

**SECTION 10**

# Participant Pages

*The Square*



**SouthBrook**  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## **SECTION 10:**

# THE SQUARE

**(NUMBERS 43-45 IN “52 WEEKS OF HUDDLES”)**

Jacob, my son, was fired up about his new yo-yo.

He had been working with his old yo-yo, the cheap, plastic kind you can find in any toy section of a Walmart or Kroger. He was getting pretty good, but he had just about maxed out the rudimentary yo-yo's capabilities and needed an upgrade. So Jacob had gone to a hobby store and purchased a *real* yo-yo, with metal, gears, and ultra smooth glide. Planet Earth was about to see tricks never before imagined.

I was at the stove making dinner when he came bounding into the kitchen with his new purchase. “Wow, cool bud!” I said, as I helped him take it out of the plastic and tied a loop in the string for his finger. “Now bud, remember, this is isn't like that old yo-yo. This thing is going to really glide, and it takes a special touch to get it to come back up. And you've got to throw it straight down or it will spin out.” I demonstrated a couple of times.

His response to my manifold yo-yo wisdom was as expected. “Yeah, yeah dad, I know. Can you please just give it to me?”

“Of course, son. Here.” Smiling, I handed him his yo-yo and went back to cooking.

A few minutes later, there were tears. Jacob was ready to smash his new prize and throw it in the trash. “It's not working!”

I stopped what I was doing and turned around, giving Jacob my full attention. I put my hand on his shoulder. “What's wrong, bud?”

“It won't come back up and it keeps spinning out! I HATE this thing!”

With as much empathy as I could muster, I said, “I'm sorry, buddy. I get mad at inanimate objects that don't obey me, too.” I was serious. “How 'bout we go into the living room and practice together a few times? We'll see if we can get it.”

“I don't want to try anymore. I just want to throw it away.”

“I know, buddy. Remember, though, this is a very special yo-yo. It's not for beginners. It's going to take some getting used to, and that's okay. I really think you can get it after a bit more practice. Remember all those videos on YouTube you saw of people doing tricks? Give it a little more time, and you'll be able to do some of those same things.”

He agreed to give it another go, and we headed to the living room. I put the yo-yo loop around Jacob's finger, but then wrapped my own hand around his. “Let's see if we can throw this yo-yo down together, and get it to come back up.” For the next few minutes, Jacob held the yo-yo, but I did most of the work. I would throw it down, keeping his hand in mine then jerk the string so it would come back up. “Do you feel how that's working?”

“I think so,” he said.

“Great. Do you want to try it without me holding now?”

After a couple of tries, Jacob was getting the yo-yo to come back up, with only a couple of spin-outs in between. I continued to discuss tactics with him. “That's great, buddy.

Now, what if you try leaving it down a while longer? Remember to throw it down really straight.” The yo-yo was really starting to whirl now, as he left it down for longer and longer periods. He was even learning to wind it more quickly when it did spin out. “You’re really getting this son. Do you think you’re ready to try a trick?” Jacob landed some simple tricks he had seen on YouTube, like “Around the Corner,” and “the Creeper.” He was picking things up quickly now—much faster than I thought he would.

“Dad, can I borrow your phone? I want to watch more videos.”

“Sure, bud. If you need me, I’ll be finishing up dinner. Come and show me when you learn something new.” I headed back to the kitchen.

Every few minutes over the next hour or so, Jacob would bound into the kitchen. “Hey dad, watch this.” Jacob would then perform another new trick I had never done or even seen before. “Wow buddy, that’s crazy! How did you learn how to do that? Nice work!” I was now the proud father of a yo-yo aficionado.

Now, before you laud the success of my parenting tactics in the yo-yo story too highly, let me tell you two things.

One, that is NOT how every parenting moment goes in my house. The yo-yo incident just happened to be one of the better ones.

Two, the reason this instance ended in a win was simply because I chose to take a page out of Jesus’ playbook on how to train people to do new things.

