

# Followership

---

Christopher J. West, PhD  
Institute for Advanced Analytics  
North Carolina State University



What comes to the mind of a ***mediocre***  
***or naive professional*** when they think  
about the label “follower?”



120:1 ratio of  
leadership books to  
followership books

- Bjugstad, 2006



Traditional View of Leadership Continuum



Followership

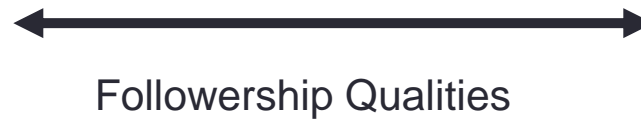
Leadership

What words come to *your* mind when *you* think about the best follower's you've encountered...or...your ideal of a follower?

### Traditional View of Leadership Continuum



### Two-Dimensional View of Leadership and Followership



# Followership Definitions

Followership is the process of attaining one's **individual** goals by being influenced by a **leader** into participating in individual or group efforts toward organizational goals in a given **situation**.

*(Wortman)*

The **cognitive capacity** and **affirmative behavior** volition of the individual to be influenced in order to actively partner and participate in the accomplishment of a shared goal or outcome

*(Chaleff)*

# Followership Definitions

Followership is a relational **role** in which followers have the ability to influence leaders and contribute to the improvement and attainment of group and organizational objectives

*(Carsten)*

“Followership is **a discipline** of supporting leaders and helping them to lead well. It is **not submission**, but the wise and good care of leaders, done out of a **sense of gratitude** for their willingness to take on the responsibilities of leadership, and **a sense of hope and faith in their abilities and potential.**”

*(Beedle)*

# Why do you want to be a good follower?

The mission, the product, the idea, or the bottomline

If my team succeeds and my leader succeeds, I succeed

To learn, grow, be shaped by teammates & leaders

To demonstrate the qualities and experience set to eventually be chosen to lead

What does it mean to be a professional?

- Professional obligation to leader/empathy

- Professional obligation to team

- Professional obligation to the larger organization

- Professional obligation to other stakeholders



# Purpose

Review and apply popular followership models

Structure our critical thinking

Leverage experience

Improve and extend personal skillset as followers and  
as leaders!

Develop vocabulary

Awareness of the literature set – Motivation to develop  
your own lifelong literature review

