



A Wakening The Leader Within You: A Review On Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Educational institutions and global business today call for every member of the organization to be a leader. Are leaders born or made? Whether one was born with the “special sauce” or not, if one wants to be a leader, they have to work to develop and refine the characteristics of the greats. What are you doing to awaken the leader in you? I started to reflect on it, write it down, and practice. Supposedly, every one of us is gifted, yet we need talents to develop. Now is the time to develop them. Awakening a leader in all of us is a creative method of realizing one’s leadership capabilities. This paper positively enhances self-esteem and embraces the belief that it is absolutely possible to cultivate the characteristics and skills necessary to call yourself a leader.

Key Words: Leader, Leadership, Awakening

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a word that we throw around a lot. But what makes someone a leader? Is it your position, your title, or your talent? Or is it something more? Have you ever asked yourself the question: Am I a leader? I know I have. The first step to answering that question is defining what a leader is. Alan S.L. Wong (2003) defines a leader as “a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal.” The 3P’s that stand tall in the definition are: person, people, and purpose. Every child is designed by God to be a leader.

A leader, by its meaning, is one who goes first and leads by example, so that others are motivated to follow him. This is a basic requirement. To be a leader, a person must have a deep-rooted commitment to the goal that he will strive to achieve, even if nobody follows him! John C. Maxwell, in his book *Developing the Leader within You*, quotes William A.

Hewitt’s saying, “To be a leader, you must preserve all through your life the attitude of being receptive to new ideas. The quality of leadership you will give will depend upon your ability to evaluate new ideas and to separate change for the sake of change from change for the sake of me.”

To be a leader, one must have followers. To have followers, one must have their trust. Bill George acclaims, “No matter how effective your strategy, your vision, or your communication, you will fail to achieve the desired results for your organization if you cannot inspire trust.” How do you win their trust? When people are convinced of your love for them and that you always have their interests at heart, they trust you, and they will follow you up the highest mountain and into the deepest sea.

According to Theodore M. Hesburgh, a requirement for leadership is personal vision—the ability to visualize your goal as an accomplished fact—a thing already achieved. “The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.” How do you become a leader with a purpose? You need guidance, and you will get it through your connection or relationship with the Divine or the Creator. The next requirement is the realization that the goal cannot be achieved alone, without the help of others. Whatever the situation, the leader must integrate himself or the organization’s goal with the followers’ personal goals and then communicate this goal in such a way that they embrace it too, and the goal becomes a common goal. Eric Hoffer beautifully describes, “The leader has to be practical and a realist, yet he must speak the language of the visionary and the idealist.” In communicating your goal, keep in mind that it should meet the following criteria: Achievable, realistic, yet faith-strengthening, inspiring, and challenging your people to give their best, Measurable, quantifiable, and shared, declaring your conviction in and commitment to the goal. (Situational modification of SMART)

What is leadership?

As said by Cole (2005), leadership is a dynamic process whereby one man influences another to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the goal's objectives; the aspirations and values of the group that represent the essence of leadership are to help a group or an organization attain sustainable development and growth.

As a universal activity, leadership is fundamental for effective organizational and social functioning. The very nature of leadership is its influencing process and its resultant outcomes. Such a process is determined by the leaders and follower's characteristics, dispositions, behavior perception, attributions, and context when influencing others. The moral purpose of leadership is to create an empowered follower that leads to moral outcomes that are achieved through moral means (Hersey & Blanchard, 1984).

An article on eight-dimension leadership in 2011 elaborates, "To be a leader is to make tough decisions." As you strive to grow as a leader, you will need to focus your leadership energy in new directions, and this will sometimes be a stretch for you. Mastering the eight dimensions of leadership will help you reduce how often you jump to conclusions, make poor judgment calls, and project your own motivations onto others.

