



Road to Flourishing

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Al Lopus is cofounder and CEO of Best Christian Workplaces Institute.

The Nutshell

Preface

My passion in life is to see the workplace culture of every Christian-led organization flourish in the sight of a watching world. My hope is this book will help you flourish as a leader and guide you to create a flourishing workplace culture.

1. From Toxic to Flourishing: Eight Keys to a Transformed Culture

During my forty-plus years in culture and human resources consulting, I've become convinced that any workplace can change. I've never seen a flourishing workplace that couldn't sag into mediocrity. And I've

never seen a dysfunctional workplace that couldn't flourish. The great tipping point in our understanding of employee engagement came when we collected enough data from workplaces to identify objectively the key elements of a flourishing workplace culture. These eight keys are represented by the acronym FLOURISH.

2. Fantastic Teams

In too many organizations, clusters of workers called *teams* aren't really teams. They're only loosely connected groups of individuals focusing on their own tasks. *Fantastic teams*, on the other hand, are cohesive and aligned, working together toward a single, clear, common purpose. Fantastic teams celebrate and rely on the

irreducible uniqueness of each team member while drawing them together in unity. If you've ever been part of a fantastic team, as I have, you know the blessing of God in your life. Work feels like play. No experience does more to engage a person fully and draw out their best.

3. Life-Giving Work

Life-giving work is work that is full of meaning, significance, and purpose. When employees can utilize their skills and spiritual gifts in what they do, and when they know their effort makes a difference, they love coming to work, and they're devoted to it. Life-giving work is the most important key in the FLOURISH model. All work that genuinely helps people is being performed by God through the workers. There is no divide between sacred and secular because all work matters to God.

4. Outstanding Talent

I define outstanding talent as highly qualified people with the necessary calling, character, competence, chemistry, and contribution to achieve the organization's mission. When an organization is blessed with outstanding talent, their high performance sustains the organization, meets its goals, and makes a marked impact on its mission. Importantly, in addition to the contribution that high performers directly make to the mission, their presence also fosters an environment that calls out the best from their coworkers.

5. Uplifting Growth

Uplifting growth is the improvement of individuals, groups, and the whole organization to meet the challenges of a changing world. When employees learn new things, their elevated ability enables the organization to maintain and improve its effectiveness. But the organization also improves because employees are more engaged in what they do. If your people aren't growing, your company isn't growing.

6. Rewarding Compensation

Improving a culture *without* compensating well will fail. Improving a culture *by means of* compensating well will also fail. Only improving a culture *along with* compensating well succeeds. If multiple factors are inhibiting your employees from becoming highly engaged in their work, addressing compensation is not the place to start because throwing money at them won't help. Compensation probably isn't the reason your best employees stay, but it may well be the reason they leave.

7. Inspirational Leadership

Inspirational leadership is one of the most critical keys to flourishing workplace culture. By calling this kind of leadership "inspirational," I mean that the leaders inspire those they lead to greater, more creative performance. Inspirational leadership is the key that turns the other keys. Inspirational leadership stimulates great effectiveness because it establishes great trust, first between the leader and those led and then among all the people in the organization.

8. Sustainable Strategy

Sustainable strategy is a powerful key to flourishing workplace culture. A sustainable strategy—well-planned, well-executed, and well-reviewed—gives employees confidence that their work makes a difference and that leaders are walking their talk. That motivates them to work the strategy with even greater devotion and enthusiasm, which makes it even more of a success. It's a virtuous spiral where employees, the organization, the people it serves, and God's work in the world all win.

9. Healthy Communication

The key element of healthy communication focuses on vertical communication between leaders and employees. The heart of healthy communication is that leaders seek, welcome, integrate, and act on employees' views on decisions that affect them. When it comes to workplace culture, healthy communication isn't mainly about one-way discourse from a platform. First and foremost, it's about two-way communication that begins with *listening* to employees, not *talking* to them.

10. Journey Inward, Journey Forward: Your First Steps on the Road to Flourishing

A bottom-line message of this book (and my lifelong belief) is that workplace culture determines employee engagement and well-being, and employee engagement and well-being determine organizational success. Whatever your situation, however intractable your problems may seem, whatever it is you've tried before that hasn't worked yet, I assure you that your workplace can flourish too. Checked-out workers can engage again or for the first time. Ministry influence can extend. Revenue can rise. And most importantly, a watching world can look at your ministry, school, church, or business and say, "I want what they have. See how they work together. See how they love one another!"