Reflection can be relaxing and enjoyable



# Organization

Blanchard - Situational Leadership

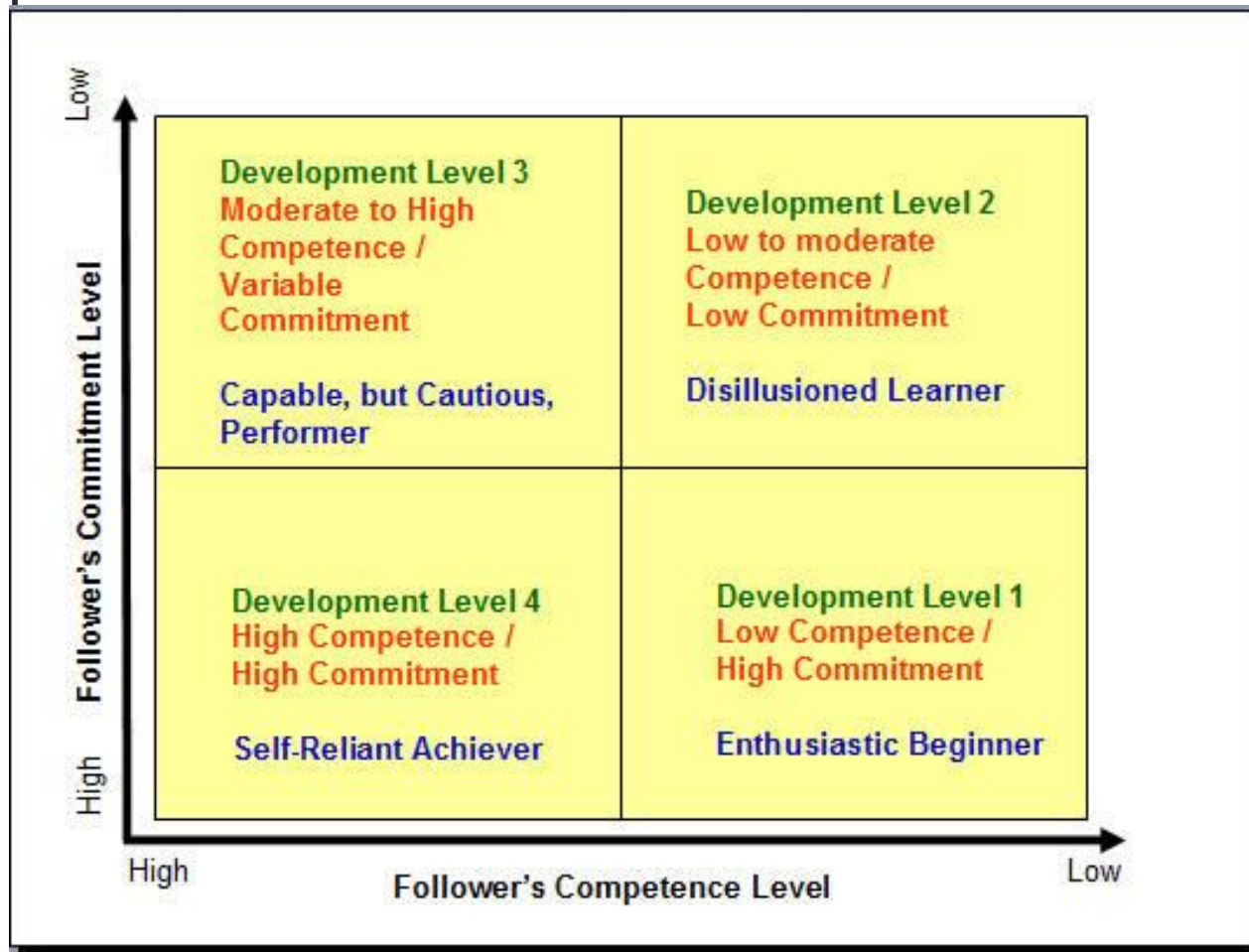