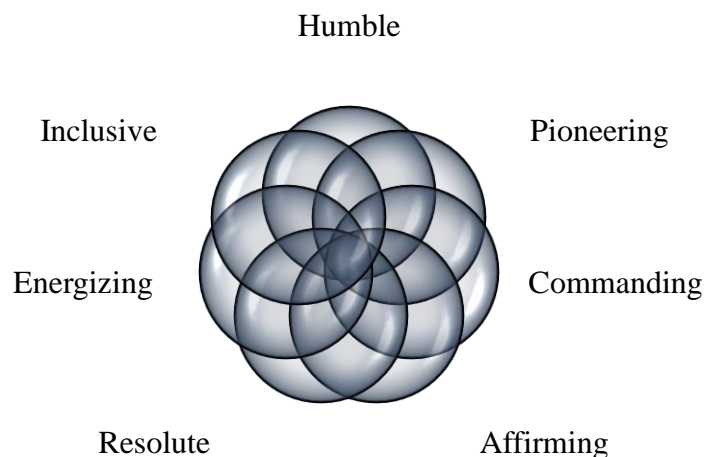


Figure 1. The 7 Dimensions of Leadership

These dimensions (Fig. 1) are non-hierarchical and nonsequential, and above all, one finds a circular relationship. A leader has a natural home on the circle, but he or she can move to an adjacent or opposite style depending on the situation or role. Such flexibility is easier for some leaders than for others. This would expand one's perspective on effective leadership for each of us.

QUESTIONABLE QUALITIES IN SELF

Are you conditioned to think that to be a leader at work, you have to be in a position of power? But true leadership can come from anywhere. Because it's not your job title that allows for great leadership; it's your commitment to creating positive change in yourself and in others. Whatever your role, if you want to become a true leader in the workplace, "someone who influences others to do more, be more, and give more," start here by asking yourself if you possess these core qualities:

Are you emotionally fit? Extraordinary leaders bring certainty to uncertain environments. That doesn't mean that you have all the answers, but you do have the inner conviction that you can find the answer and move forward. The key is emotional fitness—a state of readiness.

Are you open to growth? True leaders understand their own capabilities and limitations and use this insight to consistently challenge themselves to grow. A true leader sees criticism and setbacks as an opportunity to improve as well as a challenge to prove themselves to others. Professional development is a key component of leadership, whether it means working on your communication tools, technical acumen, or trying something new altogether. When you are constantly striving to better yourself, you will be able to give and become more than you ever thought possible, defying the odds, setting a new standard, and stepping up to create the future you want.

Do you support your colleagues? A true leader is a great facilitator; they encourage others to voice their opinions, are skilled at finding the greatness in others, and support their colleagues' perspectives. They also have no qualms about sitting back and hearing what others have to say. And if they disagree with what has been said, they vocalize their opinion in a constructive way, not putting others down, especially in front of others.

Because a true leader understands that when people are rewarded for progress and honored consistently, their drive to become better increases as well.

Are you resourceful? One of the most important skill sets of any great leader is resourcefulness. Who wants to redefine the possible: extract greater results from the same hours or minutes, cut through the clutter of to-dos, and focus on how to get real results? Because for a leader, there is no such thing as limited resources; there are only opportunities for innovation and self-realization.

Do you embody the core values? A true leader has a deep understanding of the institution's mission and embodies the core values set forth. Because leadership is not just about winning the game; it's about shaping the field so that it truly reflects what the institution is about.

A HUNGER TO LEARN

Tony Lynch, in his article on essential leadership qualities, pauses this question: 'Do I have a hunger to keep learning?' You see, the very definition of a leader is 'a person who leads others to a place they could not have gone alone'. People are always changing. No matter how many leadership qualities you acquire, *you will need to continue to learn in order to take your team to places they cannot go without you.*

Are you learning? Ask yourself, 'What have I learned about my ability to lead others in the last seven days?' Anything? He says the *most effective* leaders are ravenous learners. These people are not just learning in classes and seminars. They look at every problem, every challenge, and every setback as an opportunity to learn more. Finally, remember this: *leaders are readers*. What are you reading? Facebook? Twitter? Viber? That is not going to help you. Start stocking up on great material that will expand your leadership qualities. Look for guides to growing your influence, vision, productivity, and profitability. Continuing to learn will reap huge benefits for you and your team. You will become a leader that your team wants to follow. Your team, in turn, will grow in productivity and profit. Watching your team grow will keep you motivated and inspired. And it all starts with a hunger to learn.

POPE FRANCIS ON LEADERSHIP

Leadership Lessons from A Humble Pope by Jeffrey A. Krames (2014) point out that one of the hallmarks of any leader is how he or she leads by example. Here, then, are those lessons.

Lead with humility. Pope Francis believes that humility is a particularly powerful leadership quality. Leaders can move out of their corner office for a cubicle alongside other employees.

