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Attitude in Leadership

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MICHAEL ON AUGUST 10, 2016

SELF LEADERSHIP

Living Life With The Right Mind

Having the right attitude in life is important, but more so having the right attitude in leadership. Attitude is in the realm of choice, meaning that you can control it at any point in time, no matter the circumstances you are facing.

First, learning to adjust your attitude is the first step in self-leadership; you lead your frame of mind before anything else.

Viktor Frankl, who was a man imprisoned by the Germans during the Second World War, remarked, "The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me."

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is to
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circumstance."

During the Second World War, the German did many things to try to break the will of Viktor Frankl, but they soon found that while they could destroy his physical state, but they could never destroy his resolve or attitude.

And the one attitude he kept holding on to was that one day he will walk out of the camp and then live to tell the story. That hope, that attitude was what kept him alive where others despaired and perished.

Viktor Frankl taught the world a very important lesson. Circumstances can take many things from you: your possessions, your family and loved ones. But circumstances can never take away your attitude. You alone choose your attitude.

Charles Swindoll said life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you react to it. They didn't have the vocabulary then, but Charles was pointing to our attitudes.

What is Attitude in Leadership?

The dictionary defines attitude as a manner, disposition, feeling, position with regard to a person or thing; a tendency or orientation of the mind.

Simply put, it's the posture that you choose to look at life in general.

Attitude is the way you mentally look at the world around you. It is how you view your environment and your future. In other words, it is your worldview.

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- Does life suck, and then you die?
 - Is life a meaningful journey filled with hope?
 - Is life meaningless, and by extension everything you do?

Your answer to this question is how you answer EVERY question. By these lenses, by these attitudes you see the world. Besides the complete worldview, we have our attitudes toward other details in life like work (is it a chore or a problem (challenge or dead-end), relationships (joy or pain) and in this case, Leadership.

How do you view Leadership and Leading People?

- Do you view your team as people that are trying to usurp you to take your position?
- Do you view them as hired hands to get the job done?
- Do you view them as team-mates who are seeking the same goals in life as you?

Your answer to these questions determines what kind of leader you will become.

How powerful your attitudes are, in fact, the success of your organization is most dependent on the leader's attitude. If you are a leader, the good news is, you can make that choice.

You have a choice to choose a positive yet realistic attitude toward the people you're leading. You have a choice to push away the attitudes that think the worst about people. But more than our attitudes towards people, our attitudes toward life will make all the difference as well.

William James, a philosopher of the early 20th century, said, "It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult undertaking which, more than anything else, will determine its successful outcome."

As a leader, you'll be facing a lot of challenges in your organization: an internal struggle like a conflict at the workplace or an external challenge that is testing the survivability of your organization.

It is ultimately your attitude that will make all the difference in whether you're successful in tackling the challenge.

To Have Great Attitude in Leadership, We Must:

To have a great attitude in leadership, we must constantly be aware of the things that are influencing us. Although you are constantly influencing people, you yourself are constantly influenced by your surroundings.

So then the question: What is in your surroundings? What are the books you read? People you speak to? Online content you consume?

Social media like Facebook and Twitter are generally negative. People complain, accuse, lay blame under the veil of anonymity. If you spend long enough on social media, it won't be surprising that you become negative, angry and dissatisfied.

Similarly, if you hang out with negative people, you're going to be influenced unconsciously. You're going to be given a reason to be unhappy. You're going to be given a reason the world did not treat you fairly.

Like it or not, all these things influence your thinking and your attitudes. Jim Rohn famously said that you are the product of the five closest people around you. They may be just one person, but these 5 represent your social world to you.



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So be careful about what and who you allow around yourself; these things unconsciously shape your worldview and attitudes.

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Leadership Geeks seeks to equip you with the right attitudes by constantly sharing key leadership principles and thoughts that will help you shape your thinking and be progressive in your growth journey.

The right influence brings the right attitudes and behaviours. Stay with the right influence and you'll begin to see yourself becoming a better, stronger and more effective leader wherever you are!

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8 Common Leadership Styles

By: Rhea Blanken, FASAE

If you're leading well, you won't have just one leadership style. You'll mix and match to engage your team and meet your goals. Look over these eight style types to see what you're doing right—and what you might be missing.

