

The

**ENGINEERING CAREER COACH**

HELPING ENGINEERS SUCCEED  
IN WORK AND LIFE

**The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST**  
**SESSION #64**  
**Engineering Leadership with Pat Sweet**

Show notes at: [TECCPodcast.com](http://TECCPodcast.com)

**Episode Intro:** This is *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, the only podcast dedicated to helping engineers succeed in work and life. This show is hosted by engineering enthusiasts, Anthony Fasano and Chris Knutson. Both are professional engineers who found success early in their careers and now work together to help other engineers do the same. Now, it's show time!

**Anthony:** Hello! This is Anthony Fasano and this is the show for engineers who want to succeed in both work and life. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to help you and your engineering career through this podcast and also through our website at [engineeringcareercoach.com](http://engineeringcareercoach.com).

In today's episode, I'm going to do something a little bit different. I'm going to take you inside **The Engineering Career Summit**, which is the event that my partner, Christian and I threw in Washington DC early May and will be throwing again next May in New Orleans, Louisiana. We are excited about that. We planned to make this an annual event focused on helping engineers develop both personally and professionally. We feel that there is a need for that in the engineering industry.

So, in today's episode, I'm going to play for you shortly an audio recording of one of **The Engineering Career Summit** sessions. This session was entitled 'Engineering Leadership' and was given by Pat Sweet, who actually appeared on this show as a guest in Episode 28 talking about crafting meaningful emails for engineers. Pat Sweet is a Professional Engineer working in Ontario, Canada as a product manager in the rail industry. He's also the author behind the Engineering and Leadership blog at [engineeringandleadership.com](http://engineeringandleadership.com), where he shares his thoughts and experiences on leadership, productivity and different career strategies for engineers. It's an excellent blog. You should check that out.

But the session you are about to hear was a very interesting session that Pat gave at the Summit. In fact, in the beginning of the session when you hear it, he pulls the engineers in the audience as to ask them what leadership is and I thought that some of the definitions of leadership were really interesting. One that stood out was, and you will hear this in the show here coming up, is that leadership is not management and he kind of gets into that. He did have some slides for his presentation but I don't think you need the slides at all. You can pretty much get all the information from the audio.

The

# ENGINEERING CAREER COACH

HELPING ENGINEERS SUCCEED  
IN WORK AND LIFE

So, it should be very valuable for you and I hope you enjoy it and also get a little bit of flavor of how powerful the event as a whole was. Before we get into the main segment of the show, I do want to take a moment to recognize our sponsor for today's episode.

Are you thinking about taking the FE Electrical and Computer Exam? If so, PPI just released a new review manual, an online review course for the FE Electrical and Computer Exam. To receive a special 15% off promo code, visit [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach). That's [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach). I'll have more information about PPI's FE exam resources a little later on in the show.

The show notes for today's episode will be located at [teccpodcast.com](http://teccpodcast.com). Look for Episode 64 and that's [teccpodcast.com](http://teccpodcast.com). The show notes will contain a summary of the key points discussed in today's episode, as well as links to any resources, websites or other books that might be mentioned during the episode. And again, that's [teccpodcast.com](http://teccpodcast.com). Look for Episode 64.

Alright. So with that, I'm going to dive right in here. I'm going to hand you over to Pat Sweet in his session and then I'll come back at the end of the show after Pat's done and I'll give you a very actionable piece of advice related to his topic of leadership that you can try out in your career today.

## Coaching Segment:

**Pat:** I'll just tell you a little bit about myself. Again, my name is Pat Sweet. I've been hard-schooled, working in industry for almost ten years now. The last four years, I've been in the rail industry. So, I started off as an electrical in an engineering industry working on vehicle systems so proportion rates all good stuff. And in the beginning of January, I started a new job as a product manager so it's kind of like my first forte into engineering management.

The whole idea there is that it's kind of moving a little bit into the evil side. It's kind of a marketing role, if I am totally honest with you. It's a neat mix between business and engineering. So, my job there is to take our systems and understand what does the market want in the rail systems we developed. For me specifically, I've developed monorail systems for variation in transportation. So anyway, the whole idea is to take a look on what does market want, where is technology headed and how can I invest in a product to develop it so that the market is still happy with the monorails we built.

So, that's a little bit about me. I'll probably share more about me later during the day or over coffee, whatever is going on. I am very happy to talk to the lot of you. So, just a few ground rules as we get started. First thing I'd like to mention is that this is a workshop. It's not a lecture, okay? So, if you have questions, raise your hand, shout, yell, whatever you go to do, that's fine. I'm a lot happier to have a conversation with you than I am to talk at you. Okay, that's not the idea here. If you got to stand up, move to coffee, water, bathroom, whatever, that's fine. Don't worry about that. Just go ahead and do it.

And I should apologize for my accent, okay? I'm told to have an accent. I'm from the east coast of Canada which kind of makes me a Canadian version of Honey Boo Boo. So, if there is something that I'm not speaking loud enough or I'm showing similar, let me know and I'll repeat it, honestly. And I'll try to leave some time at the end for discussion but if we don't get to answer a question you have or if something comes to you later on, write it down. Come find me. Email me. Again, come to me with coffee and/or beer and I'll be very happy to talk.

Before I move forward, everyone can hear me okay? See the screen? So, today's talk is going to be broken up into three parts. I want to talk about why leadership is important, what leadership is and what it is not, and then following that, a lot of talk about ways you could put leadership into practice, especially in an engineering context. So, that and my hope is that at the end of this, you're going to have a much better understanding about what leadership is and how you can actually use it in your careers. So, before I go any further, I'd like to ask you guys a question. Why is leadership important, especially in the engineering context? Why might leadership be important for engineers? Or is it not?

