

# FOLLOW THE LEADER — MORE THAN A KIDS' GAME

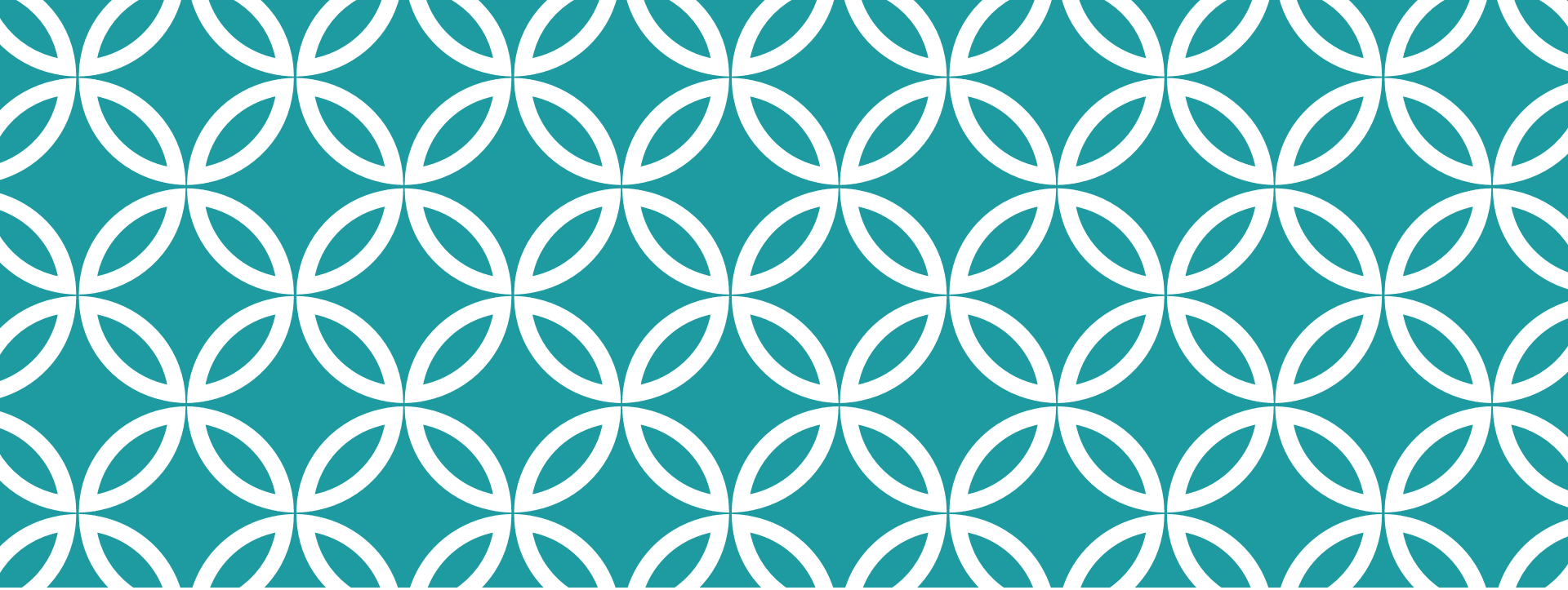
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## MY PERSONAL DISCLAIMER

# WHAT IS “FOLLOWERSHIP”?

- ✧ **Actions** taken by *an individual* under the authority of another
- ✧ Leadership depends on followership
- ✧ Followership is an essential component when explaining organizational outcomes
- ✧ Followership behaviors can be modified



WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT?