There is a time and place for all leadership styles. No style is good or bad. It's how leaders use them that determines success or failure.

Take the case of New York Giants Head Coach Tom Coughlin. Today Coughlin is a two-time Super Bowl winner. But early in his tenure, it was unclear whether he would remain as a head coach. Team members were turned off by his rigid management style. He imposed many rules to infuse discipline. He fined players if they were not in their seats at team meetings five minutes before the start time. Morale was terrible. There was no playfulness in playing.

Something had to change. The team's general manager and the head coach had a heart-to-heart.

Coughlin not only survived but became an extraordinary head coach. His willingness to dramatically alter his thinking and behavior transformed his relationship with his players. He became more concerned about their lives as well as their performance on the field. He demonstrated his accountability for their development. He created a players' council to improve communication between the coaching staff and the men in the locker room.

While reinventing himself as a leader, Coughlin showed perseverance and persistence and never lost sight of his goal: winning the Super Bowl. He surrounded himself with people who shared his values but did not necessarily act in the same ways. The result: His team now consistently dominates its division.

Coughlin's example confirms an essential truth: Leadership and management styles are not fixed in place, permanently attached to an individual's personality. While most leaders develop a dominant leadership style, the best learn to adopt elements of other styles when needed to achieve their goals. In the parlance of the eight management styles described on the following pages, Coughlin falls squarely in the command-and-control category, but he adapted key attributes of the situational, transformational, and innovative styles. And it worked.

A Winning Formula

There is no such thing as a born leader. Leadership is an acquired attribute that begins early in school and on the playground. Some children develop take-charge attitudes, some make friends fast, while others are happy just to make the team. As time goes on, education, jobs, and life experiences shape a leader's philosophy and psychology. How best to get the job done and work with others? How to set goals and objectives and manage their results? The answers to these questions become a leader's winning formula for success.

But over time, a leader may find that her winning formula is not producing the results it used to. New challenges require new leadership skills, behaviors, and ways of communicating. It's time for her to unlearn her familiar leadership approach, recognize her limitations, and adapt her leadership style to become the leader she needs to be.

Louis R. Mobley, the director of IBM's executive school in the 1950s and 1960s, first alerted executives to the need to "wake up" to the comfortable parameters they worked in so they could better "feel" their leadership potential. His lessons still apply today.

Mobley taught that leadership is based in experience and habit, not intellect, noting that success comes 20 percent from knowledge and 80 percent from behavior. For Mobley, waking up to leadership meant being responsible for one's impact on others. He pushed for a "radical revolution in consciousness," believing that great leaders don't know different things from everyone else, but they think in utterly different ways. Leadership lives in how we think, not what we think.

Consider the eight leadership styles outlined here and the real-world leaders who exemplify them. If you are aware of these different ways of leading, you can adapt your style to manage circumstances and advance your intended goals. How do you decide which styles to employ? Read, reflect, and go experiment.

1. Charismatic

THE ICON: OPRAH WINFREY

Known all over the world by her first name alone, picks a book to read and makes it a bestseller overnight, runs her own television network, and has more than 14 million Twitter followers. Her word can move the stock market and social issues for the better.

BEHAVIORS

- Influences others through power of personality
- Acts energetically, motivating others to move forward
- Inspires passion
- May seem to believe more in self than in the team

WHEN TO USE IT

- To spur others to action
- To expand an organization's position in the marketplace
- To raise team morale

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Can create risk that a project or group will flounder if leader leaves
- Leader's feeling of invincibility can ruin a team by taking on too much risk
- Team success seen as directly connected to the leader's presence

2. Innovative

THE ICON: RICHARD BRANSON

Launched his first business at 16, founder of Virgin Group, comprising more than 400 companies in fields ranging from music to space tourism. He recently described his philosophy to *Inc.* magazine: "Dream big by setting yourself seemingly impossible challenges. You then have to catch up with them."