**Audience:** Leadership is important for direction...

**Pat:** Correct. So, it's important to get anything done right?

**Audience:** Certainly.

**Pat:** Yes, difference between moving and actually moving forward. Right? Someone needs to decide what forward looks like. Anything else?

**Audience:** Engineers and scientists tend to possess unique asset knowledge and then they have different opinions about how to drive that forward. And so, a leader or not situation can be very helpful to leverage those talents and at the same time, achieve a goal for the company or whatever he was working towards.

**Pat:** Right. Engineers are notorious for having brilliant ideas and everyone else's ideas less brilliant. And you should do what I want to do. Not that anyone here is like that, I'm sure. Okay? Everyone is very happy about everyone else's brilliant ideas. No, it's true. It's true. Absolutely, it's incredible to getting concision. Right? And having people move together as one unit. Does anyone think leadership is maybe not as important for engineers?

**Audience:** Well, that is what my research is going to find out, I hope.

**Pat:** Okay.

**Audience:** The janitorial research question I have is what would Sheldon want. And this is different from someone working in Walmart.

**Pat:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Audience:** My initial, I pulled a small group yesterday and they shared with me that they, I think they wanted a lot of the same things that everyone else does; respect, honesty, trust, autonomy; I think that might be why you need engineers. But well, I think maybe because engineers are intellectually more capable, they just are, they may see leadership is being in the way.

**Pat:** Okay, that's interesting. Interesting. And you hit on a couple of key terms there. I promise I didn't send her my presentation earlier. But, this is beautiful. So, there are couple reasons that I think leadership is especially important to engineering.

So, to answer the question. Yes, I absolutely think leadership is important for engineering and there is a couple of main points here. Leaders in general affect real change in the world around them. They help their organizations be more successful, profitable and sustainable and leaders end up having higher satisfaction in their careers. Even these benefits, to me, it's easy to see how leadership can be applied in an engineering context.

Engineering leaders design better products. They solve bigger problems and they inspire their colleagues to do the same. As I mentioned before, engineers are already in a unique position to change the world. The things we do literally change the world around us. So, an engineering leadership skills loves just that ability. Although that all being said, I'd like to go on some details now on what leadership is and what it isn't.

Well, leadership can be something of a fuzzy concept for engineers. We like our facts. We like our figures. Paradoxically, we are little bit more comfortable with second order different equations than with normal ideas like leadership. It's hard to wrap your arms around what leadership is. First, I'd like to talk some myths about leadership and what leadership is not. But before I do that, what is leadership? Anyone? What is leadership or what is leadership not? So, what do you think? You just have an awesome talk on leadership.

**Audience:** Leadership is not management.

**Pat:** Okay. Excellent. It's true. A 100% true. What else is leadership or what else is leadership not?

**Audience:** Leadership is visionary.

**Pat:** Yes!

**Audience:** You may be able to see the force.

**Pat:** Yeah. Excellent.

**Audience:** Respect.

**Pat:** Yeap. Very good ideas.

**Audience:** Leadership is leading when leading in the way that people who are being led don't feel like you're being led.

**Pat:** Hmm. That's a very interesting thought. And I'm going to get to that.

**Audience:** They think they are doing what they want to do.

**Pat:** Yeah. Okay. Hold that thought for about 20 minutes because I'm really glad you said that.

**Audience:** Getting people to work together toward a common goal or then even some have their wildest imagination.

**Pat:** Yes. So, there is some mission that you're working towards right?

**Audience:** Yeah.

**Audience:** Doing what needs to be done even when it's not comfortable...

**Pat:** Yeah! Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Audience:** And if they are not following, you're not leading.

**Pat:** There you go.

**Audience:** Leaders like to fight off people from within. Managers like to fight underneath most people.

**Pat:** I like that. I like that. I have never heard that before. That's excellent.

**Audience:** I don't know this is where you're going with it, maybe more of like gearing towards what makes a leader but to me, a leadership also would emphasize on the strength on the people they have and you're the best to minimize the differences as in not putting someone in the position where they can show their strengths.

**Pat:** That's right. They help people do the best work that they can do, right? They are not set up to fail.

**Audience:** I think you are right.

**Pat:** Right, right. Now listen, you guys could have given yourselves a talk but frankly, I didn't have to fly here but I'm very happy to be in Washington. So, I'd like to talk a little bit, first, what leadership is not. And you mentioned some of these already. First of all, leadership is not management, okay? These are two separate ideas. The two are related but they are different. We have all worked with leaders who did not have manager in the title. We have all worked for managers who had zero leadership ability.

I believe that the strongest managers are absolutely leaders and the two tend to go hand-in-hand, but you don't need to be a manager to be a leader. Alright. I forgot to mention that, I think that's something you point it out right away. Who here has a management position? Is anyone here a manager? Okay, excellent. Who here has a leadership role? Thank you. Okay. Some more hands go up and the same few hands. All the managers definitely absolutely have leadership roles. That's an important distinction to draw.

