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Chapter Seven

Reframing Leadership

Lee G. Bolman
Terrence E. Deal

Leadership is universally offered as a panacea for almost any social problem. Around the world, middle managers say their enterprises would thrive if only senior management provided “real leadership.” A widely accepted canon holds that leadership is a very good thing that we need more of—at least, more of the right kind. “For many—perhaps for most—Americans, leadership is a word that has risen above normal workaday usage as a conveyer of meaning and has become a kind of incantation. We feel that if we repeat it often enough with sufficient ardor, we shall ease our sense of having lost our way, our sense of things unaccomplished, of duties unfulfilled” (Gardner, 1986, p. 1). Yet there is much confusion and disagreement about what leadership really means.

Sennett (1980, p. 197) writes, “Authority is not a thing; it is a search for solidity and security in the strength of others which

will seem to be like a thing.” The same is true of leadership. It is not a tangible thing. It exists only in relationships and in the imagination and perception of the engaged parties. Most images of leadership suggest that leaders get things done and get people to do things: leaders are powerful. Yet many examples of the exercise of power fall outside our images of leadership: armed robbers, extortionists, bullies, traffic cops. Implicitly, we expect leaders to persuade or inspire rather than to coerce or give orders. We also expect leaders to produce cooperative efforts and to pursue goals that transcend their own narrow self-interest.

Leadership is also distinct from authority, though authorities may be leaders. Weber (1947) linked authority to legitimacy. People voluntarily obey authority so long as they believe it is legitimate. Authority and leadership are both built on legitimacy and voluntary obedience. When leaders lose legitimacy, they lose the capacity to lead. Obedience to leaders is primarily voluntary rather than forced. But many examples of obeying authority fall outside the domain of leadership. As Gardner (1989, p. 7) put it, “The meter maid has authority, but not necessarily leadership.”

Heifetz (1994) argues that authority is often an impediment to leadership: “Authority constrains leadership because in times of distress, people expect too much. They form inappropriate dependencies that isolate their authorities behind a mask of knowing. [The leadership role] is played badly if authorities reinforce dependency and delude themselves into thinking that they have the answers when they do not. Feeling pressured to know, they will surely come up with an answer, even if poorly tested, misleading, and wrong” (p. 180).

Leadership is also different from management, though the two are typically confused. One may be a leader without being

a manager, and many managers could not “lead a squad of seven-year-olds to the ice-cream counter” (Gardner, 1989, p. 2). Bennis and Nanus (1985) offer the distinction that “managers do things right, and leaders do the right thing” (p. 21). Kotter (1988) views management as primarily being about structural nuts and bolts: planning, organizing, and controlling. He views leadership as a change-oriented process of visioning, networking, and building relationships. Gardner (1989) argues against contrasting leadership and management too sharply because leaders may “end up looking like a cross between Napoleon and the Pied Piper, and managers like unimaginative clods” (p. 3). He suggests several dimensions for distinguishing leadership from management. Leaders think longer-term, look outside as well as inside, and influence constituents beyond their immediate formal jurisdictions. They emphasize vision and renewal and have the political skills to cope with the challenging requirements of multiple constituencies.

It is hard to imagine an outstanding manager who is not also a leader. But it is misleading and elitist to imagine that leadership is provided *only* by people in high positions. Such a view causes us to ask too much of too few. Popular images of John Wayne, Bruce Lee, and Sylvester Stallone provide a distorted and romanticized view of how leaders function. We need *more* leaders as well as *better* leadership.

LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

Traditional notions of the solitary, heroic leader have led us to focus too much on the actors and too little on the stage they play their parts on. Leaders make things happen, but things also make leaders happen. Context influences both what leaders

must do and what they can do. No single formula is possible or advisable for the great range of situations that potential leaders encounter.

Heroic images of leadership convey the notion of a one-way process: leaders lead and followers follow. This view blinds us to the reality of a relationship between leaders and their followers. Leaders are not independent actors. They both shape and are shaped by their constituents (Gardner, 1989; Simmel, 1950). Leaders often promote a new idea or initiative only *after* large numbers of their constituents already favor it (Cleveland, 1985). Leadership is not simply a matter of what a leader does but also of what occurs in a relationship. Leaders' actions generate responses from others that in turn affect the leaders' capacity for taking further initiatives (Murphy, 1985). As Briand (1993, p. 39) puts it, “A ‘leader’ who makes a decision and then attempts to ‘sell’ it to the public is not a wise leader and will likely not prove an effective one. The point is not that those who are already leaders should do less, but that everyone else can and should do more. Everyone must accept responsibility for the people’s well-being, and everyone has a role to play in sustaining it.”

It is common to equate leadership with position, but this relegates all those in the “lowerarchy” to the passive role of follower. It also reinforces the widespread tendency of senior executives to take on more responsibility than they can adequately discharge (Oshry, 1995). Administrators are leaders only to the extent that others grant them cooperation and follow their lead. Conversely, one can be a leader without a position of formal authority. Good organizations encourage leadership from many quarters (Kanter, 1983; Barnes and Kriger, 1986).

Leadership is thus a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values of *both* the leader and the led.

REFRAMING LEADERSHIP

Reframing offers a way to get beyond narrow and oversimplified views of leadership. Each of the frames offers a distinctive image of the leadership process. Depending on leader and circumstance, each can lead to compelling and constructive leadership, but none is right for all times and seasons. We will discuss the four images of leadership summarized in Table 7.1. For each, we examine skills and processes and provide rules of thumb for successful leadership practice.

ARCHITECTS OR TYRANTS? STRUCTURAL LEADERSHIP

Structural leadership often evokes images of petty tyrants and rigid bureaucrats who never met a rule they didn't like. In contrast to other frames, little literature exists on structural leadership. Many structural theorists have argued that leadership is neither important nor basic (Hall, 1987). But the effects of structural leadership can be powerful and enduring, if more subtle and less obviously heroic, than other forms. Collins and Porras (1994) found that the founders of many highly successful companies—such as Hewlett-Packard and Sony—had neither a clear vision for their organization nor even a particular product in mind. They were “clockbuilders”—social architects who focused on designing and building an effective organization. One of the greatest architects was Alfred P. Sloan Jr.

TABLE 7.1 Reframing Leadership

Frame	Effective Leadership		Ineffective Leadership	
	Leader	Leadership Process	Leader	Leadership Process
Structural	Analyst, architect	Analysis, design	Petty tyrant	Management by detail and fiat
Human resource	Catalyst, servant	Support, empowerment	Weakening, pushover	Abdication
Political	Advocate, negotiator	Advocacy, coalition building	Con artist, thug	Manipulation, fraud
Symbolic	Prophet poet	Inspiration, framing experience	Fanatic, fool	Mirage, smoke and mirrors

Sloan, who became president of General Motors in 1923, was a dominant force in the company until his 1956 retirement. The structure and strategy he established made GM the world's largest corporation. He has been described as “the George Washington of the GM culture” (Lee, 1988, p. 42), even though his “genius was not in inspirational leadership, but in organizational structures” (p. 43).

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were some thirty manufacturers of automobiles in the United States. In 1899, they produced a grand total of about six hundred cars. Most of these small carmakers stumbled shortly out of the starting gate, leaving two late entries, the Ford Motor Company (founded by Henry Ford in 1903) and GM (founded by William Durant in 1908) as front-runners in the race to dominate the American automobile industry. Henry Ford's single-minded determination

to build an affordable car had Ford in a commanding lead when Sloan took over General Motors.

