

Gagen  
MacDonald  
Presents

LET GO & LEAD

LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION GUIDE



CURATING CREATIVITY  
AND ACTION

Perspectives from Eric Ryan  
Founder, Method

## Ideas for Application

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

- Sparking creativity throughout the organization
- Bringing different ideas and perspectives to the table
- Building brand advocacy inside the organization
- Storytelling as a way to bring communities together
- Providing the physical and mental space for creativity to thrive
- Having difficult conversations

## Instructions

This guide was developed to complement the Let Go & Lead™ interview with Eric Ryan 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

### **Creating corporate values from the bottom up can increase ownership & buy-in.**

- Do you share the same values as your organization?
- Do you feel most employees “live the values” of your organization?
- How can we all do a better job of living the values?
- How can you help new members of the organization become steeped in our values?

### **Creating and celebrating a unique culture can be a powerful differentiator.**

- Do you feel our culture differentiates us in the marketplace?
- Do you feel our culture is a powerful tool for recruiting top talent?
- What are some of your favorite cultural aspects of our organization?

### **Creativity thrives when you provide the right process and environment.**

- How do our work processes impact our culture?
- Do you feel our work environment energizes and inspires great work?
- What can we do to improve our environment?

### **Having creative talent in house can fast track innovation.**

- What are the risks and rewards of trying to do it all in-house?
- Do you consider yourself a creative thinker?
- How can we inspire others to be more creative?
- What would inspire you to bring your most creative thinking to the challenges or opportunities you are facing?

**The head of H.R. just may be the most powerful marketer in the organization.**

- How important is it to hire and develop the right people?
- How can we better use our hiring process to promote our culture and brand?

**Is “under-sharing” on social media more problematic than “over-sharing?”**

In your opinion, what are some of the benefits and risks of having our employees active on social media?

**Strategy before creative or creative before strategy? That is the question...**

Do our current processes promote or inhibit our ability to be creative?

**Two ingredients that can create cult followings: sharing your customer’s values and over serving their needs.**

How loyal are our employees and customers? How can we create stronger bonds with each?

**Monday morning “huddles” can set the stage for an energized and productive week.**

- When was the last time you celebrated a team member’s success?
- What was it like?
- What was the team member’s reaction?
- How might Monday morning “huddles” work in your organization, among your team?
- What’s your method for team communications?

**As a leader, letting people go is one of the toughest parts of the job.**

- Have you ever had to relieve someone from an organization?
- How was that experience for you?
- How can a separation be “done well”?
- How can you demonstrate respect for the individual and the larger team when there are layoffs?

**Don’t start a business, start a cause.**

What is the purpose of our organization?

## Group Exercise

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

1. As pre-work, ask the team to watch the Eric Ryan 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 minutes)
3. Group discussion: What is innovation? What is collaboration, and how does it tie to innovation? How does innovation and collaboration come to life here at our organization? (*flip chart discussion*) (10 minutes)
4. Eric Ryan spoke of the various ways in which people are involved in the mission and values of Method. When people believe in the mission and are personally committed to it, then it is possible to achieve great results.

The purpose of this activity is raise awareness about how we all inter-connect but at the same time have a personal responsibility for achieving the best results.

(This exercise can take between 30 and 45 minutes. The group configuration can be a single group, smaller sub-groups, or even pairing up.)

5. At the beginning of the activity, announce a goal that we are encouraging greater collaboration, innovation and personal involvement in the organization's mission. Briefly discuss how the achievement of these goals might be measured.
6. Ask members of the group (sub-groups or pairs) to generate ideas in response to the question, *"How can employees from the other departments help us better achieve collaboration and innovation?"*
7. Encourage group(s) to come up with five specific ideas. Announce a suitable time limit.
8. At the end of the allotted time, get participants' attention. Ask the group(s) to share the five ideas for achieving the goals collaboration and innovation.
9. Ask individual participants to take notes about the final list. Explain that every participant would need this information during the final phase of the activity.
10. Ask members of the group to generate ideas in response to the question, *"How can employees within a single department or function work with each other to achieve greater collaboration and innovation?"*
11. Encourage participants to use their ideas from the previous round in a flexible fashion. As before, encourage the group(s) to come up with five specific ideas. Share the ideas as appropriate.
12. In the final phase of this activity, ask each participant to generate five specific ideas in response to the question, *"How can I individually contribute to the achievement of greater collaboration and innovation?"*
13. Allow an open discussion, giving the participants the opportunity to explain what they can do to support others in the organization.
14. Conclude by making this point: in just a few minutes, we were able to better understand and clarify the things we can do as departments, teams and individuals to help achieve greater innovation and collaboration. It requires openness to new thinking, acceptance of other people, and a personal commitment to do something.
15. As Eric Ryan said in the video: *"The way we think about everything that we do...inspires us to work and reach bigger than if we were just selling soap. To be truly happy you have to be part of something bigger than yourself."*

## How to Take This Further

Now that you've explored the lessons from Eric Ryan's interview from the perspectives of innovation, collaboration and individual involvement, take some time to consider the implications for your organization...

- How can leaders in your organization rethink how they engage employees in the innovation of product, service and process?
- What's enabling your employees to engage? What's standing in their way?
- How can your organization's values be communicated more effectively? How can they be acted upon more authentically?

# LET GO & LEAD

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## LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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### About Let Go & Lead

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[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.

### About Gagen MacDonald

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[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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