Leadership is not charisma. Well, many leaders are charismatic. Some of the greatest leaders are not charismatic people. Quite frankly, they are some awkward leaders out there. There is a really interesting story about a guy named Darwin Smith, who in 1971 became CEO of Kimberly-Clark. Kimberly-Clark at that point was kind of a perpetual loser. They couldn't do anything right. They hired Smith and there was a lot of tension there hiring Smith because he is not your typical leader. He is not a charismatic guy. He was shy, he was quiet and he was awkward. And he turned Kimberly-Clark into one of the best performing companies in the States. So, don't think of yourself, if you're not a boisterous, out-going Pat Sweet-kind of person, that's okay. That doesn't matter. Alright?

Leadership is not technical master. Now, having technical skills is, to my way of thinking, critical for being the leader in the world of engineering. You got to have your technical chops in line if anyone is going to respect you as a leader. But, having your technical chops does not make you a leader. It also doesn't make you engineering material, for that matter. I think we have probably also worked for managers who are fantastic engineers without a management bone in their body. Right?

Next and probably most importantly, leadership is not something you're born with. Leadership is a set of behaviors and a set of skills. And it can be learned, developed and perfected over time. Like any other skill, some things come more naturally to people than to others. Sure. But that doesn't mean that if you're not born with these skills, you can't develop them.

Finally, leadership is not something that is meant for senior professionals. Anyone here in this room with any position at any age at any stage in their career could be a leader. You don't have to have gray hair or you don't have to be losing your hair to be a leader. Okay? Very, very important.

With all these things in mind, my hope is that it's clear to everyone that leadership is available to everyone in this room and that it's important for everyone in this room. My hope is that by the end of the talk, you're going to be both motivated and equipped to take advantage of that fact. Now that we have discussed what leadership isn't, let's talk a little bit about what leadership is. I think part of the confusion over leadership is that they seem to be as many definitions of leadership as there are definers of leadership and that could be good and bad. And what I'd like to present are three ideas on leadership here.

Harold said that leadership is the art of getting people to want to do what you want them to do. They get excited about the mission and vision that you have. John Maxwell said that leader is someone who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. Maxwell has always been good for these sticky terms or phrases. I like that. And Peter Drucker, who is a management guru said that management is doing things right while leadership is doing things the right things.

Now, all these things definitely sound like leadership. Well, I think these all make perfect sense but at the same time, it doesn't really define leadership. These things kind of, they sound to me as though leadership is one of these things you know when you see it and it looks like this, but it still doesn't really define leadership,. So, what I want to do from here is move in to more concrete definitions. We can do better than just a couple of nice quotes. Just as engineers tend to build mathematical models to capture and describe natural phenomenon, scholars have built useful models to capture what leadership is.

So, there are two leadership models that I want to present today. There is a bunch of them. There is a slew of them that you have probably come across hundreds in your research. I wouldn't be surprised. These are two that I think can be useful to the group today. One is transformational leadership and the other is servant leadership. And I am going to go into some detail into both of these models of leadership now. Before I move further, does anyone have any questions? Everyone pleased, proud and happy to be here?

First, transformational leadership. It's pretty much exactly what it sounds like. It's about transforming the organization around you. Transformational leaders understands what needs to change in their world and in their organizations and inspire to motivate others to actually achieve that change. There are four key components to transformational leadership before the four I's; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. I think these are fancy words to say simple things they were just looking for four I words.

Idealized influence is just a fancy way to say, be a role model. Transformational leaders walk the talk and tend to be admired for that fact. Inspirational motivation, again, it's exactly what it sounds like. It's about inspiring and motivating others to take action to realize some mission or vision. Individualized consideration just means taking a genuine interest in people. Transformational leaders know the names of their co-workers kids, their favorite sport teams or they ask you, "Hey, how are you doing

today?” They actually mean it. They actually want to hear what you have to say. It’s not just something you kind of say as you walk past them in the hallway, “How are you doing?” They care about you as people, not just as co-workers or employees.

Finally, intellectual stimulation is the habit of encouraging others to be innovative and creative, often by being innovative and creative. So, a researcher named Bernard Bass who wrote that transformational leaders are able to earn trust, admiration and respect from the followers by putting these four I’s in place. If you look back to Harold’s quote about leadership being the art of getting people to want to do what you want them to do, that to me sums up what transformational leadership is about. Transformational leaders are able to get their followers to get excited and to work hard to achieve whatever mission or vision is established by the leader. Question for you guys: has anyone worked with or for someone who, yeah?

**Audience:** What is stimulated by research is that back in my engineering career, probably they had 50 to 60 managers and I don’t think even three of them meet these traits by...

**Pat:** When you say that, you mean all four or any of them?

**Audience:** Just transformational leaders. It only works, they’d feel like I could be better than myself. They are so rare but their benefit to the world is so indecisive and they are one of the primary reasons I am doing my research is to try to catalyze transformational leadership and technical leaders.

**Pat:** Right. Right.

**Audience:** Because when you meet one of these people, you know it.

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience:** And that is just the most curious thing. How does one become one of these?

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience:** It’s like they are in the world but they are not.

**Pat:** Well, in half an hour we have a room full of them. So, that’s...

**Audience:** Nice. That would be great. So, it’s just very rare. But yes, when you work for them, then you know it.

**Pat:** Has anyone felt that way like they knew they are working for someone like this or saw someone working, even if it wasn’t you...? Sure.



**Audience:** I have worked in a firm like this. It is very interesting because they are on the time that I worked there, he was getting up in age like looking towards a time machine. He was kind of stepping back and he can actually really see the effect. It kind of had a negative effect on his farm but at the same time, he knew and he had to do it while he still had the influence in everyone. It was really interesting to be there at that time. So, I didn't work directly for him but he could tell us when he walk around all of us, when he showed up just two days a week.

