



April 11, 2018 *In The Know* Summary

GROUNDED

How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World

by Bob Rosen

What Did We Discuss?

[Carla Dancy Smith](#) from MedStar and [Rick Auman](#) from Healthy Companies presented on the book *Grounded* by Bob Rosen. Carla is a facilitator at an organization that has implemented the program for all leaders, and Rick represents the Healthy Companies organization, a consulting group founded by Rosen that focuses on leadership development and research. During the book club discussion, we learned about the model presented in the book and heard a case study of how it has positively influenced leadership—and the organizational culture—at MedStar.

About the Model: Grounded Leadership

Thirty years ago, Rosen won a MacArthur Grant to study what it takes to lead a corporation. *Grounded* is the compilation of much of this research. It presents a framework of six personal dimensions of health, The Healthy Leader model. The six dimensions are physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health. Rosen argues that, when leaders focus on these six dimensions, organizational productivity increases.

Shortcomings of Leadership Programs

We talked about how many leadership programs fall short of meeting the desired organizational objectives. Some of the challenges include the following:

- There may be high investment in leadership development, but ROI is small. Leaders receive training, and it may be good quality, but then return to work and don't get the support they need to practice the new behaviors or make a positive change.
- We have been socialized to think "your job defines you." But we have it backwards! Instead, the reality is that "who you are as a person drives what you do." Tapping into who you are, and letting people bring their "full-sevles" to work, is key!
- Most organizations have a competency model. It is effective in setting leaders' expectations. But competencies alone are not enough! In addition, you need to focus on the six dimensions.

Genesis of the Six Dimensions

In his research, Rosen asked leaders, "What do you struggle with?" From that, he generated a list of disruptors. He then asked, "What do you do about it?" The answers are the six dimensions. For example, "pace" is an issue many leaders cited. In the world of work, things move quickly. In response and to equip themselves to manage to the fast pace, many leaders interviewed in the research said that they take care of their physical health. ("The better I take care of myself, they better I can keep the pace.")

MedStar Case Study

MedStar partnered with Healthy Companies to use the Healthy Leader model as part of their leadership development course for leaders at all levels—from frontline leaders through executives. MedStar has a four-day program for leaders to complete during their 18 months in role—in two parts. The program is a highly

successful program, and the organization is thriving in a competitive industry. Some unique aspects / highlights of the program, as it is administered at MedStar:

- The course forces you to “bring your whole self to work.” It requires leaders to talk about topics such as balance and spirituality in the workplace.
- Leaders in the program make a declaration, “I will focus on _____” and commit to focusing on one of the six dimensions. They also write a letter to their “future selves” that arrives by mail 90 days later.
- Leaders choose an accountability partner and work together to stay on track with the declaration of which dimension to focus on.
- Leaders write their own legacy. They reflect on and write down what they want to be remembered for.
- Leaders take a 360 assessment to help build self-awareness of how they show up against the dimensions.

Getting Started

- Think about your strongest and weakest dimensions. (During the book club meeting, we talked to a partner and identified them). Now, what will you do with this knowledge?

Related Resources

- [Blog post by Laura Mendelow](#)
- [Healthy Companies](#)
- New Book by Bob Rosen & Emma-Kate Swann. **Conscious: The Power of Awareness in Business and Life**

*The Chesapeake Bay Organizational Development Network (CBODN) Book Club is a monthly session, open to all learners. Each month, a presenter shares highlights from a book related to leadership, business, or coaching. There’s no obligation to pre-read the book. The session summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. [Register here](#) for upcoming events. For a listing of Book Club summaries, [click here](#).