Under GM's founder, Billy Durant, the company's divisions operated as independent fiefdoms. Uncontrolled costs and a business slump in 1920 created a financial crisis—Chevrolet lost \$5 million in 1921, and only Du Pont money and Buick's profitability kept GM afloat (Sloan, 1965). In Sloan's first year, matters got worse. GM's market share dropped from 20 percent to 17 percent, while Ford's increased to 55 percent. But things were about to change. Henry Ford had a disdain for organization and clung to his original vision of a single, low-priced, mass-market car. The Model T was cheap and reliable, and Ford stayed with the same design for almost twenty years. That worked fine in the early years when customers would buy anything with four wheels and a motor. Whereas Ford saw no great need for creature comforts in the Model T, Sloan surmised that consumers would pay more for amenities like windows to keep out rain and snow. His strategy worked, and Chevrolet soon began to gnaw off large chunks of Ford's market. By 1928, Model T sales had dropped so precipitously that Henry Ford was forced to close his River Rouge plant for a year to retool. General Motors took the lead in the great auto race for the first time in twenty years. In the next seventy years, no one ever sold more cars than General Motors.

Durant had built GM by buying everything in sight, thus forming a loose combination of previously independent firms. "GM did not have adequate knowledge or control of the individual operating divisions. It was management by crony, with the divisions operating on a horse-trading basis. The main thing to note here is that no one had the needed information or the needed control over the divisions. The divisions contin-

ued to spend lavishly, and their requests for additional funds were met" (Sloan, 1965, pp. 27–28).

Sloan recognized that GM needed a better structural form. The primary option at the time was a centralized, functional organization, but Sloan felt that such a structure would not work for GM. Instead, he created one of the world's first decentralized organizations. His strategy was simple: centralize planning and resource allocation; decentralize operating decisions. Under Sloan's model, divisions focused on making and selling cars, while top management focused on long-range strategy and the allocation of resources. The central staff made sure that top management had the information and control systems it needed to make strategic decisions.

The structure worked. By the late 1920s, Sloan headed a more versatile organization with a broader product line than Ford. With Henry Ford still dominating his highly centralized company, Ford was poorly positioned to compete with GM's multiple divisions, each producing different cars at different prices. GM pioneered a structural form that eventually set the standard for others: "Although they developed many variations and although in very recent years they have been occasionally mixed into a matrix form, only two basic organizational structures have been used for the management of large industrial enterprises. One is the centralized, functional departmentalized type perfected by General Electric and Du Pont before World War I. The other is the multidivisional, decentralized structure initially developed at General Motors and also at Du Pont in the 1920s" (Chandler, 1977, p. 463).

In the 1980s, GM found itself with another structural leader at the helm, Roger Smith. But the results were less satisfying. Like Sloan, Smith ascended to the top job at a difficult

time. In 1980, his first year as GM's chief executive, all American automakers lost money. It was GM's first loss since 1921. Recognizing that the company had serious competitive problems, Smith relied on structure and technology to make it "the world's first 21st century corporation" (Lee, 1988, p. 16). He restructured vehicle operations and spent billions of dollars in a quest for paperless offices and robotized assembly plants. The changes were dramatic, but the results were not:

[Smith's] tenure has been a tragic era in General Motors history. No GM chairman has disrupted as many lives without commensurate rewards, has spent as much money without returns, or has alienated so many along the way. An endless string of public relations and internal relations insensitivities has confused his organization and complicated the attainment of its goals. Few employees believe that [Smith] is in the least concerned with their well-being, and even fewer below executive row anticipate any measure of respect, or reward, for their contributions. No GM chief executive's motives have ever been as universally questioned or his decisions as thoroughly mistrusted [Lee, 1988, pp. 286–287].

Why did Sloan succeed but Smith have trouble? They were about equally uncharismatic. Sloan was a somber, quiet engineer who habitually looked as if he were sucking a lemon. Smith's leadership aura was not helped by his blotchy complexion and squeaky voice. Neither had great sensitivity to human resource or symbolic issues. Why was Sloan's structural contribution so durable and Smith's so problematic? The answer comes down to how well each implemented the right structural form. Structural leaders succeed not because of inspiration but because they have the right design for the times and

are able to get their structural changes implemented. Effective structural leaders share several characteristics.

1. *Structural leaders do their homework.* Sloan was a brilliant engineer who had grown up in the auto industry. Before coming to GM, he was chief executive of an auto accessories company where he had implemented a divisional structure. When GM bought his firm in 1916, Sloan became a vice president and board member. Working under Durant, he devoted much of his energy to studying GM's structural problems. He pioneered the development of sophisticated internal information systems and better market research. He was an early convert to group decision making and created a committee structure to make major decisions. Roger Smith had spent his entire career with General Motors, but most of his jobs were in finance. Much of his vision for General Motors involved changes in production technology, an area where he had little experience or expertise.

2. *Structural leaders rethink the relationship of structure, strategy, and environment.* Sloan's new structure was intimately tied to a strategy for reaching the automotive market. He foresaw a growing market, improvements in automobiles, and more discriminating consumers. In the face of Henry Ford's stubborn attachment to the Model T, Sloan introduced the "price pyramid" (a different car for every pocketbook) and the annual model change. Automotive technology in the 1920s was evolving almost as fast as electronics in the 1990s, and the annual model change soon became the industry norm.

For a variety of reasons, GM in the 1960s began to move away from Sloan's concepts. Fearing a government effort to

break up the corporation, GM reduced the independence of the car divisions and centralized design and engineering. Increasingly, divisions became marketing groups required to build and sell cars the corporation designed for them. In the early 1980s, "look-alike cars" became the standard across divisions. Many consumers became confused and angry when they found it hard to see the subtle differences between a Chevrolet and a Cadillac.

Smith's vision focused more on costs and technology than on marketing. As he saw it, GM's primary competitive problem was high costs driven by high wages. He gave little support to efforts already under way at GM to improve working conditions on the shop floor. He saw technology, not human resource management, as the wave of the future. Ironically, his two best investments—NUMMI and Saturn—succeeded precisely because of innovative approaches to managing people. "With only a fraction of the money invested in GM's heavily robotized plants, [the NUMMI plant at] Fremont is more efficient and produces better-quality cars than any plant in the GM system" (Hampton and Norman, 1987, p. 102).

3. *Structural leaders focus on implementation.* Structural leaders often miscalculate the difficulty of putting their design in place. They underestimate resistance, skimp on training, neglect the process of building a political base, and misread cultural cues. As a result, they are often thwarted by neglected human resource, political, and symbolic barriers. Sloan was no human resource specialist, but he intuitively saw the need to get understanding and acceptance of major decisions. He did that by continually asking for advice and by establishing committees and task forces to address major issues.

4. *Effective structural leaders experiment, evaluate, and adapt.* Sloan tinkered constantly with GM's structure and strategy and encouraged others to do likewise. The Great Depression produced a drop of 72 percent in sales at GM between 1929 and 1932, but the company adapted very adroitly to hard times. It increased its market share and made money every year. Sloan briefly centralized operations to survive the Great Depression but decentralized again once business began to recover. In the 1980s, Smith spent billions on his campaign to modernize the corporation and cut costs, yet GM lost market share every year and continued to be the industry's highest-cost producer. "Much of the advanced technology that GM acquired at such high cost hindered rather than improved productivity. Runaway robots started welding doors shut at the new Detroit-Hamtramck Cadillac plant. Luckily for Ford and Chrysler, poverty prevented them from indulging in the same orgy of spending on robots" ("On a Clear Day. . .," 1989, p. 77).

CATALYSTS OR WIMPS?

HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERSHIP

The tiny trickle of writing about structural leadership is swamped by a torrent of human resource literature (among the best: Argyris, 1962; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Blanchard and Johnson, 1982; Bradford and Cohen, 1984; Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler and Chemers, 1974; Hersey, 1984; Hollander, 1978; House, 1971; Levinson, 1968; Likert, 1961, 1967; Vroom and Yetton, 1973; and Waterman, 1994). Human resource theorists typically advocate openness, mutuality, listening, coaching, participation, and empowerment. They view the leader as a facilitator and catalyst who motivates and empowers subordinates.