Kelley

Chaleff

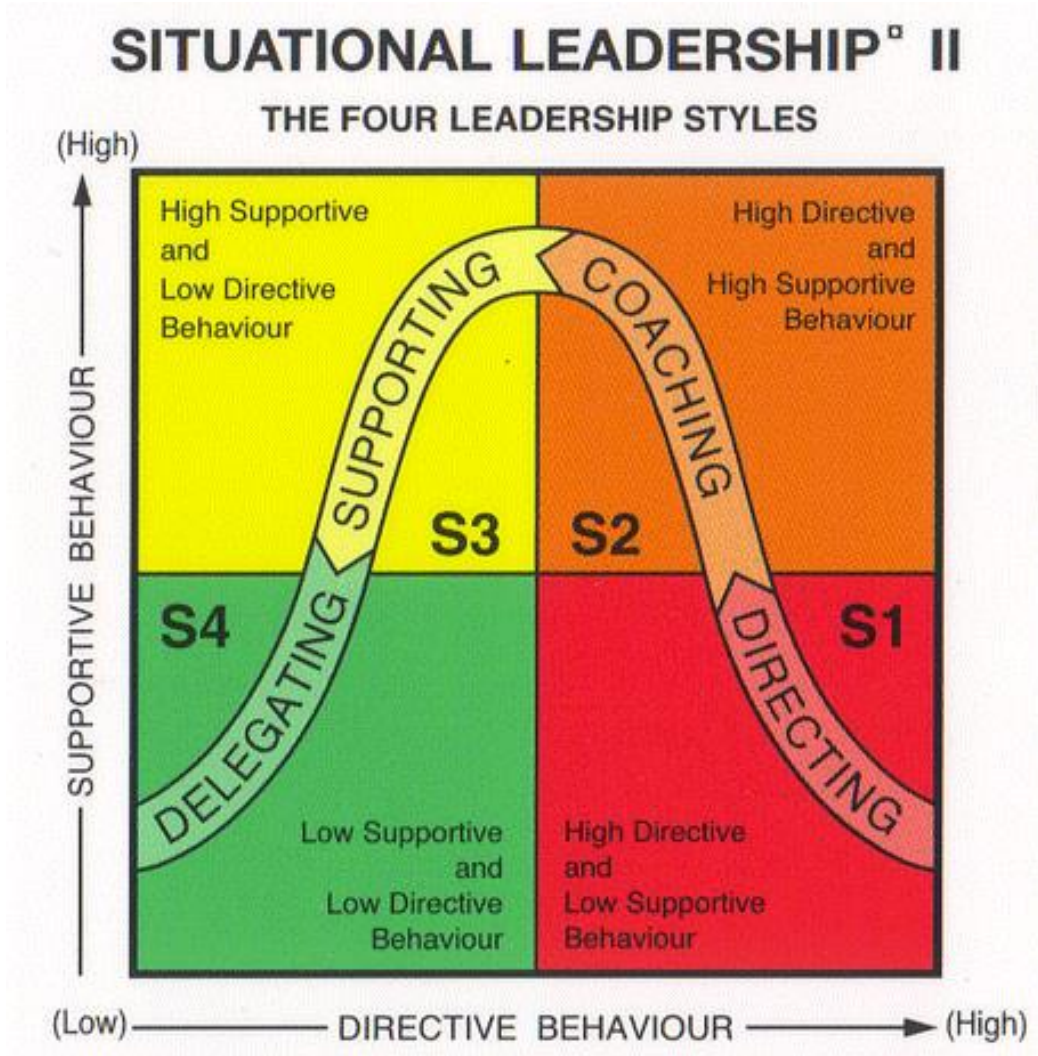
Kellerman

# Situational Leadership: Diagnose the Followers (Blanchard)

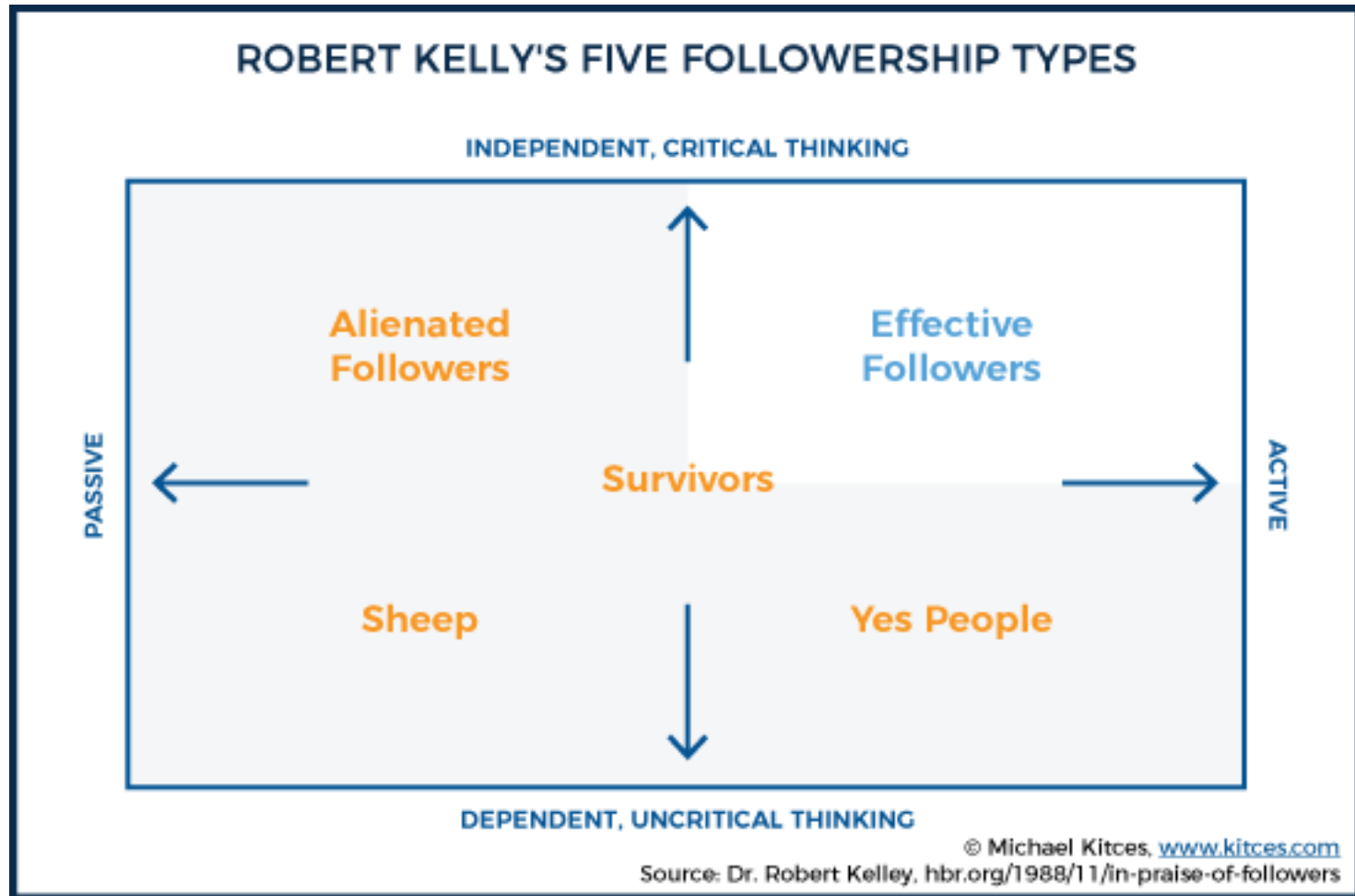
Leader changes style: determined by team/individual development level