## APPRENTICES AND MASTERS

A disciple is someone who *knows* Jesus and learns to *be* and *do* like Him. Over the course of about three years, Jesus intentionally built relationships with twelve “apostles.” He taught them to see and think like Him and trained them to do all of the things He could do. He taught them to pass the same things onto a new generation once He was gone. His disciples embodied both His *character*, and his *competencies*—so much so that if you read the miracles and teachings recorded in the book of Acts, and cover up the names, you might think it was Jesus doing them. The Rabbi had trained new rabbis.

How did he do it?

This is an extremely important question if we’re going to take seriously Jesus’ final command to His disciples: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus has placed the responsibility making disciples of all nations squarely on His disciples’ shoulders.

In order for this to happen, our definition of “disciple” must include being a disciple *maker*, or else we will never get there. The learners must become the instructors. The baptized must baptize. The apprentices must become the masters. We need to make disciples, who can make disciples...who can make disciples—just like Jesus. We can’t just grow by addition and expect to fulfill the Great Commission. We need to learn to multiply.

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<sup>1</sup> The Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, emphases mine.

For this, Jesus is *with us*. He shares His authority and power with us. The grace to make disciples is available to us through His empowering Spirit.

The problem is, many of us either don't *believe* we can do it, or we do, and just haven't figured out how.

My friend, Robby, the leader of a fairly well-known ministry in Dayton, recently shared his frustrations with trying to get the guys he was leading to lead others. "I was leading a bunch of men once a week, helping them with their struggles and addictions. I told them, 'Hey, I'm gonna do this with you guys for a while, and then I want you to turn around and do the same thing out there for some other guys.' Well, after like ten weeks, I said, 'Okay, it's your turn to give it a shot.' They just stared at me. None of them even attempted to help another struggling person like I was helping them. They just wanted to stay in their comfort zone and keep coming to me."

Some of us can relate to Robby. Maybe we've taken the lead, genuinely wanting to challenge and inspire others to new places in their faith, but it hasn't turned out like we hoped.

Some of us can relate to the men in his group. We're happy to show up, help out and make some changes in our lives, but when that next level of challenge comes, we think, "You want me to do *what?*"

How did Jesus do it?

Surely Jesus' disciples battled some of the same fears and doubts Robby's men did. How did he help them move beyond the doubts and fears? How did He equip them to not only lead other followers, but to equip new leaders to do the same?

A study of the gospels reveals at least four different types of leadership Jesus offered as He guided His disciples along their journey from beginners to multipliers. Those four kinds of leadership, along with the phases his disciples went through, are expressed in Ken Blanchard's Situational Leadership Model, and adapted into a tool we call the Leadership Square<sup>2</sup>. It is one of our tools for **Support**, as we use it to train other Christ-followers to do new things—especially to be and make disciples. And not only is it useful for training Christ-followers to do new things; it's a useful tool in business, in the family, in education, and virtually anywhere else people need to master new skills.

## THE SQUARE

Whenever someone learns a new thing, they generally pass through four phases on their journey to mastery. The path of the learner or "Disciple," is represented by the "D" phases of the Square.

For each of those "D" phases the learner experiences, there is a corresponding type of leadership that works best to lead that learner through that phase. These different types of leadership are represented by the "L" phases on the Square.

Let's take a look at each of these learning phases, and the corresponding leadership that works best to help them move onto the next phase.

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<sup>2</sup> These leadership phases were made into a square by Mike Breen from 3dm.

## L1/D1

When Jacob came bounding into the house that night with his new yo-yo, he was in the first stage of the learner:

### D1 UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE

D1 is when we don't know what we don't know. The endeavor is new. It's the honeymoon phase. Often it's marked by excitement, anticipation, and maybe some nervousness about starting a new thing.

For Jacob, getting that shiny new yo-yo home and out of the package and throwing it down the first few times was D1. He was excited and confident he'd get the hang of it. He would be doing tricks in no time. He wasn't thinking much at all about having to deal with the yo-yo not coming back up or spinning out. He didn't know those things would become problems.