The leader's power comes from talent, sensitivity, and service rather than position or force. Greenleaf (1973) argues that followers "will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants" (p. 4). He adds, "The servant-leader makes sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test [of leadership] is: do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 7).

Will managers who adhere to such images be respected leaders who make a difference? Or will they be seen as naive and weak, carried along on the current of other people's energy? The leadership tightrope is real, and some managers hide behind participation and sensitivity as excuses not to walk it. There are also many human resource leaders whose skill and artistry produce extraordinary results. They apply leadership principles such as the following:

1. *Human resource leaders believe in people and communicate their belief.* Human resource leaders are passionate about "productivity through people" (Peters and Waterman, 1982). They demonstrate this faith in their words and actions and often build it into a core philosophy or credo. Fred Smith, founder and CEO of Federal Express, sees "putting people first" as the cornerstone of his company's success: "We discovered a long time ago that customer satisfaction really begins with employee satisfaction. That belief is incorporated in our corporate philosophy statement: People—Service—Profit" (Waterman, 1994, p. 89).

William Hewlett, cofounder of the electronics giant Hewlett-Packard Corporation, put it this way:

The dignity and worth of the individual is a very important part of the HP Way. With this in mind, many years ago we did away with time clocks, and more recently we introduced the flexible work hours program. This is meant to be an expression of trust and confidence in people, as well as providing them with an opportunity to adjust their work schedules to their personal lives. Many new HP people as well as visitors often note and comment to us about another HP way—that is, our informality and our being on a first-name basis. I could cite other examples, but the problem is that none by [itself] really catches the essence of what the HP Way is all about. You can't describe it in numbers and statistics. In the last analysis, it is a spirit, a point of view. There is a feeling that everyone is part of a team, and that team is HP. It is an idea that is based on the individual [Peters and Waterman, 1982, p. 244].

2. *Human resource leaders are visible and accessible.* Peters and Waterman (1982) popularized the notion of "management by wandering around"—the idea that managers need to get out of their offices and spend time with workers and customers. Patricia Carrigan, the first woman ever to be a plant manager at General Motors, modeled this technique in the course of turning around two different GM plants, each with a long history of union-management conflict (Kouzes and Posner, 1987). In both situations, she began by going onto the plant floor to introduce herself to workers and ask how they thought the plant could be improved. One worker commented that before Carrigan came, "I didn't know who the plant manager was. I wouldn't have recognized him if I saw him." When she left her first assignment after three years, the local union gave her a plaque. It concluded, "Be it resolved that Pat M. Carrigan, through the exhibiting of these qualities as a people person, has

played a vital role in the creation of a new way of life at the Lakewood plant. Therefore, be it resolved that the members of Local 34 will always warmly remember Pat M. Carrigan as one of us" (Kouzes and Posner, 1987, p. 36).

3. *Effective human resource leaders empower others.* Human resource leaders often like to refer to their employees as "partners," "owners," or "associates." They make it clear that employees have a stake in the organization's success and a right to be involved in making decisions. Nordstrom has its "rule number one": "Use your good judgment in all situations; there will be no other rules" (Collins and Porras, 1994, p. 117). In the 1980s, Jan Carlzon, CEO of Scandinavian Air Systems (SAS), built a turnaround effort around making the airline "the best airline in the world for business travelers" (Carlzon, 1987, p. 46). To find out what the business traveler wanted, he turned to SAS's front-line service employees to collect their ideas and suggestions. Focus groups generated hundreds of ideas and emphasized the importance of front-line autonomy to decide on the spot what passengers needed. Carlzon concluded that SAS's image to its customers was built out of a series of "moments of truth"—fifteen-second encounters between employees and customers. "If we are truly dedicated toward orienting our company to each customer's individual needs, we cannot rely on rule books and instruction from distant corporate offices. We have to place responsibility for ideas, decisions, and actions with the people who are SAS during those 15 seconds. If they have to go up the organizational chain of command for a decision on an individual problem, then those 15 golden seconds will elapse without a response and we will have lost an opportunity to earn a loyal customer" (p. 66). The

French packaging giant Carnaud enjoyed enormous growth and success after Jean-Marie Descarpentries became its chief executive in 1982. Descarpentries said his approach to management was simple: "You catalyze toward the future, you trust people, and they discover things you never would have thought of" (Aubrey and Tilliette, 1990, p. 142).

ADVOCATES OR HUSTLERS? POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Lee Iacocca's career at Ford Motor Company was a meteoric rise through a series of sales and marketing triumphs to become the company's president. Then, on July 1, 1978, his boss, Henry Ford II, fired him, reportedly with the simple explanation, "Let's just say I don't like you" (O'Toole, 1984, p. 231). Iacocca's unemployment was brief. Chrysler Corporation, desperate for new leadership, believed that Iacocca was the answer.

Even though Iacocca had done his homework before accepting Chrysler's offer, he encountered problems worse than he anticipated. Chrysler was losing money so fast that bankruptcy seemed almost inevitable. The only way out was to persuade the U.S. government to guarantee massive loans. It was a tough sell—much of Congress, the media, and the American public were against the idea. Iacocca had to convince all of them that government intervention was in their interest as well as Chrysler's. He pulled it off with a remarkable combination of personal artistry and adroit political maneuvering. He successfully employed a set of rules for political leaders.

1. *Political leaders clarify what they want and what they can get.* Political leaders are realists above all. They avoid letting what they want cloud their judgment about what is possible.

Chrysler's problem was survival. Iacocca translated that into the realistic goal of getting enough help to make it through a couple of difficult years without going under. Iacocca was careful to ask not for money but for loan guarantees. He insisted that government guarantees would cost the taxpayers nothing because Chrysler would pay the money back.

2. *Political leaders assess the distribution of power and interests.*

They map the political terrain by thinking carefully about the players, their interests, and their power. They ask: Whose support do I need? How do I go about getting it? Who are my opponents? How much power do they have? What can I do to reduce or overcome their opposition? Is this battle winnable? Iacocca needed the support of Chrysler's employees and unions, but he knew that they had little choice. The key players were Congress and the public. Congress would vote for the guarantees only if Iacocca's proposal had sufficient popular support.

3. *Political leaders build linkages to key stakeholders.* They focus their attention on building relationships and networks. They recognize the value of personal contact and face-to-face conversations. Iacocca worked hard to build linkages with Congress, the media, and the public. He spent hours meeting with members of Congress and testifying before congressional committees. After he met with thirty-one Italian-American members of Congress, all but one voted for the loan guarantees. Said Iacocca, "Some were Republicans, some were Democrats, but in this case they voted the straight Italian ticket. We were desperate, and we had to play every angle. It was democracy in action" (Iacocca and Novak, 1984, p. 221).

Iacocca gave interviews to anyone in the media who would listen. He personally signed Chrysler's advertisements in newspapers and magazines and appeared on television to make Chrysler's case. Over time, he became one of America's best-known and most respected chief executives.

4. *Political leaders persuade first, negotiate second, and use coercion only if necessary.* Wise political leaders recognize that power is essential to their effectiveness; they also know to use it judiciously. William P. Kelly, an experienced public administrator, put it well: "Power is like the old Esso ad—a tiger in your tank. But you can't let the tiger out, you just let people hear him roar. You use power terribly sparingly because it has a short half-life. You let people know you have it and hope that you don't have to use it" (Ridout and Fenn, 1974, p. 10).

The sophisticated political leader knows that influence begins with an understanding of others' concerns and interests. What is important to them? How can I help them get what they want? Iacocca knew that he had to address the widespread belief that federal guarantees would throw millions of taxpayers' dollars down a rat hole. He used advertising to respond directly to public concerns. Does Chrysler have a future? Yes, he said, we've been here fifty-four years, and we'll be here another fifty-four years. Would the loan guarantees be a dangerous precedent? No, the government already had \$400 billion in other loan guarantees on the books, and in any event, Chrysler was going to pay its loans back. "You can count on it!" he said over and over. Iacocca also spoke directly to congressional concerns. Chrysler prepared computer printouts showing how many jobs would be lost in every district if Chrysler were to go under.

