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# The Artist as Leader

**Interview conducted by Corey Madden and Rob Kramer**  
**Edited by Betsi Robinson**

*How do artists become leaders?*

*This is the question I asked when I accepted a completely new leadership challenge as Executive Director of the Kenan Institute after 35 years working as director, producer and executive in the performing arts. Returning to UNCSCA's campus, it occurred to me that no one taught me how to be a leader when I attended art school, although soon after graduating I needed exactly those skills. Instead, I learned by observing and emulating the founders of resident theatres Jon Jory and Gordon Davidson; the vanguard of my generation, including Oskar Eustis, George C. Wolfe, Emily Mann and Anne Bogart; and visionaries like Canadian auteur Robert Lepage and postmodern choreographer David Gordon.*

*Most artists learn to lead on the job, drawing from their creative processes, their work culture and the colleagues around them. Expectations will be high and resources will be tight, so you'll have to act like you know what you're doing. And, since competition for the next opportunity is always fierce in the arts, your learning curve will play out in front of your critics. As a result, most artists—including yours truly—stumble as they start out, learning to balance authority*

*with empowerment, vision with practicality, inspiration with money. Fortunately, I was invited to take part in Artistic Director training from Theatre Communications Group and eventually worked with a leadership coach who provided personalized mentoring that I use today.*

*As I took on this job, I realized that developing leadership skills could be an important way that the Kenan Institute for the Arts can help strengthen the entire arts sector, as well as broaden understanding of artists' capacity and skill.*

*Enter Rob Kramer, a fantastic leadership development coach who works with a number of people at UNCSA, as well as in corporate settings. He founded, ran, directed and performed in theatres for more than 20 years. I mentioned to Rob my interest in conducting a series of interviews with artists to help develop a body of knowledge around artist leadership, and he jumped at the idea of collaborating on this new series called The Artist as Leader.*

*Rob and I agreed it would be a good idea to develop some translatable concepts and terms, so we interviewed each other to start off the series. Thanks to Betsi Robinson for her patience in listening and editing our very first conversation on this topic.*

*Here goes:*

**CM:** Rob, how do you define the term “leadership”?

**RK:** It's a three-piece definition that I have developed over time, which is: Leaders gain willing followers toward a vision or a goal within a specific context or situation. Gaining followership transcends position, because anyone can gain followership with the right skill set. Part of it is clarifying where a person is going, what their vision is, what they want to accomplish, and communicating that in a way that gains followership. All of that is done specifically to match a context, because the strategy used in one context may fail in another context.

**CM:** That sounds a lot like directing.

**RK:** It is a lot like directing in the theatre. And you see directors do really well and you see directors fail miserably, typically on one of those three components of leadership.

**CM:** What's your background in the arts?

**RK:** I spent 22 years in the theatre. I have a master of fine arts in acting from UNC-Chapel Hill's professional actor training program. I worked at [PlayMakers Repertory Company](#) for three years. Then I started two theatre companies in my career — both were nonprofits. One was designed to help K-12 students focus on promoting creativity and imagination in everyday life. We toured up and down the Eastern seaboard and did a little bit of work in Europe. The second company was more of a traditional, classical, union contract theatre.

**CM:** So you really have direct experience at this idea of an “artist leader” because you've worked as an artist and as a leader.

**RK:** Yes, I did it all. I was an executive director and artistic director. I helped build boards. I've lived on both sides and gotten to do a lot of directing and acting.

**CM:** You were in the amazing position of starting two institutions and then you began to get interested in leadership training. How did you make the transition?

**RK:** After living in New York and deciding that was not the way I wanted to make my mark, I came back to North Carolina to start my second theatre company with a classmate from graduate school. In the midst of that I was introduced to a person who ran a management leadership consulting firm. What intrigued me about it was he focused on outdoor experiential education and did ropes courses as part of his offerings. Long story short, I went out to meet him, watched what they were doing, and it was completely a light bulb moment. It just blew me away. I gave him my resume. He looked at it and said, "Rob, you are *perfect* for this kind of work."

What they were doing was framing initiatives and activities, and the facilitator was really playing a role in that. It just lit me up. That led me to coaching. Coaching, without question, is directing but just with a different language. It's 90 percent the same process of directing an actor through their creative process as coaching a leader or manager through their own self-discovery process. Coaching, for me, was mostly learning the different language for applying it in a business context. Once that happened, I recognized that I could help people be better in their lives. That has, to me, such a great impact for my personal values, versus putting on a great production, which can be important and yet fleeting. It's the notion that if I help someone it impacts everyone else around them. That really hit me deeply and I said, "This is a place I want to go." Leadership work is still incredibly creative, but just in a different context.