**Pat:** So, what was it about him? What of these four characteristics, what stands out to you?

**Audience:** He was just a guy that he wanted to go to like really, you could tell that he knew you on a deeply personal level. He knew like everybody that worked there, he knew stuff about you and he was like a reliable sources for himself. He was just a really hard worker. Not overly technical person, just a very good manager and just tireless worker and he wouldn't need to be told to have a project delivered.

**Pat:** I read an interesting article and I have a business review here a while back. And it had about technical confidence in an executive level management. Basically, what they said is that technical correspondence has to be there up to a point and then being world class expert after that doesn't really matter. There is a certain threshold and after that threshold, what really makes someone a fantastic manager or a fantastic leader is emotional intelligence, which is exactly what we talked about. This guy knew his whole company. Right? Small firm, big firm?

**Audience:** Like 50 people.

**Pat:** That's a lot of people to keep track of. Right?

**Audience:** Just to kind of go into what you said there. I was at a firm that, when I work in larger organizations they really want you to go through training to get all your skills up to a certain level and I always kind of felt that that was kind of juridical. True success for each one of us is that we need skills. What makes us great is what we do well. We have to bring all out. We have to bring everything to a certain level.

**Pat:** That's right.

**Audience:** And then accentuate and then really hone in those skills.

**Pat:** Ever read the *Strength Finder*?

**Audience:** Yeah.

**Pat:** Yeah, okay. So, for those of you who hadn't read it, I saw a lot of nodding. Has anyone not read it? Okay. It's a really interesting study and workbook. Author's name is Tom Rath and the theory basically goes that culturally, we spend an awful lot of time focusing on what we are terrible at. You're a bad public speaker. Go to Toastmasters. Learn to be better, whatever. You're a terrible engineer. Go learn to be an engineer.

Tom Rath says well, what if we focused on those things that we were really, really good at and made those better? Invest in those skills? Yeah, you can't be an engineer without like simple calculus. You kind of got to have that. But, if we spend our time thinking about what we are extraordinarily good at and invest in those, we will be even better. It will be easier to learn, easier to get better work. We have to put those skills to work. It's just life gets awesome which I think is, kind of the point you're making is that there is some minimum threshold. You have to know the basics. But after that, if you focus on, like if you're really passionate about...

**Audience:** And if you find yourself in the technical aspect.

**Pat:** You bet.

**Audience:** We learn the bare minimum communication skills. Learn to speak in a meeting, learn how to write, to transmit your ideas, really honing on the technical skills.

**Pat:** Yeap. Absolutely. I'm really glad you all bring that up. I'm really glad to hear that there are some examples of transformational leadership. The next model that I wanted to discuss a little bit is servant leadership. Servant leadership has been a theory that existed for thousands of years, quite frankly. But, it's become increasingly popular especially in corporate culture since the 60's. The fellow by the name of Robert Greenleaf was a management researcher who spent about four decades at AT&T. His job was to look at AT&T and help them understand. It's all management practices and to make it better. At the time, AT&T had a million people working for. It was huge. It was absolutely enormous, by far the largest company in the world. And his job was to look at it as his Petri dish. It was a really cool gig.

Anyway, what he came out of AT&T was with this essay called, The Servant Is Leader. Basically, he believed that there was a crisis of leadership in business, in academia, and in churches in America. And what he noticed was that leaders ultimately collect a lot of power and that power corrupts the leaders and makes them ineffective and if not, detrimental to the organizations they are meant to be leading.

His solution to that was what he called servant leadership. The theory is simple. The idea is that in servant leadership, the leader feels called to serve others first and that call to service brings them to decide to lead. So, service first, leadership follows. In servant leadership, the leaders subordinates themselves to others into the mission and vision that are greater than themselves. The servant leader

works hard to point followers towards that higher purpose and not to themselves.

So, you got to think the leader all of a sudden becomes the bottom of that typical higher pyramid. It's not the leader on top. The leader is on the bottom serving the needs of the people in the organization, facilitating them to achieve the mission and vision that's being set. It's not about, "Look at me. Look how great I am. Together you are going to help me become the greatest CEO ever."

No no no no. It's about what are we trying to accomplish as a group of people, which is normally some kind of a ultraistic thing, and making sure that there is no barrier between you being to accomplish that goal. It's a different way to look at leadership. Research has shown that servant leadership is identified as 9 key attributes and I think a lot of these you mentioned earlier. Yeah, you did. And a lot of these attributes are common sense.

Vision. Honesty. Integrity. Trust. Service, which is a little bit of a funny one in leadership which is the whole idea of being not interested in yourself, not interested in what you're trying to get out of leadership, being interested in what others are going to get out of your leadership. Pioneering is another, not a funny one but maybe a funny word for. It's just the ability to prepare the way towards a vision. Remember Maxwell's quote, leaders knows the way, show the way, and go the way? That's pioneering. They show appreciation of others and they empower others. They share their leadership. They share their power with others so that they can get the job done.

Servant leadership can be contrasting with more traditional leader-first styles of leadership. Leader-first is often a temptation to lead for the sake of personal gain. Servant leadership turns that on its head and puts the needs of the served first. Servant leaders act in ways that help those served grow to become healthier, wiser, freer, and more likely to they themselves become servants. They got to think, if you are a servant leader, if you established within your department or your company that, "This is the way things are going to be. I am going to make sure that I pioneer your needs first and other people catch on to it." Then you don't have to worry about putting your needs first because other people are going to put your needs first.