Iacocca got his loan guarantees. Eight years later, in 1987, Chrysler reported earnings of more than \$1 billion, ranking it eleventh among all U.S. corporations. The company survived and paid back the loans early.

PROPHETS OR ZEALOTS? SYMBOLIC LEADERSHIP

The symbolic frame provides a fourth turn of the leadership kaleidoscope. This frame sees organizations as both theaters and temples. In the theater, every actor plays certain roles and tries to communicate the right impressions to the right audiences. As temple, organizations are communities of faith, bonded by shared beliefs, traditions, myths, rituals, and ceremonies.

Symbolically, leaders *interpret and reinterpret experience*. What are the real lessons of history? What is really happening in the world? What will the future bring? What mission is worthy of our loyalty and investment? Data and analysis provide few adequate answers to such questions. Symbolic leaders interpret experience so as to provide meaning and purpose through phrases of beauty and passion. Franklin D. Roosevelt reassured a nation in the midst of its deepest economic depression that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” At almost the same time, Adolph Hitler assured Germans that their severe economic and social problems were the result of betrayal by Jews and communists. Germans, he said, were a superior people who could still fulfill their nation’s destiny of world mastery. Though many saw the destructive paranoia in Hitler’s message, millions of fearful citizens were swept up in Hitler’s bold vision of German ascendancy.

Burns (1978) was mindful of leaders such as Franklin Roosevelt, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. when he drew a distinction between “transforming” and “transactional” leaders. According to Burns, transactional leaders “approach their followers with an eye to trading one thing for another: jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contributions” (p. 4). Transforming leaders are rarer. As Burns describes them, they evoke their constituents’ better nature and move them toward higher and more universal needs and purposes. They are visionary leaders, and visionary leadership is inherently symbolic. Symbolic leaders follow a consistent set of practices and rules.

1. *They use symbols to capture attention.* When Diana Lam became principal of the Mackey Middle School in Boston in 1985, she faced a substantial challenge. Mackey had the usual problems of urban schools: decaying physical plant, poor discipline, racial tension, disgruntled teachers, and limited resources (Kaufer and Leader, 1987a). In such a situation, symbolic leaders will do something visible and dramatic to signal that change is coming. During the summer before assuming her duties, Lam wrote a personal letter to every teacher requesting an individual meeting. She met teachers wherever they wanted, in one case driving two hours. She asked teachers how they felt about the school and what changes they wanted. She recruited members of her family as a crew to repaint the school’s front door and some of the most decrepit classrooms. “When school opened, students and staff members immediately saw that things were going to be different, if only symbolically. Perhaps even more important, staff members received a subtle challenge to make a contribution themselves” (Kaufer and Leader, 1987b, p. 3).

When Lee Iacocca first became president of Chrysler, one of his first steps was to announce that he was reducing his salary from \$360,000 to \$1 a year. “I did it for good, cold pragmatic reasons. I wanted our employees and our suppliers to be thinking: ‘I can follow a guy who sets that kind of example,’” Iacocca explained in his autobiography (Iacocca and Novak, 1984, pp. 229–230).

2. *Symbolic leaders frame experience.* In a world of uncertainty and ambiguity, a key function of symbolic leadership is to provide plausible interpretations of experience. Jan Carlzon mobilized front-line staff at SAS around the idea that each short encounter with a customer was a “moment of truth” (Carlzon, 1987). When Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at the March on Washington in 1963 and gave his extraordinary “I Have a Dream” speech, his opening line was, “I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.” He could have interpreted the event in a number of other ways: “We are here because progress has been slow, but we are not ready to quit yet”; “We are here because nothing else has worked”; “We are here because it’s summer and it’s a good day to be outside.” Each of those versions is about as accurate as the next, but accuracy is not the real issue. King’s assertion was bold and inspiring; it told members of the audience that they were making history by their presence at a momentous event.

3. *Symbolic leaders discover and communicate a vision.* One of the most powerful ways in which leaders can interpret experience is by distilling and disseminating a vision—a persuasive and hopeful image of the future. A vision needs to address both

the challenges of the present and the hopes and values of followers. Vision is particularly important in times of crisis and uncertainty. When people are in pain, when they are confused and uncertain, or when they feel despair and hopelessness, they desperately seek meaning and hope.

Where does such vision come from? One view is that leaders create a vision and then persuade others to accept it (Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985). An alternative view is that leaders discover and articulate a vision that is already there, even if in an inchoate and unexpressed form (Cleveland, 1985). Kouzes and Posner (1987) put it well: “Corporate leaders know very well that what seeds the vision are those imperfectly formed images in the marketing department about what the customers really wanted and those inarticulate mumblings from the manufacturing folks about the poor product quality, not crystal ball gazing in upper levels of the corporate stratosphere. The best leaders are the best followers. They pay attention to those weak signals and quickly respond to changes in the corporate course” (p. 114).

Early in his career, Jan Carlzon had learned this lesson the hard way when he and a group of young executives designed a set of tour packages offering Swedish senior citizens just what Carlzon thought they wanted—safe, risk-free travel to familiar places. The product bombed because the seniors really wanted variety and adventure. For Carlzon it was a memorable lesson: listen to your customers and to the front-line staff who know them (Carlzon, 1987).

Leadership is a two-way street. No amount of charisma or rhetorical skill can sell a vision that reflects only the leader’s values and needs—Carlzon’s team had spent a fortune on beautiful color brochures to promote the doomed tour packages.

Effective symbolic leadership is possible only for leaders who understand the deepest values and most pressing concerns of their constituents. But leaders still play a critical role. They can bring a unique, personal blend of poetry, passion, conviction, and courage to the articulation of a vision. They can play a key role in distilling and shaping the vision to be pursued. Most important, they can choose which stories to tell as a means of communicating the vision.

4. *Symbolic leaders tell stories.* Often symbolic leaders embody their vision in a story—a story about “us” and about “our” past, present, and future. “Us” could be the Sorbonne, the Chrysler Corporation, the people of Thailand, or any other audience a leader hopes to reach. The past is usually a golden one, a time of noble purposes, of great deeds, of heroes and heroines. The present is a time of trouble, challenge, or crisis: a critical moment when we have to make fateful choices. The future is the dream: a vision of hope and greatness, often linked directly to greatness in the past.

That is just the kind of story that helped Ronald Reagan, a master storyteller, become president of the United States. Reagan’s golden past was the frontier, a place of rugged, sturdy, self-reliant men and women who built a great nation and took care of themselves and their neighbors without the intervention of a monstrous national government. It was an America of small towns and volunteer fire departments. America had fallen into crisis, said Reagan, because “the liberals” had created a federal government that was levying oppressive taxes and eroding freedom through regulation and bureaucracy. Reagan offered a vision: a return to American greatness by “getting government

off the backs of the American people” and restoring traditional American values of freedom and self-reliance.

The success of such stories is only partly related to their historical validity or empirical support. The central question is whether they are credible and persuasive to their audiences. A story, even a flawed story, will work if it taps persuasively into the experience, values, and aspirations of listeners. Good stories are truer than true: this reflects both the power and the danger of symbolic leadership. In the hands of a Gandhi or a King, the constructive power of stories is immense. Told by a Hitler, their destructive power is almost incalculable. In the wake of World War I and the Great Depression, Germany in the 1930s was hungry for hope. Other stories might have caught the imagination of the German people, but Hitler’s passion and single-mindedness brought his story to center stage and carried Europe to a catastrophe of war and holocaust.

