Direct–Empower–Catalyze Pulse

Companion to Catalyst Leadership | *John Coné*

HOW TO USE A PULSE • For each question, ask: Am I confident, based on sufficient evidence, that I know the answer—and could explain my reasoning if challenged? You need not write out answers or complete a form. If your understanding is adequate for the stakes, act or carry the learning forward. If an important answer rests on assumption, is contradicted by evidence, or remains uncertain, investigate or use the full tool. For high-stakes decisions, briefly recording key assumptions may be useful.

Generative return is worth seeking where valuable and responsible, but not every action should be optimized for it. Protect immediate outcomes, safety, and legitimate accountability.

BEFORE CHOOSING HOW TO LEAD • What combination does this situation require?

Am I clear which answers or boundaries are known, urgent, high-consequence, or legitimately mine to specify? (DIRECT)

Can I identify where the outcome is clear enough for others to own execution—and whether they have genuine authority and resources? (EMPOWER)

Can I recognize where the answer must emerge through discovery, connection, experimentation, or learning? (CATALYZE)

Have I checked whether I am directing more than necessary—or asking people to discover what is already known and nonnegotiable?

If I need to Direct now, do I know what could later be Empowered or Catalyzed, and which boundaries must remain fixed?

Readiness check

Judgment: Sufficiently grounded to act / One important uncertainty to check / Use the full tool

Optional note (only if useful): _____

Full instrument: Direct–Empower–Catalyze Diagnostic

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