The seminal learning I've gleaned from all of the research I have studied and been a part of on leadership is simple: while leaders should not strive to be well-rounded, teams should. This is a basic math problem. If one person tries to do everything well, it creates cognitive dilution.

When the leader of a team in particular has the courage to surround herself with people who can be even better than she ever could in certain areas, this leads to cognitive diversity. We need teams that have a great diversity of talent, motivation, and energy—just like we need teams that have a balance of gender, race, and age. Some research suggests that this "cognitive diversity" is essential to the success of a work team.

Unfortunately, when forming and building teams in the workplace, we rarely stop to look for diversity of thought and perspective. Instead, we often look for like-mindedness—people who will agree with our perspective. While this may be the easier route, it often leads to what psychologists call groupthink, which results in less creativity and more insular thinking. In contrast, when teams have cognitive diversity, they solve problems faster, experience far more creativity, and can do more for the people and communities they serve.

As you think about your work team or any other social group, I encourage you to map out how each person contributes across these four broad domains. This can be a good starting point so each person has clear expectations about how they can maximize their efforts. Using these domains can also be a good way to think about bringing new contributors into the mix who can fuel more growth in the future.

Create

Initiating: How do we get started?

Challenging: Are we doing the right things?

Teaching: What do people need to know?

Visioning: What should we do next?

Relate

Connecting: How do we connect people to our mission?

Energizing: How do we get and stay charged?

Perceiving: What does each person need?

Influencing: How can we grow our client base?

Operate

Organizing: How do we make things run smoothly?

Achieving: How can we get more done?

Adapting: How can we adapt quickly to changes?

Scaling: How can we reach more people?