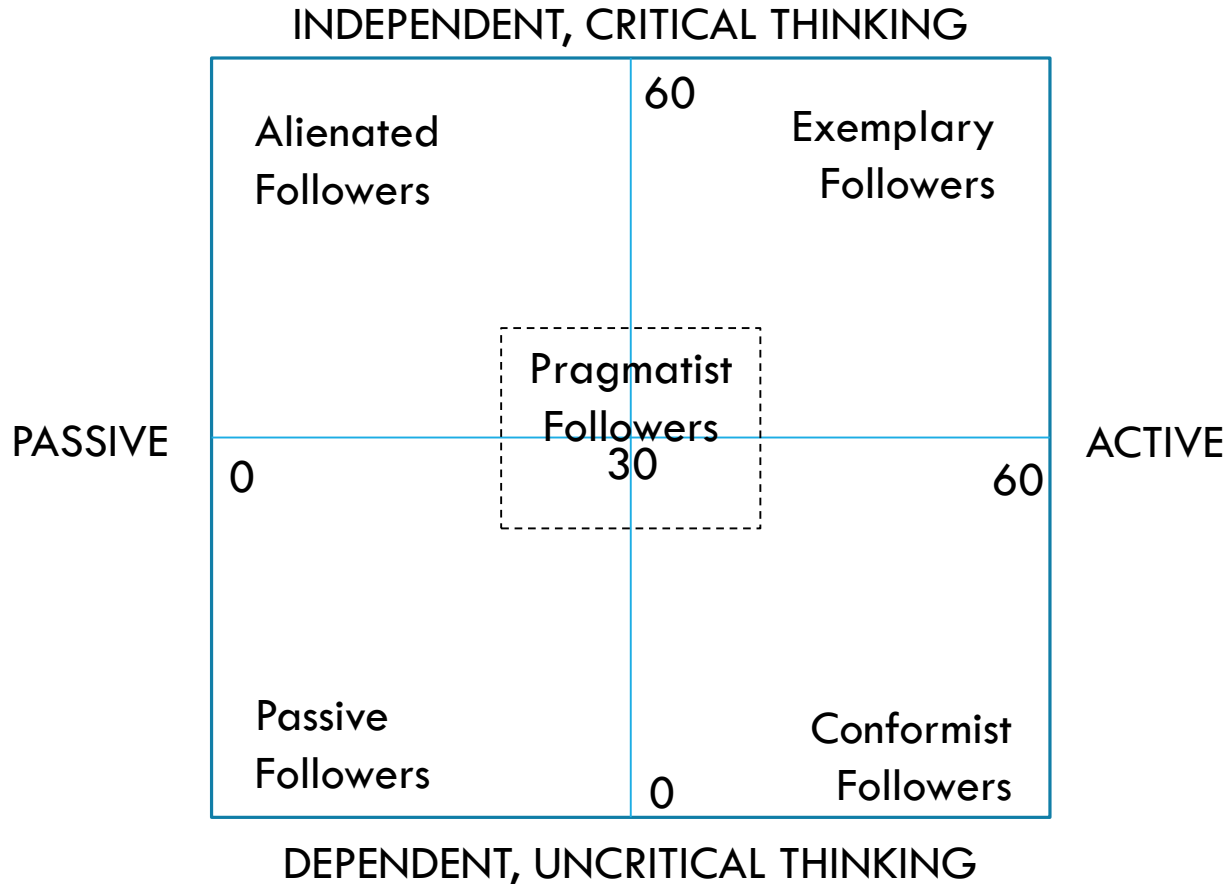
**OUR FOCUS TENDS TO BE ON LEADERS.**



**POOR EMPLOYEE-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIPS CAN MAKE  
PEOPLE STRESSED, CONFUSED, AND MISERABLE**