# Situational Leadership: Style Flexibility



# Kelley – Followership Types



# Kelley – Followership Traits

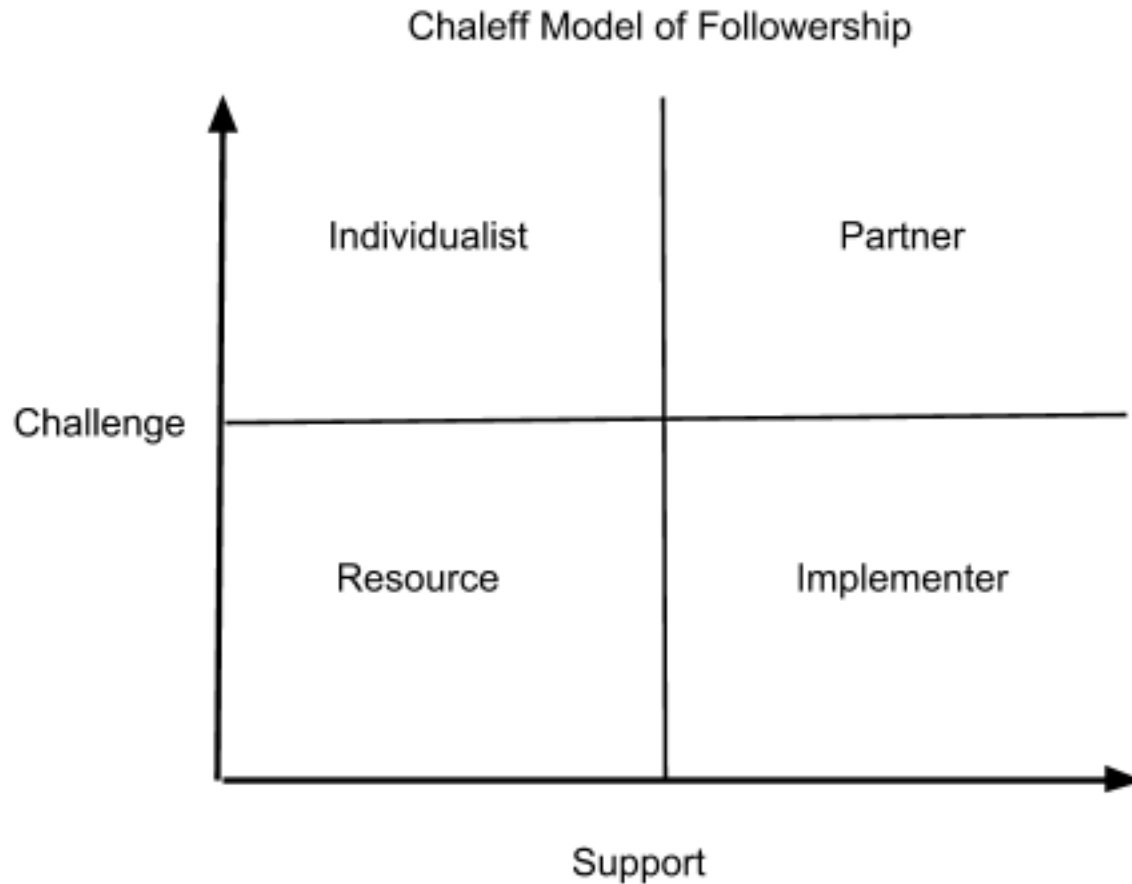
Excellent Self-Management

Commitment beyond oneself

Pursue impactful competence/focus

Courageous, honest, credible

# Chaleff - Courageous Followership Types



# Chaleff's Traits – Courage to:

Assume responsibility/ownership/initiative

Serve

Challenge

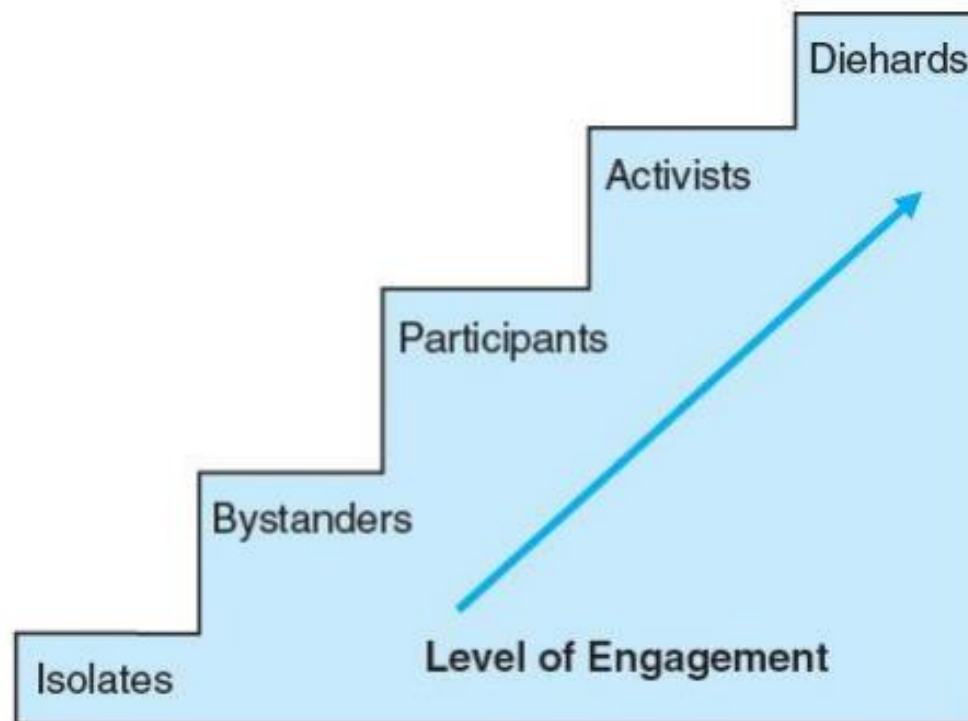
Participate in transformation

Take moral action



Kellerman

# TYPES OF FOLLOWERS



Followers Classified by Level of Engagement.

# What are you?

Can you classify yourself in a given team's situations and find an area for improvement?

What does it mean to be a follower as a professional? A desired professional worthy of premium positions/compensation?

Do I have a professional obligation to my leader? Where does it end?

Do I empathize with my leader?

What is my professional obligation to the organization, the cause, the team?

# A graded assignment...

Who: The individual student

When:

- Assignment formally given *with more detail* shortly before the winter holidays
- Due: Jan ~20th – but will accept for review as soon as you're ready

What: ~5p (double-space) case study paper applying any model/framework taught in class regarding any non-technical subject, or one of your preference (citations required) to a practicum or homework team case experience in the fall

- Use your selected framework to structure your document

Why: To support the development of critical/structured thinking to professional experiences (*and to prep for those employer interview soft questions!*)

Criteria: *More to follow* but ideally, essentially a measure of the depth/rigor/sincerity of the reflective effort