**CM:** That resonates with me. I've made similar transitions in my career. For instance when I was here at [UNCSA](#), I found that I was more interested in the big picture of making theatre than acting. As I went through the program I found I wasn't creatively comfortable as an actor but I loved interpreting plays and imagining productions. And I became curious about how a group of artists could create something together. So play development and directing became my focus by my junior year.

**RK:** Interesting. Even then you could tell a difference.

**CM:** Oh yes, in fact, I had one of those Eureka! moments during Intensive Arts when I got the chance to direct a new play. And in my first job at [Actors Theatre of Louisville](#), I learned to draw on my actor training to become a director. Not just the technicalities of becoming a director, but also in terms of developing a persona that encourages the artistic process. I realized you are playing a role as a director. I've come to believe all leadership includes aspects of playing a role and performance.

**RK:** So what does the term "artist leader" mean to you?

**CM:** I like building on your definition. An artist leader is someone who brings a group of people together and helps individuals develop their role in accomplishing a mission or vision. An artist

leader shapes ideas and creates a context for new understanding. In that sense they are authors of a new vision or reality.

**RK:** I love the notion that artists shape context. To me, being an artist and watching artists, there is such a different level of attunement, acuity, sensitivity to the environment. I don't know if it's that type of personality drawn to the arts, or if the arts help draw that skill set out. But there is definitely a sense of recognizing impact and shaping context that is a key thing that comes out of the creative process and creativity training.

**CM:** Absolutely. And my interest in creating this interview series is to provide emerging artists with real-world examples of how they might translate their skills into new contexts — within the arts and way beyond. Through this series I hope we will share powerful stories about diverse artists, including many in UNCSA's creative community and those working all over the world.

For instance, the Kenan Institute recently hosted [Michael Rohd](#), who founded [Sojourn Theatre](#) and who teaches at Northwestern University. Sojourn Theatre's mission is to make innovative theatre that can also help people transform their communities through "arts-based civic dialogue." Michael helped facilitate our [Community Innovation Lab](#) using his skills as an artist leader to help a diverse group of community members talk with each other about their experiences of poverty and prejudice. His exercises, which are informed by [Augusto Boal's \*Theatre of the Oppressed\*](#), allow people of very different backgrounds to listen deeply to each other, develop empathy and create a shared vision for how together they might be able to make positive change.

**RK:** I love to see artists embracing social justice issues. Imaginative processes short-circuit habitual thinking and allow us to expand our vision. One of the most powerful skills I gained from my training was the ability to think divergently; to solve my problems by looking at lots of possibilities. Helping communities imagine a new way forward leads me right back to leadership coaching, and helping people look at new possibilities for themselves.

**CM:** At some point in every artist's career they need to translate their skills. For me, it was when I wrestled with the fact that actors let someone else decide when they can work. I know lots of actors get beyond this, but it felt like I was giving up creative control. At the time, it was painful to let go of acting, but as soon as I translated all of my passion into writing, directing and producing, I never looked back.

**RK:** I think one of the shortcomings of artist training is that we don't help artists think about their careers in a divergent fashion. Part of conservatory training is to become a classically trained actor, for sure. But for those who don't make a career out of it, how do they apply those skills to develop different, but equally rewarding, careers? The average knowledge-based worker has five careers in their lifetime; and we know the number of people who stay in theatre for their entire career is pretty darned limited. So how do artists take what they learn, which is such a gift, and do more with it?

**CM:** Our work at the [Kenan Institute](#) converges around that issue. It's inevitable that artists, like all workers, will go through transitions, but my experience over 35 years is that our field doesn't

make it easy. There's a lot of doubt cast on people who want to make a career change. How can a violinist do anything but play? It's about naming those skills and dispositions that translate: focus, persistence, attention to detail, pattern recognition, etc., and imagining where else those skills could be applied.

There's an amazing amount of change in the arts and entertainment sector, and with that comes new opportunities. So this is a great moment for artists to embrace transitions and divergent thinking. I will always return to my core training, my core values — but I'm always looking for new approaches to translate my training in other settings.

**RK:** So how does your arts training influence your work?

**CM:** Well, I am still a practicing artist, so I approach this job as a creative challenge. There's a way of making theatre called "devising" where everyone involved participates in creating the play, including the design, text and performances. As a director, my job in devising is to focus the vision, encourage exploration and refine the production through rehearsal. My job here at the Kenan Institute is incredibly similar.