Smell like your flock. Immersing yourself in whatever group you are leading. Managing by walking around and spending time really getting to know employees.

AWAKENING THE DEPTH

- **Who am I to judge?** Leaders should, instead of judging their employees, listen to them, assess them, and focus on their strengths.
- **Don't change; reinvent.** Leaders must keep their organizations relevant, maintaining the greater good by getting rid of people who do not espouse the values of the organization and focusing on reducing bureaucracy.
- **Make inclusion a top priority.** Leaders, including employees, make decisions. Stress on the importance of open dialogue and communication.
- **Avoid Narrow-mindedness.** Leaders can avoid this by looking outside the organization to see if things can be done differently and seeking advice from outsiders, as well as ensuring that people in different departments understand what their colleagues elsewhere contribute.
- **Choose pragmatics over ideology.** Leaders embrace the real world rather than lamenting one that has passed and are prepared to try new ideas and approaches.
- **Employ the Optics of Decision.** The decision-making process can be improved by always making people's decisions a priority, not rushing key decisions, and taking care to make decisions that advance the leader's strategy.
- **Run your organization like a field hospital.** "Healing the wounds and warming the hearts" of the faithful. Leaders must be available for those for whom they are responsible, decentralizing decision-making.
- **Live on the Frontier.** Widen the experience by spending "time walking on the periphery" to understand the reality of other people's lives.
- **Confront Adversity Head-on.** Leaders must learn to turn adversity into an advantage. Doing this requires confronting adversity head-on, rather than pretending it is not there.
- **Pay attention to noncustomers.** Leaders need to have the willingness to reach out beyond reaching out to outsiders in order to be successful.

CHANGE AGENT

For a successful organization, change is meant to be implemented at three different levels: individual, group, and organization. At every level of change, leadership plays a different role, as it is the virtual duty of a leader to manage the people and make their efforts to be at their best in favor of change for an organization. An important element for a successful change in any organization is 'leadership'. Leaders are known as "Champions of Change, as they are the top management of any organization who keep the process of change going and maintain the operational reliability of the organization. (Nadler & Nadler, 1998).

QUALITIES OF ALL NATURAL BORN LEADERS

According to Jennifer Cohen (2015), leaders are born. And naturally born leaders do so automatically. They Lead: Obvious...right? Leaders lead. They don't wait for someone to ask them to take charge because, without pausing to think about it, a leader does just that. So, if you want to be a leader, then lead. This should go without saying. Being a good leader means being comfortable leading, so naturally born leaders tend to do it whenever and wherever they can.

They Move Their Body: They make a commitment that they keep. They get their bodies moving every single day. It's been proven that the endorphins from exercise increase productivity. Those endorphins also increase confidence, and confidence is a massive part of being a successful, natural leader.

They Make Lists: Leaders start their morning by making a list of what they need to accomplish that day. At the end of the week, leaders look back on what they've accomplished and look for ways to improve their time management. Leaders know how to get the job done!

They Listen: Being a natural-born leader doesn't mean bossing around colleagues or bullying others into agreement all the time. Leaders listen to others opinions and then take the time to reflect on what they hear. Natural-born leaders are worthy of that trust and organically lead by example.

They Are Open to Evolving: Natural-born leaders always take the time to stay informed and are open to new ways of doing things. They learn from past mistakes and have the courage to make fresh ones. Often, our most innovative leaders try several ways before finding their path. Leaders aren't afraid to be original, and they always ask questions. They never stop learning!

They Enjoy Life: Being a great leader doesn't mean having to be all work all the time. While naturally born leaders tend to remain focused with "their eye on the prize," they are also able to enjoy life outside of the workplace too.

They Successfully Delegate: They are able to find the right team to contribute to their ideas, and they are wonderful at encouraging those under them to do their best. A sign of a truly great leader is the success of the team underneath them.

CONCLUSION

Awakening a leader in all of us is a creative method of realizing one's leadership capabilities. Leadership is built on the idea that everyone at every level in the organization is a leader; that leaders must know themselves and be alert to their failings and graces to better serve the organization; and that only by mastering complexity—both human and organizational—will leaders be able to achieve alignment. Can we together start to master becoming effective leaders? Leadership is not about the next election; it is about the next generation. Again, leadership is all about unlocking one's potential to become better. So, begin today, here, and now!

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