SUMMARY

Though leadership is widely accepted as a cure for organizational ills, it is also widely misunderstood. Many views of leadership fail to recognize its relational and contextual nature and its distinction from power and position. Inadequate ideas about leadership often produce oversimplified advice to managers. We need to reframe leadership to move beyond the impasses created by oversimplified models.

Each of the frames highlights significant possibilities for leadership, but each is incomplete in capturing a holistic picture. Early in the twentieth century, implicit models of managerial leadership were narrowly rational. In the 1960s and

1970s, human resource leadership became fashionable. In recent years, symbolic leadership has moved to center stage, and the literature abounds with advice on how to become a visionary leader capable of transforming cultural patterns. Organizations need vision, but it is not their only need and not always their most important one. Ideally, managers combine multiple frames into a comprehensive approach to leadership. Still, it is unrealistic to expect everyone to be a leader for all times and seasons. Wise leaders understand their own strengths, work to expand them, and build teams that can provide leadership in all four modes—structural, political, human resource, and symbolic.

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Chapter Eight

Situational Leadership

Paul Hersey
Kenneth H. Blanchard

Situational Leadership® is based on an interplay among (1) the amount of guidance and direction (task behavior) a leader gives, (2) the amount of socioemotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides, and (3) the readiness level that followers exhibit in performing a specific task, function or objective. This concept was developed to help people attempting leadership, regardless of their role, to be more effective in their daily interactions with others. It provides leaders with some understanding of the relationship between an effective style of leadership and the level of readiness of their followers.¹

Thus, while all the situational variables (leader, follower(s), superior(s), associates, organization, job demands, and time) are important, the emphasis in Situational Leadership will be on the behavior of a leader in relation to followers.

BASIC CONCEPT OF SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

According to Situational Leadership, there is no one best way to influence people. Which leadership style a person should use with individuals or groups depends on the readiness level of the people the leader is attempting to influence, as illustrated in Figure 8.1.²

Task behavior is defined as the extent to which the leader engages in spelling out the duties and responsibilities of an individual or group. These behaviors include telling people what to do, how to do it, where to do it, and who is to do it.

An example of high amounts of task behavior might be the last time you asked someone for directions. The person was probably very precise and clear about telling you what streets to take and what turns to make. Task behavior is characterized by one-way communication from the leader to the follower.

Relationship behavior is defined as the extent to which the leader engages in two-way or multi-way communication. The behaviors include listening, facilitating, and supportive behaviors.³

An example of high amounts of relationship behavior might be when you reach an impasse with an assignment. You basically know how to do the assignment but need some encouragement to get you over the hump. The listening, encouraging, and facilitating a leader does in this example is an illustration of relationship behavior.

Task behavior and relationship behavior are separate and distinct dimensions. They can be placed on separate axis of a two-dimensional graph, and the four quadrants can be used to identify four basic leadership styles.⁴ Figure 8.1 illustrates these styles.

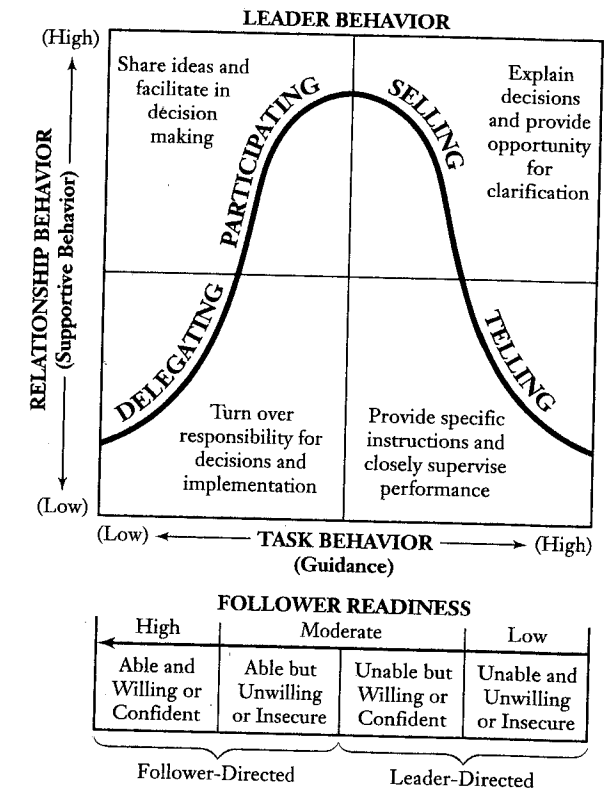


FIGURE 8.1 Situational Leadership

By using the four quadrants as the basis for assessing managerial success in different work settings, it became clear that it wasn't just one style that was effective. Each style was appropriate, depending on the situation.

READINESS OF THE FOLLOWERS OR GROUP

The more that leaders can adapt their behaviors to the situation, the more effective their attempts to influence become. The situation, in turn, is influenced by the various conditions that are present.

These variables do not operate in isolation. They are interactive. We need to remind ourselves that the relationship between leaders and followers is the crucial variable in the leadership situation. If the followers decide not to follow, it doesn't matter what the boss or key associates think or what the job demands may be. *There is no leadership without someone following.*

In order to maximize the leader-follower relationship, the leader must first determine the task-specific outcomes the followers are to accomplish—on an individual and group basis. Without creating clarity on outcomes, objectives, subtasks, milestones, and so on, the leader has no basis for determining follower readiness or the specific behavioral style to use for that level of readiness.

READINESS DEFINED

Readiness in Situational Leadership is defined as the extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task. People tend to be at different levels of readiness depending on the *task* they are being asked to do. Readiness is *not* a personal characteristic; it is not an evaluation of a person's traits, values, age, and so on. *Readiness is how ready a person is to perform a particular task.* All persons tend to be more or less ready in relation to a specific task, function, or objective that a leader is attempting to accomplish through their efforts. Thus, a salesperson may be very responsible in securing new sales but very casual about completing the paper work necessary to close on a sale. As a result, it is appropriate for the manager to leave the salesperson alone in terms of closing on sales but to supervise closely in terms of paper work until the salesperson can start to do well in that area too.

The two major components of readiness are *ability* and *willingness*.⁵

Ability is the knowledge, experience, and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity.

When considering the ability level of others, it is very important to be *task specific*. A person who has a Ph.D. in music and twenty years of professional experience playing the piano may be of little help in the design of a new jet engine. It is essential to focus on the specific outcome desired and to consider the ability of the followers in light of that outcome.

Willingness is the extent to which an individual or group has the confidence, commitment, and motivation to accomplish a specific task.

Willingness is only one word that describes the issue. Sometimes, it isn't so much that people are really unwilling, it's just that they've never done a specific task before. Perhaps they don't have any experience with it, so they're insecure or afraid. Generally, *if it is an issue of never having done something, the problem is insecurity*. The term "unwilling" might be most appropriate when, for one reason or another, the individuals have slipped, or lost some of their commitment and motivation. It might imply that they are regressing.

Even though the concepts of ability and willingness are different, it is important to remember that they are an *interacting influence system*. This means that *a significant change in one will affect the whole*. The extent to which followers bring willingness into a specific situation affects the use of their present ability. And it affects the extent to which they will grow and develop competence and ability. Similarly, the amount of knowledge, experience, and skill brought to a specific task will often affect competence, commitment, and motivation.

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Chapter Nine

The Servant as Leader

Robert K. Greenleaf

Who is the servant-leader? The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served,

become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?

As one sets out to serve, how can one know that this will be the result? This is part of the human dilemma; one cannot know for sure. One must, after some study and experience, hypothesize—but leave the hypothesis under a shadow of doubt. Then one acts on the hypothesis and examines the result. One continues to study and learn and periodically one re-examines the hypothesis itself.