BEHAVIORS

- Grasps the entire situation and goes beyond the usual course of action
- Can see what is not working and brings new thinking and action into play

WHEN TO USE IT

- To break open entrenched, intractable issues
- To create a work climate for others to apply innovative thinking to solve problems, develop new products and services

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Risk taking is increased for all
- Failures don't impede progress
- Team gains job satisfaction and enjoyment
- Atmosphere of respect for others' ideas is present

"My best leadership moments have all occurred when I realized I did not have to lead anymore. Leadership is not always about being in front. Sometimes, it is about being comfortable enough in your skin to lead from the rear and let others shine."—*Velma Hart, FASAE, CAE, chief financial officer, Thurgood Marshall College Fund*

"The best leadership moments are the ones that I don't know about. They happen when someone on the staff or volunteer team makes the right decision that solves a problem, or delights a member, or inspires an idea, or advances our mission. The ultimate measure of a leader is what happens in your absence."—*Gary A. LaBranche, FASAE, CAE, president and CEO, Association for Corporate Growth*

"What comes naturally to me is the desire to connect ideas, experiences, stories, efforts, and people. Sharing relevant information at opportune times in ways that enhance outcomes is energizing. Communication skills, timing, including all stakeholders, and ego-free interactions are keys to successful leadership."—*Susan Gorin, CAE, executive director, National Association of School Psychologists*

3. Command and Control

THE ICON: TOM COUGHLIN

Controversial head coach of the New York Giants, a stern taskmaster and disciplinarian who learned to adapt his leadership style to improve his relationships with his team but never lost sight of his goal: winning Super Bowls.

BEHAVIORS

- Follows the rules and expects others to do the same

WHEN TO USE IT

- In situations of real urgency with no time for discussion
- When safety is at stake
- In critical situations involving financial, legal, or HR issues
- In meeting inflexible deadlines
- Demands immediate compliance
- Engages in top-down interactions
- Is the sole decision maker

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- If used too much, feels restrictive and limits others' ability to develop their own leadership skills
- Others have little chance to debrief what was learned before next encounter with leader

4. Laissez-Faire

THE ICON: DONNA KARAN

Founder of DKNY, built an international fashion empire based on wide appeal to both women and men. Although she has spent less time creating her own designs since 2002, her vision lives on in the work of other designers, inspired by her leadership.

BEHAVIORS

- Knows what is happening but not directly involved in it
- Trusts others to keep their word
- Monitors performance, gives feedback regularly

WHEN TO USE IT

- When the team is working in multiple locations or remotely
- When a project, under multiple leaders, must come together by a specific date
- To get quick results from a highly cohesive team

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Effective when team is skilled, experienced, and self-directed in use of time and resources
- Autonomy of team members leads to high job satisfaction and increased productivity

5. Pace Setter

THE ICON: JEFF BEZOS

Founder of Amazon, set the pace for the boom in e-commerce by creating a transactional interface that every other online merchant copied—the same people who are now following him to the cloud.

BEHAVIORS

- Sets high performance standards for self and the group
- Epitomizes the behavior sought from others

WHEN TO USE IT

- When staff are self-motivated and highly skilled, able to embrace new projects and move with speed
- When action is key and results are critical

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Cannot be sustained too long, as staff may "burn out" from demanding pace
- Results delivered at a speed staff can't always keep up with

6. Servant

THE ICON: HERB KELLEHER

Cofounder and former CEO of Southwest Airlines, famously said "the business of business is people" and created a company culture that reflects that philosophy. He once took an interior office with no windows rather than encourage the traditional view of an office as a status symbol.

BEHAVIORS

- Puts service to others before self-interest
- Includes the whole team in decision making
- Provides tools to get the job done

- Stays out of limelight, lets team accept credit for results

WHEN TO USE IT

- When leader is elected to a team, organization, committee, or community
- When anyone, at any level of the group, meets the needs of the team

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Organizations with these leaders often seen on "best places to work" list
- Can create a positive culture and lead to high morale
- Ill-suited if situation calls for quick decisions or meeting tight deadlines

7. Situational

THE ICON: PAT SUMMITT

Former head coach of the University of Tennessee women's basketball team, holds the record as the all-time winningest coach in NCAA history. Even as new players joined her team each year, she maintained a winning record (more than 1,000 victories and eight national championships over 38 years) by adapting her coaching to her young players' skills and needs.