Though it works, once it kind of catches fire, things start to get very, very interesting in organizations where servant leadership is practiced. Good example of servant leadership is Lincoln. You got to think his efforts to keep the unit together, doing the civil war and above all, slavery or not because it was going to be easy or make him look good. It is incredibly difficult. I mean he knew long term was best for the people he was serving. And I think we could all agree that the country as a whole has benefited from that. So, I ask the same question about transformational leadership. Has anyone here worked for a servant leader?

**Audience:** I don't know if I worked for them but I fall into this category predominantly from my background. I mean, it was absolutely transformational. I didn't I worked for several gentlemen who were. Servant leadership, I'm sure this insight . This was ingrained into anyone who goes in the

military standpoint and spoon fed it from day one and you would still tell but some people don't get it. And I think the biggest reason that people don't get it is because this is, we are wired as humans to protect ourselves.

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience:** It's the whole concept of when you're on the plane and they tell you if things go bad, you depressurize whose mask to put on first.

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience:** The grown-ups first.

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience:** But it's the general concept is putting yourself into the idea of being insured putting other people before you its rewiring how were wired as humans. So, that's been an observation that I've had. I have also had seen it through over two decades applying to people who are good practitioners and have had the opportunity to agreed to do things like Boy Scouts of America, do some training for adult leaders in that organization and this servant leadership, one of the requirements is to read the book..

**Pat:** Oh, interesting!

**Audience:** These are like literally, this is what you will bring every day when you show up at your working place in that kind of organization because it's not about you. Leadership is not something you are born with. You actually have to be either in that organization that will teach you that or actually personally seek it out.

**Pat:** Set your skills, right? Set your skills. As simple as that.

**Audience:** I think it's predecessor to become a transformational leadership because you need to know how to serve people first. Understand what the need is, what they need help most, then you can transform their lives to become more successful. Do you agree with this?

**Pat:** Well, I think what they will notice is that as I moved forward through the presentation, one of the things with compare and contrast, there was a ton of overlap. And I think that's common for a lot of models for leadership is that there is a lot of overlap and people don't tend to flatly disagree with others in terms of that model is wrong and well, if you tweak a little bit, it will look like this and that may be better to describe as a leader. So, I'm very happy to hear you say that.

**Audience:** I know somebody who is a servant leader. He is a mentor for engineers without borders chapter.

**Pat:** Oh, okay. Where? Which chapter?

**Audience:** North Eastern University.

**Pat:** Cool.

**Audience:** And so, he definitely practices this with the students. It's all about them and further, just because of the nature of the work, it's also about community that they are working in.

**Pat:** Service, right?

**Audience:** Yeah, service. And so, it's a neat model.

**Pat:** Yes.

**Audience:** I was wondering what anybody thought of this model. I feel like I'm not sure if it can exist and I'm sure that when your company does it for you, there are just certain situations that come out that I don't have certain leader to deal with. If you have a really terrible team, you have to get rid of people.

**Pat:** Yeah, I know. It's interesting.

**Audience 1:** I have to flip a switch, I guess.

**Audience 2:** I think the best way that I'd approach is, let me put it this way, if you are a servant leader organization, your servant might need your service today in your organization. And sometimes, within an organization, you will have individuals who are not onboard and they need to be pitched over and you're not doing it because it's difficult, it's hard and it's also not a natural human being to put someone off the island, but you're doing it and what you're doing is service today. If you have done the transformation either way, if you are doing it out of trust and integrity and honesty, you're serving him by putting him on loose. Kind of like what Jonathan talked about this morning when he was reading the letter from his professor that he only does the bare minimum to get by, so he basically put him off the island but that is not disservice to put him on notice if the other individual does receive it... But you're also doing service to the organization because that individual, whatever kind of issue might be is almost cancerous to the organization causing other people discomfort overall. So it's still a servant leadership mentality, I don't know if you're thinking it as somewhat a stretch but really you're in service at different level. In this case, you're in service to the company, you can also say you're in service to your clients because if you're not delivering any goods, you're not providing value to your

client.

Audience 3: I guess what I'm envisioning is that it depends on personalities. Even an intelligent person could manipulate a servant leader. In my mind, certain personality, you need to treat them differently, respond differently.

**Audience 1:** Your goal should be as a servant leader is to deliver much value to the client ten times the value that your client will be receiving back from the pay. If member of your team is manipulative, that will ultimately show themselves in results. If you can't get those results that you transformed, then you can see how in service to the client you can make a shift.

**Pat:** So, I think it's a really interesting point, right? Because what it gets down to is no model is perfect. This isn't a, if you have vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciative of others in empowerment, everyone wins and you will always make money. That's not true. But, I appreciate the point that you guys are making and I think that even in a situation where there is a poor performer in an organization, often people who aren't doing well in organizations aren't happy in that organization and cutting someone loose can be a service to them. Give them the opportunity to start over. Give them the opportunity to figure out that, "Hey, maybe something I was doing wasn't working and I have got to look inward." It's easier said than done, for sure.

Now that we have a couple models of leadership, the question that becomes, what do we do now? How do we actually put this into practice? These models are nice and everything, but how is it going to affect our actual lives? And that's what I want to focus the rest of the talk on, is putting leadership into practice. What I'll do is I'll zero in on a couple of elements that are common to both models so that we can look at those things and try to implement those things and also to look at things that are pragmatic, that you as engineers at any level, doesn't matter, can actually use in a day-to-day life.

