

NextGen Professionals Cohort







SESSION SIX

Build Your Professional Playbook

August 20, 2026

YELLIN GROUP

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NextGen | Session Six
Leadership Manifesto Capstone

Over the past four months, you've explored leadership from multiple angles. You've encountered new ideas, challenged assumptions, experimented with different approaches, and—hopefully—learned something meaningful about yourself along the way.

For our final session, we are not asking you to tell us everything you learned.

We're asking you to decide:
What will you do with what you've learned?

Your capstone is to create and present your own Leadership Manifesto—a personal declaration of what you believe, how you intend to lead, and the experience you want to create for the people around you.

What is a manifesto?

A manifesto is a declaration of beliefs, principles, and intentions.

It takes something that could remain abstract—an aspiration, a philosophy, a desired experience—and makes it tangible.

One well-known example comes from the Danish concept of hygge.

Hygge is often associated with warmth, comfort, connection, presence, and enjoying simple moments.



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OUR MANIFESTO

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You are human.
We are, too.
It's OK.



We are already impressed.



Your thoughts, opinions, and experiences are valued and held in confidence.



You are responsible for your own experience. We are responsible to you – not for you.



You belong here. If it's in your experience, you are ready for it and worthy of it.



Be fully present. This is your one and only life. Don't miss it.



Focus. Your brain has limits. Minimize the distractions.



Don't believe everything you believe. Curiosity is your currency. Stay thirsty.



Think forward. The problem deserves your attention. The solution deserves your energy. Everything is figureoutable.



You can change.
Your results can change.



You have a message and a style of delivering that message that hasn't been given to anyone else. Honor and protect that gift. No. Matter. What.

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YOUR CHALLENGE:

Create a Leadership Manifesto containing 5–10 principles that define the leader you choose to be.

Think of these principles as your leadership non-negotiables.

Not what a leadership book says.

Not what you think you are supposed to say.

Not what sounds impressive.

Not a list of corporate values.

What do YOU believe?

Consider what you believe about:

- People and human potential
- Trust and accountability
- Communication
- Growth
- Failure and mistakes
- Conflict
- Decision-making
- Change
- Belonging and developing others
- Pressure and difficult moments
- The responsibility that comes with leadership

MAKE IT YOURS

Avoid manifesto statements that could belong to almost any leader.

Instead of:
EMPOWERMENT
I believe in empowering my team.

Try:
DON'T STEAL THE STRUGGLE
If I continually solve people's problems for them, I shouldn't be surprised when they don't learn to solve problems.

Instead of:
COMMUNICATION
I believe communication is important.

Try:
NO SURPRISES
People should never have to guess where they stand with me.

THE NO-ONE-ELSE TEST

When you finish your manifesto, remove your name from it and read it again.

Ask: Could this manifesto belong to almost any leader?
If the answer is yes, you're not finished. Push deeper.
Make it personal enough that the people who know you would read it and say: "Yep. That's them."
Your manifesto should sound like you, not Human Resources.

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YOUR 10-MINUTE CAPSTONE PRESENTATION

You will have approximately 10 minutes to introduce your Leadership Manifesto. Do not simply put your manifesto on the screen and read it to us. Tell us the story behind it. Briefly introduce your full manifesto, then take us deeper into the 2–3 principles that matter most to you.

For each principle, help us understand:

WHY IS THIS ON YOUR MANIFESTO?

- What experience, challenge, success, failure, relationship, or lesson made this important to you?

HOW DID THESE FOUR MONTHS INFLUENCE IT?

- Connect the principle to a session, concept, conversation, experiment, piece of feedback, realization, or moment from the cohort.
- What changed or became clearer for you?

WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN IT SHOW UP?

Tell us about a real leadership situation.
- What happened?
- What did you do?
- What did you learn?
- What would the version of you from four months ago have done differently?

WHAT WOULD WE SEE IF YOU WERE LIVING IT?

Turn the belief into behavior.
- How would your employees, peers, customers, family, or colleagues know this principle is genuinely part of your leadership?
- What would they see you doing differently?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ARRIVED

Your manifesto is not a declaration that you have mastered leadership. It is not a list of things you already do perfectly. Leadership development doesn't end because the cohort does. Your manifesto can include the leader you already are and the leader you are still becoming. It's OK to say: "This matters to me, and I'm still working on it."

A manifesto is not a declaration of perfection. It is a declaration of intention.

END WITH ONE LEADERSHIP PROMISE

Finish your presentation by completing this sentence with one promise:
THE PEOPLE I LEAD CAN COUNT ON ME TO _____.

What is the one thing you want the people you lead to be able to hold you accountable for?
If we remember nothing else from your presentation, what do you want us to remember about the leader you choose to be?