BEHAVIORS

- Links behavior with group's readiness
- Includes being directing and supportive, while empowering and coaching

WHEN TO USE IT

- Where ongoing procedures need refinement, reinvention, or retirement

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Can be confusing if behavior changes unpredictably and too often
- Can reduce uncertainty as leader adapts behavior appropriately

8. Transformational

THE ICONS: BEN COHEN AND JERRY GREENFIELD

Turned a \$12,000 investment and a correspondence course on ice cream making into a beloved international treat. They adopted a radical business philosophy dedicated to social responsibility and created a business model that allowed members of their customer community to become stockholders.

BEHAVIORS

- Expects team to transform even when it's uncomfortable
- Counts on everyone giving their best
- Serves as a role model for all involved

WHEN TO USE IT

- To encourage the group to pursue innovative and creative ideas and actions

- To motivate the group by strengthening team optimism, enthusiasm, and commitment

IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Can lead to high productivity and engagement from all team members
- Team needs detailed-oriented people to ensure scheduled work is done

Rhea Blanken, FASAE, is president of Results Technology, Inc., in Bethesda, Maryland. Email: rheaz@resultstech.com (<mailto:rheaz@resultstech.com>)

Read More

- "Strengthen Your Executive Presence," by Carol Vernon, *Associations Now*, September/October 2012
- "[The Truth as a Leadership Imperative](#)," by Jamie Notter, *Associations Now*, June 2010
- "[Transformative Leadership at the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind](#)," by Doug Eadie and Virginia Jacko, *Associations Now*, February 2010

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To Create Real Change, Leadership Is More Important Than Authority

2014 JUNE 1

by Greg Satell

tags: Disruption, Influentials, Leadership, Social Networks



Aspiring young executives dream of climbing the ladder in order to gain more authority. Then they can make things happen and create the change that they believe in. Senior executives, on the other hand, are often frustrated by how little power they actually have.

The problem is that while authority can compel action it does little to inspire belief. Only leadership can do that. It's not enough to get people to do what you want, they have to also want what you want or any change is bound to be short lived.

That's why change management efforts commonly fail. All too often, they are designed to carry out initiatives that come from the top. When you get right down to it, that's really the just same thing as telling people to do what you want, albeit in slightly more artful way. To make change really happen, it doesn't need to be managed, but empowered.

Failures of Authority

In the 1850's, Ignaz Semmelweis was the head physician at the obstetric ward of a small hospital in Pest, Hungary. Having done extensive research into how sanitary conditions could limit infections, he instituted a strict regime of handwashing and virtually eliminated the childbed fever that was endemic at the time.

In 2005, John Antioco was the eminently successful CEO of Blockbuster, the 800-pound gorilla of the video rental industry. Yet, despite the firm's dominance, he saw a mortal threat coming in the form of streaming video and nimble new competitors like Netflix. He initiated an aggressive program to cancel late fees and invest in an online platform.

Things ended poorly for both men. Semmelweis, was castigated by the medical community and died in an insane asylum, ironically of an infection he contracted while under medical care. Antioco was fired by his company's board and his successor reversed his reforms. Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy in 2010.

While today the insights of Semmelweis and Antioco seem obvious, they did not at the time. In the former case, it was believed that illness was caused by an imbalance of humours and in the latter, the threat of online video seemed too distant to justify forsaking profits. Even given their positions of authority, neither was able to overcome the majority view.

Majorities Don't Just Rule, They Influence

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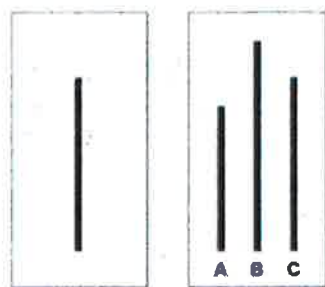
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We tend to overestimate the power of influence. It always seems that if we had a little bit more authority or were able to make our case more forcefully, we could drive our ideas forward. Yet Semmelweis and Antioco had not only authority, but also the facts on their side and were willing to risk their careers. They failed nonetheless.



In the 1950's, the eminent psychologist Solomon Asch performed a series of famous experiments that help explain why. He showed the chart below to a group of people and asked which line on the right matched the line on the left.