There are three common elements that I think kind of capture everything between the two models. Just being a role model, being inspiring, and being selfless. If you look back at the models, being a role model comes from idealized influence, from transformational leadership, and then from servant leadership, modelling honesty and integrity. Inspiring comes from inspirational motivation and vision and empowerment. Selflessness comes from individualized consideration, that genuine care for others and service and appreciation of others. That's where I get this.

From here, what I want to try and do is find ways to make these traits and attributes actionable. I want to help you do these things. First thing I want to talk about is becoming a role model. To my way of thinking, becoming a role model is a two-fold exercise. First is deciding what is that model going to look like and the second is having the discipline to actually do it. In my experience, the best way to become a role model is to think about your own role models, what made them role models. What traits or habits or practices did they have that made them a role model for you and how did that affect your company? How did that affect you?

So, one of the things that I want to do before I go too much further is, does everyone have a piece of paper and a pen? It'll be great if you take a minute and write down the names of a couple of role models and what they did, what did they physically actually do that you noticed that made them role models for you. And at the end you've got one that you're really excited about, I won't mind hearing about them. I think what's key here is to think about the practices. Think about what they actually did. And it might be worthwhile underlining couple of those practices, say, "I'm going to start doing that. That's something I can do on a daily basis." Doesn't have to be big, or crazy, or exciting. It just has to be something active. Does anyone have an example that they would like to share? If not, that's okay. We are running out of time but I'd like to give you an opportunity.

**Audience:** He led himself in a vulnerable position but he want to be less aggressive to his team, be more receptive to what his team's input is. He actually listened, I think that is a keyword for leadership.

**Pat:** Yeap!

**Audience:** And then he's able to deliver a lot about thoughts, communicate through another management. If he cannot do it, he will communicate through the people. If he can do it, he will follow up.

**Pat:** That's great example. I'll let you wrap that up. I want to keep moving things along here. The second step to become a role model is to actually adopt those traits. It can be tough to do this because your traits, your practices, your habits are auto-pilot, for the most part. It's very rare that you actually stop and think about what you are going to do. There is too much to do to think. We are all really busy. We all have our routines and the whole trick is to establish new routines. I think there are two strategies to help fight against this auto-pilot. One is to set up reminders, physical mementos to help you remember, "Right, this is what I'm targeting." And the second is to have the discipline to actually put those into practice.

Now, I'm happy Chris is with us because a couple of years ago, Chris gave me an idea of setting up a belief board. But, the whole idea is what Chris does is his desktop background is a collection of words and images that remind him of what he is targeting, what he wants in life, what's important so that it's always there. It's always in front of him. He's got a print out underneath, you've got a glass desk at home right, so you can always see it. To me, I think that's brilliant. It's always in your face and it can really help you to guide your day-to-day decisions. It's always right there.

The other thing that I think is interesting with respect to discipline, I've got a Dr. Victor Franklin here. He wrote that between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space, there is a power to choose a response and in that response, lies our growth in freedom. To me, this ability, just see and use that space between stimulus and response, is the essence of discipline. It's cement and using it

and using it for something that you are actually trying to target. Using it productively.

**Audience:** That's very difficult.

**Pat:** It is!

**Audience:** Because in that phase, we especially as engineers, we are trained to think that the most important thing you can do in that moment is not think and that's an enormous mental practice.

**Pat:** Yeap!

**Audience:** And also, our culture teaches us that thinking is valuable and therefore, the opposite is not true and that's not true.

**Pat:** Right.

**Audience 1:** Not thinking is equally more valuable the ability to not think and I'd encourage everyone if this is motivating you and you want to develop some discipline for change, seek out some sources on how to stop thinking and believe it or not, the quality of your thinking will improve tremendously.

**Audience 2:** It's like a muscle.

**Audience 1:** Yes! You could look at it that way.

**Pat:** So, the whole idea is to eventually reprogram your auto-pilot, right?

**Audience:** Yes.

**Pat:** That's the idea. And one of the best methods I'd ever come up with in terms of building discipline and retraining my auto-pilot is something that's called self-denial. It's a funny thing. But, it's remarkably effective. So the whole idea is to start doing things you don't want to do. Simple things. Things that you don't like. For me, I've got a couple examples. I've moved to black coffee. I like black coffee now so that doesn't work anymore. I'll take the stairs instead of the elevator. I'll drive the one-way home. I'll take cold showers.

Things you can do. Anyone can do this. We never do because we don't like it, but the whole point is you have to train yourself. You have the choice. You do whatever you want to do. Often, we just don't decide to do what we want to do. I guess my least favorite one is actually driving the speed limit. It's so hard for me, like incredibly difficult for me. But all I have to do is just drive the speed limit. It's not actually hard but through those little kind of silly discipline practices, you can then go on to bigger, it's like going to the gym. If you start off with ten pounds eventually, that will be easy to build your way out



to bigger, better, more important a little bit things like adopting the practices and habits of your own role models to become a role model.

The next common element is being inspiring. Inspiration is another idea that might be a little bit tough for some engineers to wrap their heads around. How does someone go about intentionally inspiring people? Well, over the course of my career, I've known that there are four key components that inspirational people share. They have a compelling vision. They adopt positive can-do attitudes. They take bold action and they bring you along for the ride. You can't inspire someone without having something for them to aspire to. That's the whole point of vision; that idealized image or picture of the future.