When I started here so many people asked, "What is the Kenan Institute for the Arts?" They didn't understand the "who, what, where and when" of the Institute. We didn't have a *story* — and we lacked structure. I mean, like a narrative spine. But you can't just impose this on an existing organization and community. So we devised it by asking our stakeholders, "What, at our best, should the Kenan Institute be?" From that dialogue, our three strategic directions and the concept of "building creative community" emerged. Our story.

My job as director of the Institute is to help build creative community by encouraging and focusing what others want to accomplish. Interestingly, just as I learned over the years as a director that there is more creative power in asking questions and listening, than in telling people what to do, I am becoming more adept at this in my current role.

Here's a difference that's been harder for me — rehearsals are highly structured. You have a script, a well-defined creative culture and very clear goals. But our work at the Kenan Institute was relatively undefined, at first. So, one translation I made was to apply my experience of developing new plays in this new setting. For instance, I think of the strategic plan, our quarterly goals and meeting agendas as different parts of our script. They quite literally help everyone get on the same page. It's also been helpful to identify the stages of creating a new program — the times when we are envisioning, drafting, rehearsing and revising.

At one point in the Community Innovation Lab (which brings diverse people together to creatively address prejudice and poverty in Winston Salem), I mentioned that in theatre we allow time in the process for productive creative conflict — time to challenge assumptions. But over time the group comes to consensus about all these conflicts. We ultimately agree on design, interpretation, pace, and where every prop will go, so that the show goes on, you know? In any institution I've found there's a fair amount of conflict going on. But when it goes on forever, it feels dysfunctional. As a director, it's my role to let everyone know that we have to resolve our creative conflicts and move forward.

**RK:** I hear two things in that, Corey, that resonate with me, two foundational pieces from my artist training that I apply to my career now. One is the foundational ability to listen — listening at a conscious level, listening from a place of curiosity — and to assess a situation. Part of listening is assessing what is happening in the room and really understanding the environment. That is a deep, powerful skill I didn't realize I had developed as an artist until I moved away from the theatre. The other piece is the ability to move from a meta conversation to action. I certainly saw this as a director, learning how to create positive disruptions — dinging the thing at hand, poking at it from different sides and trying to unlock a creative moment, an impulse, a process, some kind of movement that takes us in a different direction. So if we are stuck on looking at the meta picture, can I create a disruption that moves us into something more tangible? And vice-versa, if everyone's got their heads down, can I create a disruption that brings them back to looking at the big picture? Those are two skills I continue to use regularly from my arts training that I didn't even know I was learning at the time.

**CM:** Totally, yes, positive disruption is such a valuable skill we develop through being artists. The other one that's really, really important is the ability to hold failure in your mind and not be afraid of it.

**RK:** Being willing to risk making a mistake.

**CM:** Yes, among my artist friends we'll tease each other about the "Downward Spiral of Doubt and Despair." You know it's going to happen after the first run-through at the end of the third week of rehearsal, just before the last push to finish the show. It's when you realize that you haven't gotten as much done as you would like or that there is some fatal flaw. I've spent 35 years working on new plays, and they're like Edsels — half of them don't run. And it's very hard to untangle what's not working once you are in production. So you can hit this moment where you realize, oh my gosh, we are working so hard on something that's going to miss the mark

But if you are the director or the producer, you have to help people get as far as they can get, and that requires acknowledging other people's sense of failure and giving them reasons to push beyond the idea of "success." I heard [Joe Mantello](#) tell this incredible story to student directors. He's one of the most famous drama alums from UNCSCA — he directed [Wicked](#) and has two shows opening on Broadway this season alone. He said, "You can never predict whether a particular show will be a success — and it's a bad idea to do it — so I always come into the rehearsal room with a personal goal of what I am trying to achieve in this particular creative experience and I only assess myself against that."

**RK:** I think that is similar to the entrepreneurial spirit. How do you manifest that or nurture that in a complex organization or a complex system, where there is so much bureaucracy and entrenched ways of thinking? How can you provide that positive disruption? I always say this to leaders when they are grappling with it: It's very easy to go from being the hero to being the village idiot. You haven't really done that much different from one day to the next, but you haven't adapted to the changing circumstances around you. I think that artistic capacity is to recognize when it's the time to adapt. And sometimes it's that kinesthetic understanding you develop by being a creative artist.