When a person is just starting out, in D1, the most effective kind of leadership a leader can offer is L1 leadership.

## L1 DIRECTIVE LEADERSHIP | "I DO, YOU WATCH."

How does an aspiring doctor learn how to remove an appendix? I sure hope it starts with hearing from and watching someone who already knows how to do it! It would be unfair and dangerous to hand that novice a scalpel, step back, and say, "figure it out."

When people are in D1, they don't really know what they're doing yet. They need to see and hear how to do it. A person in D1 needs a *directive* leader; someone to offer direction and vision; someone to say, "Here's the plan. Here's where we're headed." The mantra of the L1 Leader is, "I do, you watch."

When Jacob was starting out, I simply took the yo-yo, explained a few things, and demonstrated for him how I use one. After listening with rapt attention (that's a joke), Jacob grabbed the yo-yo, not knowing yet what he didn't know. The rest of D1 was about him finding out.

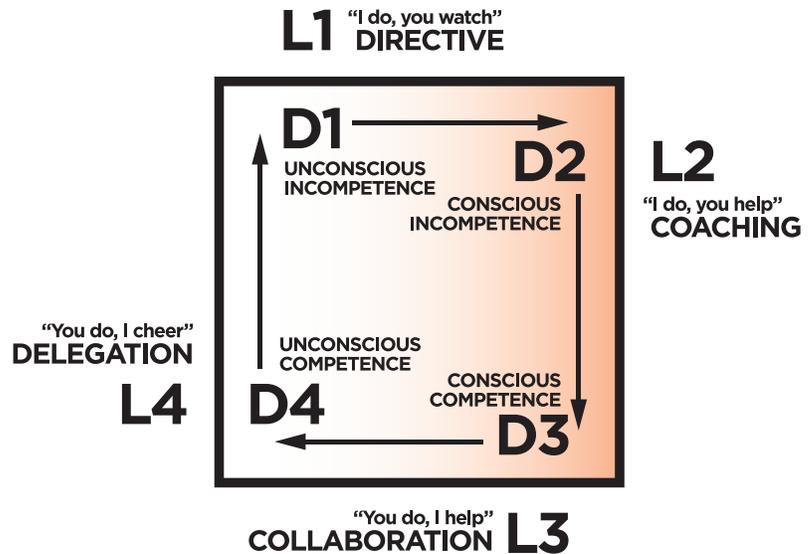
And then, he fell right off the D2 cliff.

## L2/D2

Jacob's frustration with the yo-yo indicated he was moving to the next phase of learning:

### D2 CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE

D2 is when we realize and experience what we don't know. The honeymoon is over. The



initial excitement has worn off. Challenges we hadn't foreseen surface. We realize we don't have the skills or know-how we thought we did. Our confidence and enthusiasm may plummet.

Jacob, like many of us when we hit D2, was tempted to quit. He was discouraged and angry that he couldn't make the yo-yo work. He wanted to blame the yo-yo for not working correctly. He wished he could just skip this part, and since he couldn't, he wanted to throw his yo-yo in the trash.

D2 is generally not the preferred phase of the learner, but it is extremely important. D2 makes us aware of our weaknesses, and reveals where in our lives we need to trust God. If we embrace D2 as an opportunity to grow rather than giving up, we will come out of it more dependent on Him.

## **L2 COACHING | "I DO, YOU HELP."**

When Jacob hit D2, the change in him was pretty obvious. It was time to change my leadership style. I needed to make the switch to L2 Leadership: That of a *coach*.

A coach is someone who walks beside someone through the D2 valley, helping him or her through it. Three things are crucial to offer the person in the D2 pit:

- 1. Time**—Extra space in our schedules needs to be made for that individual so we can listen, empathize, and help her or him process. For Jacob, that meant me turning from my cooking and giving him my full attention so I could meet him in his frustration.
- 2. Vision**—It's easy for a person to forget why he or she ever started this thing to begin with, once one has sunken into D2. An L2 leader needs to help that person remember why one got into this in the first place, and where one can end up if one keeps moving forward. I had to remind Jacob of the tricks he saw people doing, and how, if he kept at it, he would get there, too.
- 3. Grace**—The person needs to know it's okay; that they are loved, God is with them, and they're not alone in their struggle. We struggle, too. I let Jacob know that I get angry at inanimate objects that don't obey me, too and that this yo-yo is no easy thing to master, and that it's okay for it to take a while. He's doing great and I love him.