In our case here, that vision can be applied to ourselves, to our careers, to the work we do, anything. Your challenge is to actually develop a vision. What is your vision for your own career? Could you write the resume for yourself ten years from now? What does that look like? What about the group you work for? What about the company you work for? Do you have this mental picture of what things are going to be like? To me, the ultimate test is if you could write it down on a recipe card or even better, if you could tweet it, if your vision is that crystal clear that is distinct, then you've got it. And that's something I'd challenge you all to do. I got a question. Does anyone here know their company's vision statement? Okay. Do we have a fact checker because I'm actually...what's yours?

**Audience:** Value our customers and our employees for exceptional performances.

**Pat:** Okay. What's your organization?

**Audience:** Value our customers and our employees for exceptional performance.

**Pat:** Okay. Alright, are you checking on this Chris? Is that...? Alright, what's yours?

**Audience:** Providing quality engineering survey and services...

**Pat:** Okay. Alright. So, I'm sorry to be picking on you guys, let's assume you're 100% correct and why doesn't anyone else know what their organizations are trying to do?

**Audience 1:** They didn't personalize it.

**Audience 2:** They haven't told them.

**Pat:** You mean they haven't told you?

**Audience 1:** No! Our company has told us. It's just hard to remember and it was in an email and that's it.

**Audience 2:** I was working for a large A/E firm and detection. Company lost the contract. I stay on job following the contract. So basically I just have an employer that signs paycheck. I have absolutely no idea what the company does.

**Pat:** Right. So, I think this is terrible and I think this is very common. Given any group of engineers, the vast majority of people won't know what their company's vision is. I worked for a few companies where the vision was we are going to be the number one firm in the industry. Who cares? How is that going to change the world? What does that matter if you sell more than the next guy?

**Audience 1:** Are we ready for the fact check?

**Audience 2:** Value customers and employees to bring about exceptional performance. Something around performance.

**Audience 1:** Our vision is to be the most trusted provider of systems and technology that ensures the security and freedom of our nation and its allies...

**Pat:** Not that it's a bad thing to target, but it's impossible to remember. It's not like, you know...

**Audience:** And ours is global reach global vision global power for America.

**Pat:** I kind of like that. It's something you can actually get behind. I went and looked up on GE's vision, because GE is one of these companies that does this kind of thing really well. They say GE is inventing the next industrial era to move power building throughout the world. That's badass. If I worked at GE, I'd be very excited to try to make that happen.

So, I think for everyone here, the challenge is to set up your own vision. What's the vision for you? How are you going to change the world? How are you going to change yourself to be able to do that? I think it's also helpful that if you could establish that, also establish how could your department change. What's the vision for your department? What about your organization? Because the point is, you actually matter in your department, in your organization, in your team. You have an opportunity to help effect change towards that vision, like you got to start with that vision.

Next, inspirational people have positive can-do attitudes. Now, that's not to say they are naïve, they don't understand reality as it really is or they don't understand that there are some corny things about the world and about the situation they are in; they just don't get knocked down by it. So they accept reality for what it is and look to the future with excitement. Now, the kind of people who mean it when they smile and mean it when they say, "Yeah, I'll do it. I'm doing well." They are just good people to be around.

I work with a fellow whose name is George. He is one of our methods technicians at the company. So, his job is to figure out, you know, “As an engineer, I might design wiring has to go from point A to point B.” He is going to figure out on the train how is that physically going to happen. Wonderfully positive guy. You ask George, “How are you doing today?” and he’ll tell you, “Oh Pat, I’m doing great! I woke up pumping air this morning. So, things are looking good.” So, the guy legitimately happen to be alive.

**Audience:** You know what? And going back to what you’ve said earlier about doing things you don’t like, a couple of years I bound that I’m going to be ridiculously positive and even when I was not good situation and I became ridiculously positive, it just happens.

**Pat:** It just happens. I think, by large, it’s about context. To me, there are two kinds of people in the world. If your car breaks down, you will be upset that your car broke down. “That sucks!” Or you could like “Hey, I own a car! That puts me in about like the top 1% of humanity. That’s fantastic. My life is good.” So, positivity is: a) a decision, exactly like you pointed out and b) a matter of context.

**Audience:** On that note, I have a personal experience of my car breaking down, and I always think, will this affect me six months from now, if the answer is no, then okay.

**Pat:** That’s a good one! Yeah, absolutely. Again, context. Does this really matter?

**Audience:** You can even frame it in the same context like will this affect my life today? If I get mad, that makes my day very negative.

**Pat:** That’s right, that’s right. It’s a choice. Your emotions, generally, are not a choice. That’s generally not something you could control, but you can control your reaction to those emotions. Between stimulus response, there is a space. Use that space to choose your reaction.

The next thing I want to talk about is inspirational people take bold action. They take decisive steps to move themselves and their teams toward a vision. Over here, most have bold action. You actually took time off work. You travel to DC to improve yourselves, to improve your careers. Anthony, for organizing this conference, that’s bold action. You all get that. The challenge there is to continue taking bold action. Propose that big project. Start that business. Write that book. Talk in Anthony’s next conference. Do stuff. This is the next principle. Just do it. Take bold action.

Finally, inspirational people bring others along for the ride. They don’t say, “You know what? David, you should really go do something. You should go do X.” They say, “David, let’s go do X.” It’s about being a team. It’s about being inclusive. The final thing I want to talk about here is selflessness. We already know that selflessness is the crux of servant leadership. But, I also believe that a place in role of transformational leadership is rough. In general, you can think of it as a general orientation toward others. Selfless people not only put the needs of others above their own, they actually think of the

needs of others before they think of their own.