**CM:** I also recognize about the artistic work I do, there is a tremendous freedom and excitement to having a looming deadline and having to make choices within a certain framework. Adapt or die, you know? It's true as a writer. It's true as a director. And sometimes I think organizations suffer from not creating excitement around making a critical set of decisions. They just put things off forever.

**RK:** Kick the can down the road.

**CM:** Yeah. I think that the incredible reward you get from completing a project is one of the reasons artists persevere despite the odds. It's a great example of how human beings are deeply motivated by something other than money. They are motivated by the feeling of creative completion.

**RK:** And also the feeling of being a part of something that grows and evolves. Artists are generative.

**CM:** Which is why you absolutely have to have a goal besides a great review. Because even if the project didn't go where you expected it, you've had a growth experience. It's such an important thing for leaders to realize: Where is there room in your institution for experimentation and growth that may lead to new understanding? And then what's the process you have for developing and applying it?

**RK:** There is a fascinating experiment being done in real time right now at Zappos, the online shoe and clothing store. [Tony Hsieh](#), the founder, has decided that the hierarchy and bureaucracy that has developed in the organization as it has grown is now limiting the company's innovative potential, so he has adopted this model called [Holacracy](#). It is basically a systems theory model where you flatten the organization and you allow employees to grow or develop or incubate ideas and solve problems where they are needed. It's a self-organizing system. He wanted to get the hierarchy and the power dynamics out of the way so people can be their own entrepreneurs in Zappos. He said, "I'd rather encourage someone to do something creative, and feel like there is room here in our company to do it, than have to leave to do it."

**CM:** He sounds like a creative leader. Do you think leaders are born or developed?

**RK:** I think it's a combination of both. It's bringing together all three pieces of my definition — gaining willing followers toward a vision or goal within a specific context or situation. Some people might have a natural affinity in one area and not another. Shortcomings can be developed if there is a willingness to learn it and an understanding of why learning it is going to be useful. It's a constant ability to recognize what's new and to adapt. This is where I see a straight connection to the artist — recognizing what's new and what's here and what's the generative or forward-leaning movement to make. And to recognize that what might make me successful in one context may not work in another context.

**CM:** It can be really difficult to make career transitions in the arts. I think theatre people have generally done better moving into other arts fields like film and television or even music. I know quite a few theatre producers who are now running music organizations, for instance. But my

sense is that it's much rarer for someone from music or dance to move into leadership or management of a theatre.

**RK:** Because it is so different.

**CM:** I wonder how that relates to the training — or to the professional culture in each discipline. It is interesting to think about what translatable skills each discipline (dance, music, film, design, drama) develops. For instance, you and I are interested in leadership, and I think it's because theatre people study human behavior. I'm not sure musicians are that concerned with human behavior. Maybe it would help the arts sector to recognize where each discipline develops strengths and consider "cross-training" for other fields.

**RK:** And by cross-training artists, one's innate or "natural" skills can be nurtured, and skill gaps can be strengthened. To me, this brings up the question, is the artist born with certain skills or are they developed? To what extent do "creative types" have a natural affinity to lead and manage? Depending on what artists retain from their training, they might discover certain strengths they did not know they had, but choose to leave others behind. This is similar to the way training is used to develop effective leaders or managers.

**CM:** What is the difference to you between a manager and a leader? And do they go well together?

**RK:** If you are lucky! It's a great question. To me, a manager is someone who is responsible for the accomplishment of work through policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Managers use those as their power and influence sources to try to get people to get work done. A leader transcends the hierarchy of the model of management. First of all, leadership has nothing to do with the title on your business card, because anyone can gain willing followers. And secondly, it's about influencing and exciting and gaining buy-in from people to want to move in a certain direction and want to accomplish something. Gandhi never had the title, "Freer of India," on his business card but he catalyzed a nation. Martin Luther King Jr. was the same way. Now the sweet spot, for people who work in organizations or systems or are entrepreneurs, is can I both be manager and leader and inspire willing followership and drive the work to get done?

It's interesting. Even in something like the IT or the engineering field, when someone gets promoted to "a leadership role" it doesn't mean that person is suddenly a leader. It means that person is now a manager of processes and gets some new decision-making authority. And yet, someone can emerge in the engineering world and become a fantastic leader. The question is: Is it because they can speak the same language to the other engineers and they recognize the ability to do that? Because they set an enrolling vision? Is it a skill set the engineer could use to then go run the Lincoln Center? Or was the context of the engineering space what helped make the person a success?