The mantra of the L2 Leader is "I do, you help." The leader isn't just instructing anymore. The disciple has an active role in his or her learning. At some point, the doctor tells the resident, "Okay, now you hold these clamps while I cut out the appendix."

Jacob wasn't ready for "I do, you help" right away. He needed to take the yo-yo and find out for himself what he didn't know. Many of us are like that.

Once he did, he was willing to receive some coaching. That's when I put the yo-yo in his hand, wrapped my own hand around his, and started throwing it down. I was still doing most of the work, but he had an active role and was experiencing the feel of successful yo-yo tosses.

After a couple minutes, I turned the yo-yo over to him again. Mistakes were still present, but he saw the hope of a better future. His competency started to grow.

## L3/D3

Jacob's growing skill with the yo-yo showed he was close to the next phase of learning:

### D3 CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

D3 begins when we start to get the hang of it. It's not quite natural or automatic yet; we still need to think or talk ourselves through the steps to achieve success. But our competence is growing along with our confidence.

Jacob did some of his processing out loud. "Okay, so I need to hold the yo-yo like this... hand like this...and then straight down...ok, slight jerk...". Successful tosses and even some tricks became more frequent.

I didn't need to hold Jacob's hand anymore—literally or figuratively. I needed to once again adjust my leadership style.

### L3 COLLABORATION | "YOU DO, I HELP."

At some point, as the resident grows in confidence and competence, the surgeon begins to hand more significant portions of the operation over to the resident. The surgeon is taking on the role of a collaborator (or co-laborer).

A good L3 leader begins handing more and more responsibility over to the disciple, as the leader's own confidence in the disciple grows alongside the disciple's competence. The leader empowers the learner to help in the decision-making process. Rather than just giving the answer, the leader *discusses* with the learner, helping them to find and choose solutions. Sometimes the leader will put a task completely in the hands of the learner, and discuss afterward how it went. The mantra of the L3 leader is, "You do, I help."

A few minutes after I gave the yo-yo back to Jacob, He didn't have much need for me to direct him anymore, and he didn't need me to do most of the work. My posture changed from, "Hey, you can get this," to "What if you tried *this*?" My role was to simply fan that flame, and get out of the way.

## L4/D4

As Jacob grew more and more competent, he moved to the last phase of learning:

### D4 UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

D4 is when a skill becomes almost automatic; we hardly need to think about it at all. We can always still improve and learn of course, but our execution has become natural, unconscious. Our experience and confidence have grown along with our mastery.

Good free-throw shooters don't have to think through their shot; they have practiced their mechanics over and over again. They just shoot the ball.

Once we really master the skill of driving stick, we don't need to walk through the mental steps of pushing in the clutch and shifting. We just do it.

The resident, once fully trained, is competent in his or her precision and pressure with the scalpel. The resident becomes the surgeon.

For Jacob, the yo-yo started to become like an extension of his arm. He didn't even need to think about the correct amount of force to use to pop the yo-yo back up to his hand; the gesture was automatic, natural. He mastered some tricks to the point where he probably could have done them with his eyes closed.

Once again, it was time for me to adjust my leadership style.