THE REAL TEST

Four months from now, will someone experience you differently because of what you learned? Your manifesto is your opportunity to decide what you want that experience to be.

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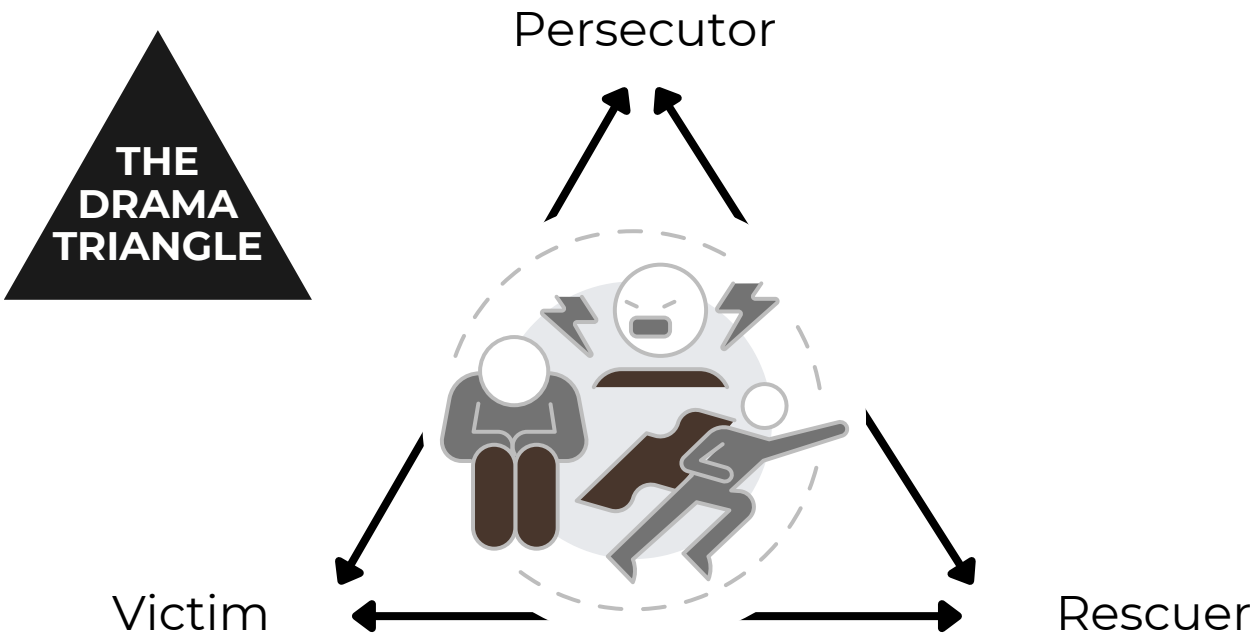
The Drama Triangle







Victim ➜ Creator	Persecutor ➜ Challenger	Rescuer ➜ Coach
New belief: Where a problem exists, the solution exists.	New belief: People's choices make sense to them.	New belief: People are whole, resourceful, and capable.
Ask: "What action can I take?" and "What else?"	Ask: "What do I want?"	Ask: "How can I help?"

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GROW Conversations

Goal:

State the goal of the conversation. State a goal that is compelling to everyone involved. State the goal in the positive.

- What is the perfect outcome?
- What is the ultimate goal for this conversation?
- What outcome would you like to create through this conversation?

Reality:

Allow everyone to share what he or she is experiencing. Fearlessly and objectively discuss the current situation. The purpose is not to reach agreement on reality but rather to establish there is a gap between where we are and where we need to be.

- Where are you now?
- What's holding you/us back?
- What are you experiencing?
- What are current costs/struggles/frustrations?
- What assumptions are you making?
- What are your expectations and needs?

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Options:

Collaboratively explore options to close the gap between the reality and the goal.
(If you are their leader, set clear performance expectations.)

- What are all of our options?
- What ideas do you have?
- What haven't you tried?
- What can you do differently?
- What has worked in the past?
- What are your non-negotiables?

Way Forward:

Decide on the best options and clearly communicate the next steps, responsibilities, and timeline.

Set a follow-up conversation.

- What option(s) make the most sense?
- Who will do what?
- What resources will you need?
- How do you hold each other accountable?
- When can you have a follow-up conversation?

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Build Your Professional Playbook

KEY CONCEPTS

- Manifesto
- Drama Triangle
- GROW

LAB TESTED

One thing I will try is:

I will try it when:

I will know it's working if:

If I forget or struggle, I will:

My next step is:

I will check in with _____ on _____ by text email call.
Name of partner date circle one

Partner's contact information: _____

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