Finally, one chooses again. Perhaps one chooses the same hypothesis again and again. But it is always a fresh open choice. And it is always an hypothesis under a shadow of doubt. “Faith is the choice of the nobler hypothesis.” Not the *noblest*; one never knows what that is. But the *nobler*, the best one can see when the choice is made. Since the test of results of one’s actions is usually long delayed, the faith that sustains the choice of the nobler hypothesis is psychological self-insight. This is the most dependable part of the true servant.

The natural servant, the person who is *servant first*, is more likely to persevere and refine a particular hypothesis on what serves another’s highest priority needs than is the person who is *leader first* and who later serves out of promptings of conscience or in conformity with normative expectations.

My hope for the future rests in part on my belief that among the legions of deprived and unsophisticated people are many true servants who will lead, and that most of them can learn to discriminate among those who presume to serve them and identify the true servants whom they will follow.

EVERYTHING BEGINS WITH THE INITIATIVE OF AN INDIVIDUAL

The forces for good and evil in the world are propelled by the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of individual beings. What happens to our values, and therefore to the quality of our civilization in the future, will be shaped by the conceptions of individuals that are born of inspiration. Perhaps only a few will receive this inspiration (insight) and the rest will learn from them. The very essence of leadership, going out ahead to show the way, derives from more than usual openness to inspiration.

Why would anybody accept the leadership of another except that the other sees more clearly where it is best to go? Perhaps this is the current problem: too many who presume to lead do not see more clearly and, in defense of their inadequacy, they all the more strongly argue that the “system” must be preserved—a fatal error in this day of candor.

But the leader needs more than inspiration. A leader ventures to say: “I will go; come with me!” A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success. A leader says: “I will go; follow me!” while knowing that the path is uncertain, even dangerous. One then trusts those who go with one’s leadership.

Paul Goodman, speaking through a character in *Making Do*, has said, “If there is no community for you, young man, young man, make it yourself.”

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?

“What are you trying to do?” is one of the easiest to ask and most difficult to answer of questions.

A mark of leaders, an attribute that puts them in a position to show the way for others, is that they are better than most at pointing the direction. As long as one is leading, one always has a goal. It may be a goal arrived at by group consensus, or the leader, acting on inspiration, may simply have said, "Let's go this way." But the leader always knows what it is and can articulate it for any who are unsure. By clearly stating and restating the goal the leader gives certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves.

The word *goal* is used here in the special sense of the overarching purpose, the big dream, the visionary concept, the ultimate consummation which one approaches but never really achieves. It is something presently out of reach; it is something to strive for, to move toward, or become. It is so stated that it excites the imagination and challenges people to work for something they do not yet know how to do, something they can be proud of as they move toward it.

Every achievement starts with a goal—but not just any goal and not just anybody stating it. The one who states the goal must elicit trust, especially if it is a high risk or visionary goal, because those who follow are asked to accept the risk along with the leader. Leaders do not elicit trust unless one has confidence in their values and competence (including judgment) and unless they have a sustaining spirit (*entbeos*) that will support the tenacious pursuit of a goal.

Not much happens without a dream. And for something great to happen, there must be a great dream. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams. Much more than a dreamer is required to bring it to reality; but the dream must be there first.

LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

One of our very able leaders recently was made the head of a large, important, and difficult-to-administer public institution. After a short time he realized that he was not happy with the way things were going. His approach to the problem was a bit unusual. For three months he stopped reading newspapers and listening to news broadcasts; and for this period he relied wholly upon those he met in the course of his work to tell him what was going on. In three months his administrative problems were resolved. No miracles were wrought; but out of a sustained intentness of listening that was produced by this unusual decision, this able man learned and received the insights needed to set the right course. And he strengthened his team by so doing.

Why is there so little listening? What makes this example so exceptional? Part of it, I believe, with those who lead, is that the usual leader in the face of a difficulty tends to react by trying to find someone else on whom to pin the problem, rather than by automatically responding: "I have a problem. What is it? What can *I* do about *my* problem?" The sensible person who takes the latter course will probably react by listening, and somebody in the situation is likely to say what the problem is and what should be done about it. Or enough will be heard that there will be an intuitive insight that resolves it.

I have a bias about this which suggests that only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*. When one is a leader, this disposition causes one to be *seen* as servant first. This suggests that a non-servant who wants to be a servant might become a *natural* servant through a long

arduous discipline of learning to listen, a discipline sufficiently sustained that the automatic response to any problem is to listen first. I have seen enough remarkable transformations in people who have been trained to listen to have some confidence in this approach. It is because true listening builds strength in other people.

Most of us at one time or another, some of us a good deal of the time, would really like to communicate, really get through to a significant level of meaning in the hearer's experience. It can be terribly important. The best test of whether we are communicating at this depth is to ask ourselves first: Are we really listening? Are we listening to the one we want to communicate to? Is our basic attitude, as we approach the confrontation, one of wanting to understand? Remember that great line from the prayer of St. Francis, "Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be understood as to understand."

One must not be afraid of a little silence. Some find silence awkward or oppressive, but a relaxed approach to dialogue will include the welcoming of some silence. It is often a devastating question to ask oneself—but it is sometimes important to ask it—"In saying what I have in mind will I really improve on the silence?"

ACCEPTANCE AND EMPATHY

These are two interesting words, acceptance and empathy. If we can take one dictionary's definition, *acceptance* is receiving what is offered, with approbation, satisfaction, or acquiescence, and *empathy* is the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being. The opposite of both, the word *reject*, is to refuse to hear or receive—to throw out.

The servant always accepts and empathizes, never rejects. The servant as leader always empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort or performance as good enough.

A college president once said, "An educator may be rejected by students and must not object to this. But one may never, under any circumstances, regardless of what they do, reject a single student."

We have known this a long time in the family. For a family to be a family, no one can ever be rejected. Robert Frost in his poem "The Death of the Hired Man" states the problem in a conversation on the farmhouse porch between the farmer and his wife about the shiftless hired man, Silas, who has come back to their place to die. The farmer is irritated about this because Silas was lured away from his farm in the middle of the last haying season. The wife says that theirs is the only home he has. They are then drawn into a discussion of what a home is. The husband gives his view:

*"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."*

The wife sees it differently. What is a home? She says,

*"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."*

Because of the vagaries of human nature, the halt, the lame, half-made creatures that we all are, the great leader (whether it is the mother in her home or the head of a vast organization) would say what the wife said about home in Robert Frost's poem. The interest in and affection for one's followers which a

leader has—and it is a mark of true greatness when it is genuine—is clearly something the followers “haven’t to deserve.” Great leaders, including “little” people, may have gruff, demanding, uncompromising exteriors. But deep down inside the great ones have empathy and an unqualified acceptance of the persons of those who go with their leadership.

Acceptance of the person, though, requires a tolerance of imperfection. Anybody could lead perfect people—if there were any. But there aren’t any perfect people. And the parents who try to raise perfect children are certain to raise neurotics.

It is part of the enigma of human nature that the “typical” person—immature, stumbling, inept, lazy—is capable of great dedication and heroism *if* wisely led. Many otherwise able people are disqualified to lead because they cannot work with and through the half-people who are all there are. The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be.

People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing. Leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted.

FORESIGHT:—THE CENTRAL ETHIC OF LEADERSHIP

The common assumption about the word “now” is that it is this instant moment of clock time—*now*. In usage, we qualify this a little by saying *right now*, meaning this instant, or *about now*, allowing a little leeway. Sometimes we say, “I’m going to do it now,” meaning “I’m going to start soon and do it in the near

future,” or “I have just now done it,” meaning that I did it in the recent past. The dictionary admits all of these variations of usage.