**WHAT KIND OF A FOLLOWER ARE YOU?**

# LET'S CHECK OUR RESULTS?





# 5 Followership Styles

## PASSIVE

Low  
Independent  
Thinking

Low Active  
Engagement

## ALIENATED

High  
Independent  
Thinking

Low Active  
Engagement

## CONFORMIST

Low  
Independent  
Thinking

High Active  
Engagement

## PRAGMATIST

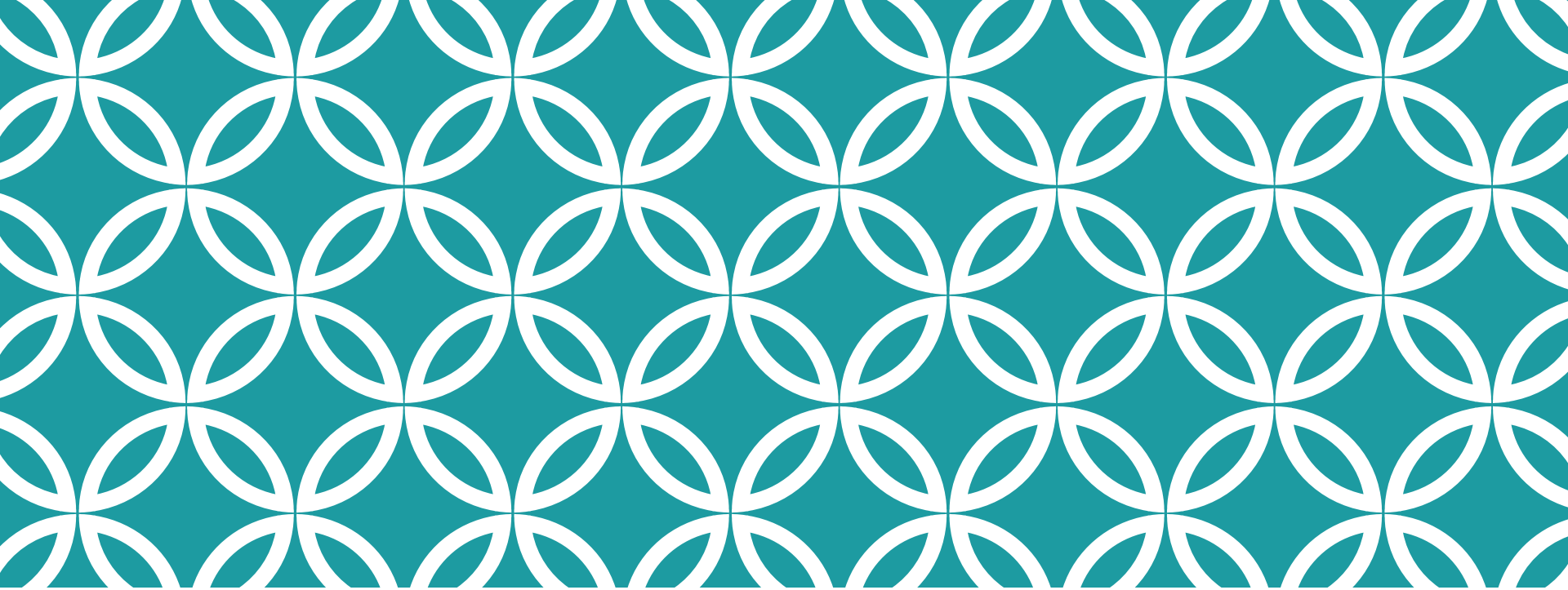
Middling  
Independent  
Thinking

Middling  
Active  
Engagement

## EXEMPLARY

High  
Independent  
Thinking

High Active  
Engagement



# STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING YOUR FOLLOWERSHIP SKILLS



# PASSIVE

## WHO THEY ARE:

- ❖ Tend to be the smallest group of followers
- ❖ Often lack initiative and a sense of responsibility
- ❖ Behavior usually isn't due to laziness or incompetence
- ❖ Tend to be individuals who haven't developed their follower skills

## STRATEGIES:

- ❖ Learn followership skills (communication, interest in the organization, adding value, etc.) – *More to come!*

# ALIENATED

## WHO ARE THEY:

- ❖ They think for themselves, but have a lot of negative energy
- ❖ Often started as Exemplary followers, but trust was broken
- ❖ Can undermine leaders efforts through their pessimism

## STRATEGIES:

- ❖ Focus on building trust (reliable, open, competent, compassionate)
- ❖ Resolve specific issues
- ❖ Reclaim your dreams – What's your why?
- ❖ Get a fresh start

# CONFORMIST

## WHO ARE THEY:

- ❖ Sometimes conforming can be easier and is often reinforced
- ❖ Conflict and taking unpopular stands are stressful and often avoided
- ❖ May compromise or overlook your needs

## STRATEGIES:

- ❖ Acknowledge that you are already a committed follower
- ❖ Evaluate other's ideas and generate your own
- ❖ Study the conflicts that your avoiding
- ❖ Understand your strengths and find a style that works for you

# PRAGMATIST

## WHO ARE THEY:

- ❖ Sitting on the fence and see which way the wind blows before getting on board.
- ❖ May know how to work the system to get things done
- ❖ May be perceived as selfish, mediocre enthusiasm, or bureaucratic

## STRATEGIES

- ❖ Find a goal that sparks your passion
- ❖ Build your reputation and restore people's trust in you – Ex. Help others accomplish their goals

# EXEMPLARY

## WHO ARE THEY:

- ❖ Independent and critical thinking – different from the group or boss
- ❖ Contributes regardless of the situation

## STRATEGIES:

- ❖ Have focus and commitment to something – Ex. cause, organization, mission
- ❖ Practice self-reflection – Ex. journaling, autoethnography
- ❖ Master the job - particularly at critical points to the work - Ex. customer service
- ❖ Have a good work ethic (build trust)
- ❖ Communicate well, especially when there are problems
- ❖ Care about your organization
- ❖ Learn about your supervisor's leadership and management style
- ❖ Increase your value to the organization

**OK, FINE.  
MY BOSS STILL SUCKS.**



# HERE'S THE THING:

- ❖ These practices still apply even with “bad bosses”.
- ❖ Being an Exemplary Follower protects you from any kind of blowback.
- ❖ No body does a better job when they are being abused.
- ❖ Try taking a pause when dealing with difficult situations.
- ❖ Figure out the line between disagreements vs. malfeasance.

**IF IT IS  
MALFEASANCE:**

**BE SMART ABOUT  
ILLEGAL,  
DANGEROUS,  
AND  
DISCRIMINATORY  
SITUATIONS.**



# THANK YOU!

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Slides are available at:

- [https://works.bepress.com/michelle\\_armstrong/](https://works.bepress.com/michelle_armstrong/)