## L4 DELEGATION | "YOU DO, I WATCH (CHEER)."

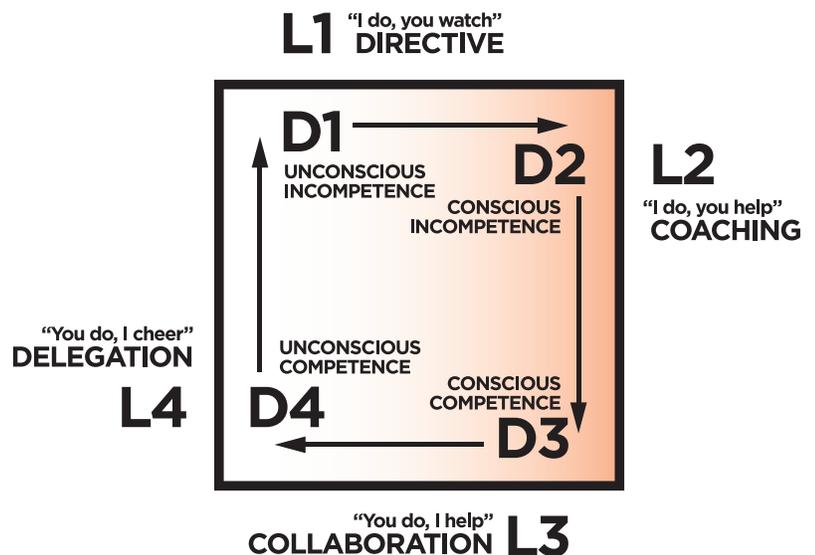
Jacob needed my help with the yo-yo less and less. He didn't need me to ask him questions or suggest different moves he could try. If he should need more help, or if want to dialog about yo-yo-ing some more, I would be there. But it was time for me to release him. He was now able to take it on his own. It was time for me to embrace the mantra of the L4 leader: "You do, I cheer." I headed back to the kitchen to finish up dinner, and when he came in the room to show me something new, I was his biggest fan.

Attentive L4 leaders recognize the growing competence in their learner and discern when it is time to empower or challenge the learner to leave the nest. This can be difficult for a leader; it can be hard to let go. We've made an investment in a learner, and seen the results. It feels good to see the learner succeed, and we want to continue to be a part of it. Sometimes the learner doesn't want to leave the nest either. The relationship with the leader can become cozy and familiar. But there are some life lessons that will only be learned once something is delegated and released. If we keep holding on, we will stifle that learner's growth. It's in delegating and releasing that the apprentice becomes the master, and the disciple becomes the rabbi.

## JESUS AND THE SQUARE

I remember learning the principles and phases of the Leadership Square a number of years ago. I read that this method simply reflected how Jesus trained His disciples, and I acknowledged the scripture references given. I took the author's word for it.

Then I read *The Harmony of the Gospels*,<sup>3</sup> and I saw it everywhere. The Square is simply a tool that visually conveys how Jesus trained his disciples to become rabbis.

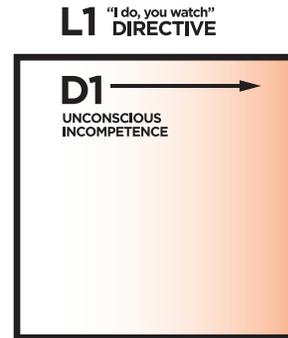


<sup>3</sup> A Harmony of the Gospels by Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry is a compilation of all four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, side by side, in chronological order. It allows the reader to compare gospel accounts and helps the reader piece together the full written story of Jesus.

Consider this *much*-abbreviated description of Jesus' and His disciples' walk around the Square:

**D1:** Some of Jesus' closest disciples, first heard about Jesus from John the Baptist. When John pointed him out, they were full of excitement. They knew He was special. They saw His first miracles and marveled. When Jesus asked them to follow him, the disciples responded enthusiastically, leaving their fishing nets behind. They knew their lives were about to change, but they had NO IDEA what was in store for them.

**L1:** Jesus' first command to his disciples was "Come, and you will see"<sup>4</sup> (Notice how close this is to "I do, you watch"!). It was an invitation to both join Him, and to watch Him live. He showed them His miracles and modeled a kingdom life. Later, Jesus offered a more challenging command: "Come follow me, and I will make you fisher's of men." Notice how Jesus' statements, along with others he made at this stage, were very *directive*. He didn't ask the disciples what they thought they should all do. This was not a democracy. Jesus was inviting them into his life to learn from Him.