Just to make something clear, selflessness doesn't mean you ignore your own needs and ambitions. Rather the point here is that your needs and ambitions are oriented towards the service of others. That is what you are about. It's not either/or, it's what you do. It's what you are striving for. And like I said earlier, if you adopt this mentality and it catches on with your team, then everyone else is looking out for you because they are putting other first, including you. So, you don't have to worry about following the heart.

And you probably noticed that the three elements that we talked about: being a role model, being inspiring, and selfless aren't neutrally exclusive. They all feed off one another and build on one another. So, bearing this in mind, I'd recommend that when you choose the role models you admire, when you establish your compelling vision, keep selflessness in the forefront of your mind because they can all work together. The idea here is simple. When you orient your life to the service of others, you would affect real change in the world, which is the whole point of becoming a leader.

I've gone over quite a bit in the last hour, so I'll just going to tidy things up here and review what we have discussed. We decided that leadership is important for engineers. Leaders can change the world and make their organizations stronger and they have better careers. Leadership is not the same as management. Career is not technical mastery of being a senior leader. It's not something you're born with. As a result, leadership can be learned, developed, and perfected. We also develop our discussion around two models of leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership. There is a lot of overlap between the two we decided.

Transformational leadership is about transforming the world around you and about getting people to want to do about what you want them to do. And servant leadership is about the desire to serve people first and then aspire to lead as a result. We also discussed common ways that we could kind of actually put these things into practice. The most important thing that I want to leave you with today, if you take anything away from this, I want you to know that leadership is something you can learn, develop and perfect and that's worth doing it. John Maxwell, I referenced earlier, said that leadership is not about titles, positions or flow charts; it's about one life influencing another. And I think he is right and I hope you do too. So, I'll leave you with the challenge to grow in leadership, to devote your life to the service of others and to make the world a better place. Thank you very much.

## Take Action Today Segment:

**Anthony:** Now it's time for our Take Action Today segment of the show where we try to give a piece of actionable bold advice out and I'm going to do that, building off of the session that you just heard from Pat Sweet. I'm going to take it to a step where you could implement leadership in your engineering career. Before I do that though, let me just give you a word from today's episode sponsor, PPI. Remember, we love the sponsors because they help us keep the show free for you.

If you are planning to take the FE Electrical and Computer exam, I suggest you check out PPI's brand new FE Electrical and Computer review manual, as well as their brand new online review course. The book and the course both come with a passing guarantee and are the top resources I have seen in the FE Electrical market. PPI also has discipline specific review manuals, practice exams, and review courses for the FE, FE Mechanical and FE's other discipline exams. To browse all products in your FE disciplinary to receive a 15% off promo code, visit [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach). That's [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach).

PPI's mission is simple. They want to help engineers pass the FE, PE and SC exams and advance their careers. Quality is paramount at PPI. In fact, it is the driving force behind everything they do. With the best-selling exam review materials developed by PPI founder, Michael Lindeburg and other experts in the industry, they have been the source and solution for passing the FE, PE and SC exams for more than 40 years. To see how PPI can help you pass your exam and for special offers and discounts exclusive to my podcast listeners, visit [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach). That's [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach).

And I did take one of their courses before we took them on as a sponsor just to check it out and it is awesome. And I used Michael Lindeburg's book myself to pass the exam at a very young age, the PE exams. So definitely check out [ppi2pass.com/coach](http://ppi2pass.com/coach).

Alright. So, today's actionable piece of advice is what I call the question-approach to leadership. If you are a leader, if you're leading a team, if you're a parent, if you have kids, if you're a coach of a team, try the question-approach where you ask your team or your parent or your children how to do something instead of telling them how to do it. So, if you say to them, "Go and clean your room right now," that's not going to sound very appealing to them. But if you say to them, "You know, we really want to get this house cleaned up. What do you think is the quickest way that we can clean this house? What do you think that you can do to try to get this whole house cleaned in the next half hour? What can we do if we work together?"

Then all off a sudden, people start thinking about it. It's the same thing at engineering project. If you go in to a team of people and say, "Alright, listen. Here is the project. I think we are going to put the building here on the site. We are going to put a driveway here. We are going to put some drainage structures over here. Go ahead and design it." That's one way to do it. Or you could say, "Listen. I've got some ideas of where we want to put everything on the site but, what do you think as far as the site goes? Where do you think we should put the building? Where do you recommend we put the driveway?" And start to hear some feedback from your team and then, who knows? They might have a better idea than you, right? Or they may not. You could tell them, "You know, it's a good idea but let's go with what I had and keep that in mind." Or you might go with their idea.

Just think about it. If you ever did go with their idea, think about how bought in they are going to be in that project. They are going to be bought into it because it's their idea. It becomes their baby. So, the

question-approach is always a great approach to leadership and it's something that I'd recommend you try at home or at work in the next 24 hours. I hope you enjoyed the episode today. Remember that the next **Engineering Career Summit** will be in New Orleans, next May. We will provide details on the show as well as we get closer. We absolutely love to hear your feedback on the show and comments and questions. To leave them, you can just go to [teccpodcast.com](http://teccpodcast.com). Look for Episode 64 and leave a comment. We do monitor and respond to all comments if you leave one. Until next time, please continue to engineer your own success.

*Thank you for listening to **The Engineering Career Coach Podcast**. Be sure to visit [engineeringcareercoach.com](http://engineeringcareercoach.com), where you can find all past episodes and also download a free 3-part video series created specifically for engineers to help you best utilize LinkedIn for networking, improve your communication and speaking skills, and also to help develop your leadership abilities. Now is the time to engineer your own success.*