

Gagen
MacDonald
Presents

LET GO & LEAD

LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION GUIDE



AWAKENING LEADERSHIP
AT ALL LEVELS



Perspectives from Northwestern University's
Dean of Engineering
JULIO OTTINO

Ideas for Application

In conjunction with the video clips from the conversation with Julio at letgoandlead.com, you can use this guide to spark thinking on leaders' role in:

- Innovation
- Building balanced teams
- Strategy development and execution
- Employee engagement

Instructions

This guide was developed to complement the Let Go & Lead™ interview with Julio Ottino 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 Leadership

Is it possible to lead from the back? Why is this important? What are some examples of successful leaders who act as more of a shepherd?

On The Three Domains

Do you believe you can be a leader, but work in a niche? How do you define the three domains of knowledge, creation, and organization? How do you navigate across these domains?

On Innovation

How does knowledge become obsolete? What impact does this have on the need for you to be adaptable in your career? What milestones can you pinpoint that have changed your career path or the way you define your job (technology, research, innovation, etc.)?

On Embracing Mistakes as Part of the Process

What do you think about Julio's assertion that "the first idea is never the best idea?" How do you embrace the artistic and scientific process in your role, industry or field?

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Group Exercise

Materials Needed: Flip Chart or White Board, Markers, Tape

1. As pre-work, ask your team to watch the Julio Ottino videos on letgoandlead.com and answer the Questions for Reflection.
2. Open the discussion by asking, *After watching the videos, what resonated most with you?* (5-10 minutes)
3. Julio says that innovation lies at the intersection of domains (areas of expertise). Using the following chart, brainstorm an innovation that could result from the merging of hard science and the liberal arts. (15 - 20 minutes)

	History	Sociology	Philosophy	Visual Arts
Computer Science				
Human Biology				
Math				
Chemistry				

4. Debrief. Simply put, there are no wrong ideas. The purpose here is to give people the chance to stretch their creative talents. (5 minutes)
5. Turn to the person sitting next to you and discuss ways that we might improve our work by merging it with another function or domain. (5-10 minutes)
6. Keep in mind Julio's principle idea: Innovation is the result the merger domains.
7. Ask pairs to report out to the larger group and flip chart the responses. (10 minutes)
8. Acknowledge and summarize the brainstorm, then discuss as a group what commitments or changes we can make to inspire innovation, ideas and success in our organization.
9. Summarize the discussion and share next steps.

How to Take This Further

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

- How does your organization support collaboration across silos or domains? Where could it encourage more connection? How could you close those gaps?
- Could your organization perform without its current leader? Why? What would need to happen for your leadership to move into the background (structure, process, culture, strategy)?
- Does your organization embrace mistakes as part of the innovation/ideation process? What must change in order for leadership to establish the right environment for innovation and educated risk-taking to flourish?

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About Let Go & Lead

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

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.

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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