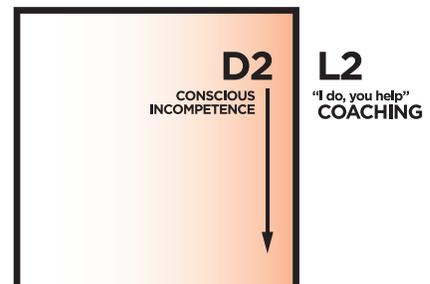
**D2:** The disciples began to experience discouragement, fear, and failure. Everywhere they went, Jesus was doing miracles—but He was also making lots of people extremely angry.<sup>5</sup> These threats from others caused the disciples to think of misappropriating the power Jesus had granted them to call fire down from heaven and hurt people, for which Jesus rebuked them.<sup>6</sup> They struggled to understand his stories, comments, and miracles<sup>7</sup>. They experienced failure as they bickered about who was the greatest.<sup>8</sup> They became more acutely aware of the cost of following Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

**L2:** Like the good shepherd He is, Jesus coached His disciples through the D2 valley. He spent an enormous amount of *time* with them, including Sabbath days and retreats. He offered them *vision*, reminding them how, if they stayed the course, it would all be worth it.<sup>10</sup> He offered them reassuring words of *grace*:

*"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

*"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."<sup>11</sup>*

It was during this time that Jesus began to give his disciples a significant stake in the ministry. He had them baptize people.<sup>12</sup> He asked them to pass out fish and bread, as he did the miracle, and asked them to clean up afterward. He even empowered *them* and sent *them* to do some of the very miracles he was doing, proclaiming the kingdom as they went. Jesus was transitioning from doing most of the work to handing more and more over to His disciples.



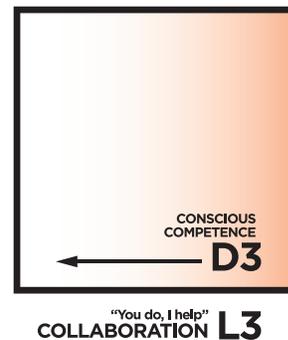
<sup>4</sup> John 1:39 <sup>5</sup> Matthew 12 reveals four instances of Jesus working against the religious and cultural currents to establish His kingdom, and some of the reactions people had to this. <sup>6</sup> Luke 9:51-56 <sup>7</sup> Mark 8:14-21  
<sup>8</sup> Matthew 9:33-37 <sup>9</sup> Matthew 19:27,28-30 <sup>10</sup> Matthew 19:28-30 <sup>11</sup> Matthew 11:28 <sup>12</sup> John 4:2

**D3:** As Jesus handed more of the work of driving out demons, healing the sick, and proclaiming the kingdom of God over to them, his disciples continued to grow in their competence and understanding. Their times with Jesus and one another had become familiar and comfortable. They understood more and more of what Jesus had been saying all along. “D3” can be seen no more clearly than in the account of Jesus celebrating the Passover with them in the upper room, and his walk with them to Gethsemane, right before his capture.<sup>13</sup> Take a look at this comment from the disciples:

*“Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need anyone to ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”* —John 16:29-30

The disciples were getting it. They by no means had arrived, and indeed would continue to learn for the rest of their lives, but they were living more and more like Jesus.

**L3:** Jesus continued to hand over more and more responsibility to His disciples. He still taught the crowds, but His disciples had a significant hand in the work. He continued to spend lots of time with them. He began treating them more and more as co-laborers, sharers in the work of His Father’s kingdom. He even called them *friends*, letting them in on *everything* His Father had given him to do.



*“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”* —John 15:15

**D4:** Jesus’s ascension into Heaven would be the ultimate test of whether or not the disciples were now equipped to continue the work. Would they make it? Was Christ-likeness a big enough part of them that they would be able to carry on the movement and pass His message, life, and practices onto others?