Let us liken “now” to the spread of light from a narrowly focused beam. There is a bright intense center, this moment of clock time, and a diminishing intensity, theoretically out to infinity, on either side. As viewed here, *now* includes *all* of this—all of history and all of the future. As one approaches the central focus, the light intensifies as this moment of clock time is approached. All of it is *now* but some parts are more *now* than others, and the central focus which marks this instant of clock time moves along as the clock ticks. *This is not the way it is!* It is simply an analogy to suggest a way of looking at *now* for those who wish better to see the unforeseeable—a mark of a leader.

Prescience, or foresight, is a better than average guess about *what* is going to happen *when* in the future. It begins with a state of mind about *now*, something like that suggested by the light analogy. What we note in the present moment of clock time is merely the intense focus that is connected with what has gone on in the past and what will happen in the future. The prescient man has a sort of “moving average” mentality (to borrow a statistician’s term) in which past, present, and future are one, bracketed together and moving along as the clock ticks. The process is continuous.

Machiavelli, writing three hundred years ago about how to be a prince, put it this way. “Thus it happens in matters of state; for knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow so that everyone can recognize them, there is no longer any remedy to be found.”

The shape of some future events can be calculated from trend data. But, as with a practical decision mentioned earlier, there is usually an information gap that has to be bridged, and one must cultivate the conditions that favor intuition. This is what Machiavelli meant when he said “knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do).” The prudent man is one who constantly thinks of “now” as the moving concept in which past, present moment, and future are one organic unity. And this requires living by a sort of rhythm that encourages a high level of intuitive insight about the whole gamut of events from the indefinite past, through the present moment, to the indefinite future. One is at once, in every moment of time, historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet—not three separate roles. This is what the practicing leader is, every day of his life.

Living this way is partly a matter of *faith*. Stress is a condition of most of modern life, and if one is a servant-leader and carrying the burdens of other people—going out ahead to show the way, one takes the rough and tumble (and it really is rough and tumble in some leader roles)—one takes this in the belief that, if one enters a situation prepared with the necessary experience and knowledge at the conscious level, *in the situation* the intuitive insight necessary for one’s optimal performance will be forthcoming. Is there any other way, in the turbulent world of affairs (including the typical home), for one to maintain serenity in the face of uncertainty? One follows the steps of the creative process which require that one stay with conscious analysis as far as it will carry one, and then withdraw, release the analytical pressure, if only for a moment, in full confidence that a resolving insight will come. The concern with the past and future is gradually attenuated as this span of concern goes forward or backward from the instant moment. The ability to do this is the essential structural dynamic of leadership.

Foresight is seen as a wholly rational process, the product of a constantly running internal computer that deals with intersecting series and random inputs and is vastly more complicated than anything technology has yet produced. Foresight means regarding the events of the instant moment and constantly comparing them with a series of projections made in the past and at the same time projecting future events—with diminishing certainty as projected time runs out into the indefinite future.

The failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an *ethical* failure, because a serious ethical compromise today (when the usual judgment on ethical inadequacy is made) is sometimes the result of a failure to make the effort at an earlier date to foresee today’s events and take the right actions when there was freedom for initiative to act. The action which society labels “unethical” in the present moment is often really one of no choice. By this standard a lot of guilty people are walking around with an air of innocence that they would not have if society were able always to pin the label “unethical” on the failure to foresee and the consequent failure to act constructively when there was freedom to act.

Foresight is the “lead” that the leader has. Once leaders lose this lead and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only. They are not leading, but are reacting to immediate events, and they probably will not long be leaders. There are abundant current examples of loss of leadership which stem from a failure to foresee what reasonably could have been foreseen, and from failure to act on that knowledge while the leader had freedom to act.

There is a wealth of experience available on how to achieve this perspective of foresight, but only one aspect is mentioned here. Required is that one live a sort of schizoid life. One is

always at two levels of consciousness. One is in the real world—concerned, responsible, effective, value oriented. One is also detached, riding above it, seeing today's events, and seeing oneself deeply involved in today's events, in the perspective of a long sweep of history and projected into the indefinite future. Such a split enables one better to foresee the unforeseeable. Also, from one level of consciousness, each of us acts resolutely from moment to moment on a set of assumptions that then govern one's life. Simultaneously, from another level, the adequacy of these assumptions is examined, in action, with the aim of future revision and improvement. Such a view gives one the perspective that makes it possible for one to live and act in the real world with a clearer conscience.

AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION

Framing all of this is awareness, opening wide the doors of perception so as to enable one to get more of what is available of sensory experience and other signals from the environment than people usually take in. Awareness has its risks, but it makes life more interesting; certainly it strengthens one's effectiveness as a leader. When one is aware, there is more than the usual alertness, more intense contact with the immediate situation, and more is stored away in the unconscious computer to produce intuitive insights in the future when needed.

William Blake has said, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything will appear to man as it is, infinite." Those who have gotten their doors of perception open wide enough often enough know that this statement of Blake's is not mere poetic exaggeration. Most of us move about with very narrow perception—sight, sound, smell, tactile—and we miss most of

the grandeur that is in the minutest thing, the smallest experience. We also miss leadership opportunities. There is danger, however. Some people cannot take what they see when the doors of perception are open too wide, and they had better test their tolerance for awareness gradually. A qualification for leadership is that one can tolerate a sustained wide span of awareness so that one better "sees it as it is."

The opening of awareness stocks both the conscious and unconscious minds with a richness of resources for future need. But it does more than that: it is value building and value clarifying and it armors one to meet the stress of life by helping build serenity in the face of stress and uncertainty. The cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one's own experience, amidst the ever present dangers, threats, and alarms. Then one sees one's own peculiar assortment of obligations and responsibilities in a way that permits one to sort out the urgent from the important and perhaps deal with the important. Awareness is *not* a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity.

Leaders must have more of an armor of confidence in facing the unknown—more than those who accept their leadership. This is partly anticipation and preparation, but it is also a very firm belief that in the stress of real life situations one can compose oneself in a way that permits the creative process to operate.

This is told dramatically in one of the great stories of the human spirit—the story of Jesus when confronted with the woman taken in adultery. In this story Jesus is seen as a man,

like all of us, with extraordinary prophetic insight of the kind we all have to some degree. He is a leader; he has a goal—to bring more compassion into the lives of people.

In this scene the woman is cast down before him by the mob that is challenging Jesus' leadership. They cry, "The *law* says she shall be stoned. What do *you* say?" Jesus must make a decision; he must give the *right* answer, *right* in the situation, and one that sustains his leadership toward his goal. The situation is deliberately stressed by his challengers. What does he do?

He sits there writing in the sand—a withdrawal device. In the pressure of the moment, having assessed the situation rationally, he assumes the attitude of withdrawal that will allow creative insight to function.

He could have taken another course; he could have regaled the mob with rational arguments about the superiority of compassion over torture. A good logical argument can be made for it. What would the result have been had he taken that course?

He did not choose to do that. He chose instead to withdraw and cut the stress—right in the event itself—in order to open his *awareness* to creative insight. And a great one came, one that has kept the story of the incident alive for two thousand years: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone."

HOW DOES ONE KNOW THE SERVANT?

For those who follow—and this is everyone, including those who lead—the really critical question is: Who is this moral individual we would see as leader? Who is the servant? How does one tell a truly giving, enriching servant from the neutral person or the one whose net influence is to take away from or diminish other people?

Rabbi Heschel had just concluded a lecture on the Old Testament prophets in which he had spoken of true prophets and false prophets. A questioner asked him how one tells the difference between the true and the false prophets. The rabbi's answer was succinct and to the point. "There is no *way!*" he said. Then he elaborated, "If there were a *way*, if one had a gauge to slip over the head of the prophet and establish without question that he is or he isn't a true prophet, there would be no human dilemma and life would have no meaning."

So it is with the servant issue. If there were a dependable *way* that would tell us, "These people enrich by their presence, they are neutral, or they take away," life would be without challenge. Yet it is terribly important that one *know*, both about oneself and about others, whether the net effect of one's influence on others enriches, is neutral or diminishes and depletes.