**CM:** When businesses are looking for more creativity in their workers, is that a key question they ask?



**RK:** The catch phrase I hear all the time is “innovation.” You have to innovate. That is the business way of saying they want creativity and creative people.

**CM:** When I think of scientists who lead, I think of the director of the Smithsonian when my mom worked there. Porter Keer. He was a fabulous guy who was an invertebrate paleontologist — about as nerdy as it gets. And he was extraordinarily curious and sociable and creative. And so, he wasn’t going to spend all of his time talking to you about why it was fossil coral were so cool. He talked to you about the ocean environment and how oceans fit into the whole picture of natural history. He just had this incredible breadth and curiosity which motivated and inspired people. Curiosity is a super important quality in artists and leaders.

**RK:** That person at the Smithsonian is akin to your traditional academic faculty member. They come in with an innate curiosity that they want to focus. If they have an intense curiosity that can be fostered through their graduate training, they can bring that to the world. In many ways faculty members are their own little entrepreneurs. They are responsible for their research, they are raising money for their studies and publishing. That is all self-driven. So if you take someone with that background and training and put them in charge of the Smithsonian, and if they can let their strengths shine, which is the ability to use that curiosity and expansive thinking to lead an organization, then it’s a win-win.

**CM:** Artists can be as effective and as powerful as the scientist who becomes the head of the Smithsonian. But, sadly, I think a lot of artists feel powerless and locked out of the system. Having been lucky enough to work at two big institutional theatres, I had a mandate and money and it was my job to identify and develop plays. I produced 300 new plays during my career, four of which went to Broadway and two of which won the Pulitzer Prize. We nurtured all of those plays for years; and while most weren’t prize winners, on balance what everyone working on a new play gains is a sense of “can do” from the process itself. I’m so excited that UNCSCA has prioritized creative incubation in its strategic plan, offering students more experiences generating their own ideas and learning to use resources to make things happen. It’s a critical skill for artists today.

**RK:** Why is leadership important, then, from the Kenan Institute’s vantage point?

**CM:** If you look at our field, in terms of national statistics, something like 60 percent of the kids who train in the arts will be out of the field after 10 years. And we are currently training hundreds of thousands of artists. To me, that’s a crisis — but not necessarily in the negative sense. Artist education has life-long value, full stop. But young artists face a crisis the day they graduate from conservatory. Right? How am I going to “make it?” It’s a creative challenge that requires curiosity, generativity and leadership. Not just management and resilience and these other qualities we’ve talked about that are part of being an effective leader.

In addition, if it takes 10 years to become a successful Broadway dancer, and then an injury sidelines you and you’re forced to make something new out of your training, to me it’s crucial that you not feel disempowered by losing your identity as an artist. My subtext is: I remember feeling lost when I decided to quit acting; and then realizing that I could take all that I had learned and apply it in a new way. I am not a different person. I don’t care about different things.

I just create in a different way. I believe more students need to know this coming out of school — more of them need to feel they have permission to convert their investment in artist training into whatever they discover really empowers them. Whether that means an actor becomes a filmmaker, or invents a whole new kind of artistry or recognizes it's OK to be a part-time artist and balance other priorities. And whatever your creative solution is, it will require you to run your own little company, in a sense, your own enterprise. So you have to lead yourself.

**RK:** To me, part of the importance of leadership is sustainability. For example, look at a movement without sustained leadership, such as Occupy Wall Street a couple years ago; it started with a lot of people having a bunch of energy and enthusiasm. People came together. But then it didn't evolve because no one established leadership and created sustaining systems for the movement to continue. There was a void in carrying it into something greater, and to me that is where leadership takes place.

**CM:** One of the current challenges for the arts is that we are in this highly disruptive period and many artists are invested in DIY, micro-budget films, YouTube, creating small companies. While there is a lot of entrepreneurship, it doesn't turn into field building. So there's an incredible failure rate. And that, I fear, is when we could lose more than that 60 percent. I think that's another challenge for the entire creative industry sector. We need to develop our infrastructure; the way that a sector like health makes an incredible investment in its own structure and sustainability. What are some first steps?

**RK:** It may be as simple as how much training artists are getting in the skills that we've talked about — like holding space and gaining followership. Are they just sort of thrust into it or are they interested in it? Do they know what it means to be leading people?