The answers are found near the end of the gospels and the book of Acts. We see the disciples praying together as Jesus taught them, loving their neighbors, doing miracles in Jesus’ name, and preaching the good news to others, often traveling far to do so. They equipped the next generation to do the same, setting the pattern for the future church. Paul writes, *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”* —2 Timothy 2:2

Ultimately, the majority of Jesus’ original twelve disciples were killed, as Jesus was—proclaiming the truth of His death and resurrection. The word Christian means “little Christ,” and that’s what His disciples had become—not by their own power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in them.

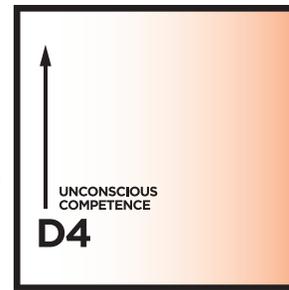
**L4:** As the time drew near for Jesus to release and delegate the work to His disciples, He began telling them He was *physically* going to leave, (though He was sending His Spirit to be with them always, as He is for every believer). *“Do not let your hearts be troubled,” He said. “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?”* After His resurrection,

He still came around, but less often. He appeared to them in homes, on beaches, and at mealtimes. But then he would leave for a period of time. He was helping them get used to the idea of Him physically not being around.

Finally, He fully released them. Jesus came to them and said, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, GO and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.”* Shortly thereafter, He rose into the Heavens. He now would lead them, and each of us, through the person and work of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, cheering us on from the best seat in Heaven. As Rich Mullins sang,

“All of the way my Savior leads me,  
And He cheers each winding path I tread.”

“You do, I cheer”  
**DELEGATION**  
**L4**



## USING THE SQUARE

The Square can be applied wherever we need to train or multiply people to do what we can do. It is helpful to know the different phases both to understand where we are and what we need as learners, and what is most helpful to offer as leaders.

Take parenting for example. Really, parenting is just one big trip around the Square, with lots of little squares to navigate along the way. Our kids start off completely incapable of doing anything, including wiping their own tushes (D1). They eventually start learning to eat, use the potty, talk, relate to friends, read, and do math. All of this is a messy, difficult process that culminates in puberty where their bodies change and everything is awkward (all part of D2). Eventually, they start figuring out who they are, how to make their own meals, and what they might want to do after high school; you can even leave them at home for chunks of time without them burning the house down (D3). Tension can often arise in the house, as the kids feel they are ready for more freedom, and parents aren't so sure! But finally, one day, they move out, whether to college or to an apartment, to try life on their own (D4).

Parenting, as with any training endeavor, calls for wisdom from the parent, the leader. We need to ask, “Where is my child on the Square? What type of leadership is appropriate here?” Offering the wrong kind of leadership can be very counter-productive. Consider the frustration for a 17 year-old boy, who's perhaps in D3 on his journey to adulthood, who is still being led by a parent stuck in L1 — micromanaging him, constantly telling him what to do, and not giving him responsibility for any life decisions. Even with the best of intentions, we can hinder our kids' growth.

Discipling others through our vehicle called “huddle” is much the same. We're not just leading a group to grow in Christ together; we're also training future disciple-makers. Like Jesus' group, there will be times that participants will struggle. Some may be tempted to quit. Some will forget the vision of discipleship. Some will feel like there is NO WAY they

will be able to lead others like we are leading them. In all these things, we can take heart. As Mark Yaconelli, a youth ministry guru once wrote, "If you have a group of 12 [people] who don't understand your illustrations and one of them wants to kill you, you have a [group] just like Jesus."

For more on how you can utilize the Square as a huddle leader, check out *The Coach's Playbook: A Guide to Leading a Huddle* pages 10-12. These pages give two specific examples of how you can utilize the Square to prepare and train your participants to lead others in a discipling context.

Multiplying disciples may sound daunting, but let's remember it was God's idea. He wants us to succeed because it is His work. He is with you, and the power and resources of His kingdom are behind you. As we emulate the Master, Jesus, calmly offering ourselves to His work in His way, we will experience Him working through us to play a part in fulfilling His commission to make disciples of all nations.