It seems like a fairly simple task and it should be, but Asch, renowned for his ingenuity, added a twist. All of the people in the room, except one, were instructed to give wrong answer. By the time he got to the last person who was the true subject, most who participated conformed to the majority view, even though it was obviously wrong.

While we like to think of ourselves as independent and free-thinking, the truth is that we are greatly affected by the views of those around us. If you are in an office where people watch silly cat videos, you'll find yourself doing the same and laughing along. Yet often you'll find that they're not nearly as funny when you watch them in different company.

The truth is that majorities don't just rule, they also influence, even if the majority is extremely localized and contextual.

How Change Really Happens

Conformity is never absolute. Even in Asch's experiments, there were some who held out much like Semmelweis and Antioco. We all have our points of conviction on which we are unlikely to be swayed, other areas in which we need more convincing and still others that we really don't care enough about to form much of an opinion at all.

That, essentially is what the threshold model of collective behavior predicts. Ideas take hold in small local majorities. Many stop there and never go any further, but some saturate those local clusters and move on to more reluctant groups through weak ties. Eventually, a cascading effect ensues.

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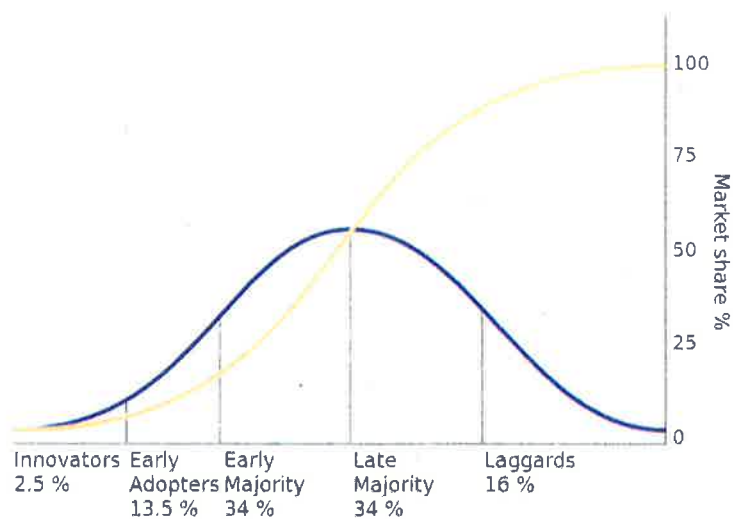
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The best known example of the threshold model at work is the [diffusion of innovations model](#) developed by [Everett Rogers](#) that is shown above. A small group of innovators gets hold of an idea and indoctrinates a somewhat more reluctant group of early adopters to form local majorities.

Before long, the more reticent denizens of those clusters soon find themselves outnumbered and begin to conform, just as in [Asch's study](#). The new converts find themselves passing the idea on to other social groups they belong to and the process continues until the idea has grown far beyond its original niche.

When this happens, a cascade can form and even the laggards join in. Those who raised their eyebrows and smirked at the very first cat video are finding themselves showing it to their aunt at a wedding. Intuitively noting that it is already a crowd favorite, she laughs approvingly.

[Empowering The Lunatics](#)

We can now see the failure of Semmelweis and Antioch for what it is. Rather than seeking to lead a passionate band of willing innovators and build a movement, they sought the authority to create wholesale change by forcing the undocinated against their will. Instead of painstakingly building local majorities, they attempted to compel entire populations.

Control is an illusion and always has been an illusion. It is a [Hobbesian paradox](#) that we cannot enforce change unless change has already occurred. The [lunatics always run the asylum](#), the best we can do as leaders is empower them to run it right.

And that's why change always requires leadership rather than authority. Respectable people always prefer incumbency to disruption. Only misfits are threatened by the status quo. So if you want to create real change, it is not power and influence that you need, but those who seek to overthrow it.

– Greg

Note: An earlier version of this post appeared in [Harvard Business Review](#)

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Frank Traylor PERMALINK

June 1, 2014

Great post. Love " the lunatics always run the asylum"

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Greg Reply:

June 1st, 2014 at 2:05 pm

That's great to hear! I've been accused:-)

– Greg

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