**CM:** A huge advantage we have is that the arts teach that you have a team, and you can disperse leadership through that team. You can also assign leadership during the process to different people. Think about the production of a play on Broadway. For a period of time the writer has the primary leadership role. They set the vision and they develop a group of followers, people who support the idea, and they create a context. The next person in line might be a producer who options the play. That person rallies people to get money behind the show and creates the buzz. The next person is the director who cultivates a group of designers and actors. But boy, those designers and actors also better be leaders, because if they don't have a vision about what they are going to contribute to the project and can't work collaboratively together, you are never getting anywhere. And it keeps going and going and going.

**RK:** Even during the rehearsal process and performances, backstage the show might need an actor to encourage others who are losing focus. So at all levels and at all times, someone is stepping up and taking the lead.

**CM:** And maybe one of the other reasons it's so much fun is because the leadership stays alive all through the process. When you talk to theatre people who work in film and television, you often hear them say theatre is more fun. Television is the next most fun, because there is the writer's room and the ensemble week after week getting something done very quickly. But people in theatre find making movies disorienting, because there are five separate filmmaking

steps with separate teams — there is script development, pre production, filming, editing, post production and all of it takes forever. Years. So you don't experience the sense of accomplishment that you get with a compact deadline. While that's not exactly about leadership, it is about structuring creative work. And in thinking about artful leadership, structuring work might be one of those translatable skills. How can you structure the experience of getting something done that makes everyone feel like there's an opening night? Can you have a culture of leadership so that running an institution can feel like a performance? Great hotels are run that way. Great restaurants are run that way. They are "on," right?

**RK:** Having worked in the restaurant industry, I would definitely agree.

**CM:** Maybe there's no surprise that actors like restaurants, because it is like a performance. Same adrenaline rush. There's this book called [Studio Thinking](#) by Lois Hetland. She did this longitudinal study about the artist's process and identified what she calls artistic "dispositions" — and now has codified the idea that eight dispositions (observing, envisioning, reflecting, expressing, exploring, engaging and persisting, developing craft and understanding art worlds) transcend the field. What are these unique things that artists know how to do that your average manager doesn't?

What if theatres offered the general public leadership training? It could be another source of revenue beyond performance. What if more people thought of a theatre as a forum for dialogue, a place where the community could creatively debate their ideas about their community? You could develop a dynamic role that artists play in a community — not simply an interpretative role, but one with activism in it. I guess I'm asking what is our shared cultural space all about and what at their best do artists contribute to our culture? That's why the Community Innovation Lab turns me on, not necessarily because artists are setting the agenda. Because we are not. But because artists are helping other people set a more creative, empathetic and collaborative agenda.

## Epilogue

Transitioning from artist as creative practitioner to artist as leader is a process of growth and development. As addressed in the conversation above, many artists may exhibit a natural affinity to lead. Some people are better leaders, and some are better workers, doers or, in this case, artists who are best at making art. Being a great pianist does not guarantee transferable skills to successfully leading a jazz band or running an orchestra. A great sound designer may not effectively start her own studio in Los Angeles. Additionally, each situation may warrant a variation of leadership skill sets to ultimately achieve great results. Given this context, what are core foundational skills artist leaders need to develop? There is no perfect answer. However, after 22 years in the arts and 18 years in leadership development and coaching, these are five foundational skills I recommend all artist leaders develop and master:

- **Listening.** Leaders succeed and fail based on this first, most important, quality. Learn to listen with presence, curiosity and full consciousness to fully understand not only what people are expressing, but what they value and need from the leader.

- **Building relationships.** Without establishing some level of mutual trust, respect, honesty and rapport, it is exceedingly difficult to have critical conversations and galvanize followership.
- **Clarifying and communicating expectations.** Learn to effectively articulate purpose, vision, goals, roles, accountability, decision making and standards. If the leader relies solely on building relationships but does not clarify these components, he becomes “the nicest, *leas*thelpful leader, ever.” Relationships and expectations are the two sides of the leadership coin.
- **Modeling and embodying effective behaviors.** The leader models the behavior she hopes to see in others. She is willing to roll up her sleeves, to take risks and fail, and supports her followers in doing the same. Demonstrating what behaviors are desired and encouraging the same is the quickest way to help others take chances, grow and improve.
- **Negotiating and managing conflict.** People inevitably flow through agreements and disagreements. In the arts, this is a natural part of the creative process. The effective leader stays attuned to his followers, anticipates problems as much as possible, and has tools to manage heightened emotional states and navigate critical conversations.

— *Rob Kramer*



## Rob Kramer

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