- Using technology and social media to stay connected
- Engaging employees
- Diversity in voices and perspectives
- Corporate storytelling
- Importance of listening

## Instructions

This guide was developed to complement the Let Go & Lead™ interview with Bernard J. Tyson and encourage learning on the individual, team and organizational level.

- Use the Questions for Individual Reflection for yourself or as pre-work before your team comes together for the Group Exercise.
- The Group Exercise can be tailored to the needs of your organization and team, but is meant to encourage deep conversation around new ways of thinking about and acting on leadership.

## Questions for Individual Reflection

### On Corporate Culture and Connecting to Purpose and Mission

How important is the shared purpose of your organization? How does shared purpose help people come together?

### On Unleashing Leadership at All Levels Through Employee Teams

What is your definition of leadership? Does the definition address those who manage people, or is it more expansive?

### On Empowering Employees Closest to the People You Serve

Do you notice a divide between the “strategists” and the “doers” in your organization? What is its genesis? How can you take personal steps to dissolve the divide?

### On Creating an Environment That Fosters Leadership

Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not? How does your organization provide clear expectations, support, encouragement and recognition for leaders?

### On Authentic Communication and Feedback

What does authentic communication and feedback in your organization look and feel like? How do you know when it is not authentic?

### On What is Means to “Let Go and Lead”

Think of a time at work or in your personal life when you “let go” and a time where you held on to “control”, how did each approach impact the outcomes? What approach will work best as you progress in your career?

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### **On the Power of a Committed Workforce**

How connected do you feel to your organization's purpose? What would make you feel more connected and, as a result, committed?

### **On the Labor and Management Partnership**

Mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit are the trilogy of strong relationships. How is this reflected in your organization?

### **On Corporate Character and Storytelling**

What is your favorite story about your organization, and how does it reflect the company's corporate character?

### **On Valuing Respect and Diversity**

Think of a time where diversity of background and thought helped bring more creativity and value to your organization. How does reaching out to colleagues and across the organization help to solve problems and generate innovation?

### **On Creating an Environment For Listening and Feedback**

What does it feel like to be truly listened to? What does it feel like when your ideas or feedback are overlooked? What behaviors signal a leader or organization is open to feedback?

## **Group Exercise**

*Materials Needed: Flip Chart/White Board or Notebooks, Pens/Markers*

1. As pre-work, ask the team to watch the Bernard J. Tyson videos on [letgoandlead.com](http://letgoandlead.com) and answer the Questions for Reflection.
2. Open the discussion by asking, "After watching the videos, what resonated most with you?" (10 – 15 minutes)
3. Divide into teams of 3-4 people. Ask each group to track their ideas, using notepaper or flipcharts, to the question: "What characteristics define leadership in our organization?"
4. Ask each group to recap the themes that came up in the discussion and report out. (5 minutes)
5. In pairs, have the participants discuss the challenges they personally face as leaders. Compare situations and determine the greatest barrier they face. (5 minutes)
6. Ask each pair to report on the greatest barrier to leadership. Invite the group to ask follow up questions to understand each barrier. (10 – 15 minutes)

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7. Return to your pairs and discuss how the concepts Bernard mentioned in his interview could be applied to overcome the current barriers to leadership (15 minutes):
  - a. Connecting to purpose and mission
  - b. Enabling leadership at all levels
  - c. Creating a culture of empowerment
  - d. Providing expectations, support, encouragement and recognition for leaders
  - e. Using technology to stay connected
  - f. Letting go of authority and power, and embracing coaching and support
  - g. Earning commitment vs compliance
  - h. Building mutual trust
  - i. Storytelling and belief systems
  - j. Valuing diversity
  - k. Listening and opening channels for feedback
8. Return to the large group and ask each pair to share their biggest takeaway (10 – 15 minutes)
9. Summarize the discussion and ask each participant to commit to a specific action that will help them embrace their role as a leader in the organization (no matter their role or level).

## How to Take This Further

Now that you've taken the time to explore the lessons from Bernard J. Tyson's interview from the perspectives of your own personal leadership and team, take some time to consider the implications for your business.

- How well does your organization connect employees to a shared purpose? What could make that connection stronger?
- What story does your organization want to tell? How are employees being involved?
- How does your organization encourage leadership development, communications and employee commitment? What could be done better? What might stand in the way?
- Does your organization promote an “authentic communication” mentality? What changes would be needed to make it so?

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### About Let Go & Lead

[letgoandlead.com](http://letgoandlead.com)

Let Go & Lead is an online project to explore leadership in the 21st Century. Maril MacDonald, CEO of Gagen MacDonald, has engaged thought leaders from different walks of life for conversations on what it means to “let go” and lead people to create meaningful, sustainable change. Video highlights from each conversation are posted for you to view and share your comments and perspective.

Most of all, Let Go & Lead is a community. It is a celebration of diversity and a genuine embrace of different points of view in an attempt to come to an unprecedented understanding of how the most powerful ideas come to life within the most complex environments and systems.

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### About Gagen MacDonald

[gagenmacdonald.com](http://gagenmacdonald.com)

Gagen MacDonald is a firm founded on a big idea: We want to make the world a better place, transforming one company at a time.

Since 51 of the world’s 100 largest economies are corporations (not countries, as one might expect), it’s a worthy pursuit. We help clients find ways to bring their employees’ passions, talents and sense of purpose to bear on the business strategy. Working collaboratively from the corporate office to the front line, we use an organization’s brand, culture, vision and history to motivate and align employees behind accomplishing meaningful and sustainable results.

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**Want to learn more about how Gagen MacDonald can help develop and align your leadership team to inspire exceptional performance?**



Our team has extensive and proven experience helping companies develop leaders, engage employees and build high-performance cultures that support the business strategy. Contact Meg Wheaton for more information on how Gagen MacDonald can help you.

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