Since there is no certain way to know this, one must turn to the artists for illumination. Such an illumination is in Hermann Hesse's idealized portrayal of the servant Leo whose servanthood comes through in his leadership. In stark modern terms it can also be found in the brutal reality of the mental hospital where Ken Kesey (in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) gives us Big Nurse—strong, able, dedicated, dominating, authority-ridden, manipulative, exploitative—the net effect of whose influence diminished other people, literally destroyed them. In the story she is pitted in a contest with tough, gutterbred MacMurphy, a patient, the net effect of whose influence is to build up people and make both patients and the doctor in charge of the ward grow larger as persons, stronger, healthier—an effort that ultimately costs MacMurphy his life. If one will study the two characters, Leo and MacMurphy, one will get a measure of the range of possibilities in the role of servant as leader.

IN HERE, NOT OUT THERE

A king once asked Confucius' advice on what to do about the large number of thieves. Confucius answered, "If you, sir, were not covetous, although you should reward them to do it, they would not steal." This advice places an enormous burden on those who are favored by the rules, and it establishes how old is the notion that the servant views any problem in the world as *in here*, inside oneself, not *out there*. And if a flaw in the world is to be remedied, to the servant the process of change starts *in here*, in the servant, not *out there*. This is a difficult concept for that busybody, modern man.

So it is with joy. Joy is inward, it is generated inside. It is not found outside and brought in. It is for those who accept the world as it is, part good, part bad, and who identify with the good by adding a little island of serenity to it.

Hermann Hesse dramatized it in the powerful leadership exerted by Leo who ostensibly served only in menial ways but who, by the quality of his inner life that was manifest in his presence, lifted men up and made the journey possible. Camus, in his final testament, leaves us with "Each and every man, on the foundations of his own sufferings and joys, builds for them all."

WHO IS THE ENEMY?

Who is the enemy? Who is holding back more rapid movement to the better society that is reasonable and possible with available resources? Who is responsible for the mediocre performance of so many of our institutions? Who is standing in the way of a larger consensus on the definition of the better society and paths to reaching it?

Not evil people. Not stupid people. Not apathetic people. Not the "system." Not the protesters, the disrupters, the revolutionaries, the reactionaries.

Granting that fewer evil, stupid, or apathetic people or a better "system" might make the job easier, their removal would not change matters, not for long. The better society will come, if it comes, with plenty of evil, stupid, apathetic people around and with an imperfect, ponderous, inertia-charged "system" as the vehicle for change. Liquidate the offending people, radically alter or destroy the system, and in less than a generation they will all be back. It is not in the nature of things that a society can be cleaned up once and for all according to an ideal plan. And even if it were possible, who would want to live in an aseptic world? Evil, stupidity, apathy, the "system" are not the enemy even though society building forces will be contending with them all the time. The healthy society, like the healthy body, is not the one that has taken the most medicine. It is the one in which the internal health building forces are in the best shape.

The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people, and their failure to lead, and to follow servants as leaders. Too many settle for being critics and experts. There is too much intellectual wheel spinning, too much retreating into "research," too little preparation for and willingness to undertake the hard and high risk tasks of building better institutions in an imperfect world, too little disposition to see "the problem" as residing *in here* and not *out there*.

In short, the enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a non-servant. They suffer. Society suffers. And so it may be in the future.

IMPLICATIONS

The future society may be just as mediocre as this one. It may be worse. And no amount of restructuring or changing the system or tearing it down in the hope that something better will grow will change this. There may be a better system than the one we now have. It is hard to know. But, whatever it is, if the people to lead it well are not there, a better system will not produce a better society.

Many people finding their wholeness through many and varied contributions make a good society. Here we are concerned with but one facet: *able servants with potential to lead will lead, and, where appropriate, they will follow only servant-leaders.* Not much else counts if this does not happen.

This brings us to that critical aspect of realism that confronts the servant-leader, that of *order*. There must be some order because we know for certain that the great majority of people will choose some kind of order over chaos even if it is delivered by a brutal non-servant and even if, in the process, they lose much of their freedom. Therefore the servant-leader will beware of pursuing an idealistic path regardless of its impact on order. The big question is: What kind of order? This is the great challenge to the emerging generation of leaders: Can they build better order?

Older people who grew up in a period when values were more settled and the future seemed more secure will be disturbed by much they find today. But one firm note of hope comes through—loud and clear; we are at a turn of history in which people are growing up faster and some extraordinarily able, mature, servant-disposed men and women are emerging in their early and middle twenties. The percentage may be small, and, again, it may be larger than we think. Moreover, it

is not an elite; it is all sorts of exceptional people. Most of them could be ready for some large society-shaping responsibility by the time they are thirty *if* they are encouraged to prepare for leadership as soon as their potential as builders is identified, which is possible for many of them by age eighteen or twenty. Preparation to lead need not be at the complete expense of vocational or scholarly preparation, but it must be the *first priority*. And it may take some difficult bending of resources and some unusual initiatives to accomplish all that should be accomplished in these critical years *and* give leadership preparation first priority. But whatever it takes, it must be done. For a while at least, until a better led society is assured, some other important goals should take a subordinate place.

All of this rests on the assumption that the only way to change a society (or just make it go) is to produce people, enough people, who will change it (or make it go). The urgent problems of our day—the disposition to venture into immoral and senseless wars, destruction of the environment, poverty, alienation, discrimination, overpopulation—are here because of human failures, individual failures, one person at a time, one action at a time failures.

If we make it out of all of this (and this is written in the belief that we will make it), the “system” will be whatever works best. The builders will find the useful piece wherever they are, and invent new ones when needed, all without reference to ideological coloration. “How do we get the right things done?” will be the watchword of the day, every day. And the context of those who bring it off will be: all men and women who are touched by the effort grow taller, and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous, *and* more disposed to serve.

Leo the *servant*, and the exemplar of the *servant-leader*, has one further portent for us. If we may assume that Hermann

Hesse is the narrator in *Journey to the East* (not a difficult assumption to make), at the end of the story he establishes his identity. His final confrontation at the close of his initiation into the Order is with a small transparent sculpture, two figures joined together. One is Leo, the other is the narrator. The narrator notes that a movement of substance is taking place within the transparent sculpture.

I perceived that my image was in the process of adding to and flowing into Leo's, nourishing and strengthening it. It seemed that in time . . . only one would remain: Leo. He must grow, I must disappear.

As I stood there and looked and tried to understand what I saw, I recalled a short conversation that I had once had with Leo during the festive days at Bremgarten. We had talked about the creations of poetry being more vivid and real than the poets themselves.

What Hesse may be telling us here is that Leo is the symbolic personification of Hesse's aspiration to serve through his literary creations, creations that are greater than Hesse himself; and that his work, for which he was but the channel, will carry on and serve and lead in a way that he, a twisted and tormented man, could not—except as he created.

Does not Hesse dramatize, in extreme form, the dilemma of us all? Except as we venture to create, we cannot project ourselves beyond ourselves to serve and lead.

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Chapter Ten

The Case for Co-Leaders

David A. Heenan
Warren Bennis

*If a man aspires to the highest place,
it is no dishonor to him to halt at the second.*

—Cicero

An overseas visitor to our shores recently remarked: “If beings from another planet were attempting to learn about working in the United States by reading business magazines, they would have to assume that everyone in America is either a CEO or about to become one.”

The point is well taken. Ours is a culture obsessed with celebrity, and so we have made superstars of Bill Gates and other fascinating leaders, just as we have made legends of favored rock stars and screen actors. Nevertheless, even as we read yet another article that implies that Microsoft *is* Bill Gates, we know better. We know that every successful organization has, at its heart, a cadre of *co-leaders*—key players who do the work, even if they receive little of the glory.