

CHAPTER 10

LEADERSHIP

“The topic of leadership and the investment in leadership development by organizations has never been more pronounced than it is today. A recent literature search using the key word *leadership* on a popular Internet search engine (google.com) turned up an incredible 9,450,000 references.”¹

Given the astounding amount of literature on the subject of leadership, how can one develop effective leadership skills? Scholars Yammarino, Dansereau and Kennedy stated flatly, “People are the basis of all leadership.”² Kanter observed, “leaders have to be relationship oriented.”³ Therefore, it appears that leadership skills are interpersonal skills. But in Chapter One it was observed that one cannot acquire interpersonal skills by reading a book or listening to a lecture.

Currently, effective managers are thought to be leaders as well. Thomas pointed out that “increasingly, the people who are the most effective are those who essentially are both managers and leaders.”⁴ More recently Bartlett observed, “Good management is about achieving results through others and I think that it always encompassed leadership.”⁵ It should be recognized however, that only a few years ago managers and leaders were thought to be different. For example, on page 173 of the January 18, 1988 issue of Fortune, Warren Bennis said:

"The difference between managers and leaders is fundamental. The manager administers, the leader innovates. The manager maintains, the leader develops. The manager relies on systems, the leader relies on people. The manager counts on control, the leader counts on trust. The manager does things right, the leader does the right thing."

Bennis also notes that "America's vast industrial empire had been built by leaders...(but) inevitably, they were replaced by managers." One may wonder why the leaders that built America were "replaced by managers" to use Bennis's words? It is particularly puzzling that America's industrial leaders were called "managers". What happened? Why were 1988s managers not considered leaders? One hypothesis might be that because of the emphasis given to systems analysis and linear thinking for the previous several decades and the attempts, most notably exemplified by former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, to make management more "scientific", the words "manager" and "management" evolved from the forties to the eighties to have a different connotation: that of "administrator" or worse, "bureaucrat". Certainly, early writers in the field such as Chester Barnard⁶ seemed

to equate "leadership of an organization" and "management". If Bennis was correct that earlier generations of those called "managers" were also "leaders", then it may well be possible that the difference between the two was a function of an over emphasis on "scientific" management and linear thinking to the exclusion of non-linear and contextual thinking essential to the more intuitive functions of "leadership". [Indeed, "a precondition for making business studies a science ... has been the explicit denial of any role of moral or ethical considerations in the practice of management."⁷ Further, "by propagating ideologically inspired amoral theories, business schools have actively freed their students from any sense of moral responsibility."⁸]

The role of intuition, judgment, and contextual thinking has exploded in the management and leadership literature as evidenced by Burke and Miller⁹, Goffee and Jones (op. cit), Hayashi¹⁰, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee¹¹, Bonabeau¹², and before that Peters and Waterman¹³, Simon¹⁴, Agor¹⁵, and Rowan¹⁶ just to cite a few. Although in some organizations such as the military it may be possible to be a "leader" without having administrative skill, it is apparent to most observers, as noted by Thomas and Bartlett (op. cit) that "managers" must also be leaders.

Since effective managers need to be good administrators and leaders, then what is a good leader and how can you become one? Goffee and Jones observed, "there are endless varieties of leadership" and "No one can just ape another leader. So the challenge facing prospective leaders is for them to be themselves, but with more skill. (You should) come up with a personal style that works for you. Remember there is no universal formula."¹⁷ Drucker also observed, "Some of the best business and nonprofit CEOs I've worked with over a 65 year consulting career were not stereotypical leaders. They were all over the map in terms of their personalities, attitudes, values, strengths, and weaknesses. They ranged from extroverted to nearly reclusive, from easygoing to controlling, from generous to parsimonious."¹⁸

"Are leaders born or made?" is a question that has been asked for decades if not centuries and is still with us today. It is a question of genes or environment. But Conger observed, "Many factors shape the extent to which an individual becomes a leader, including genetic predisposition, family environment, school experiences, hardships, job experiences, bosses, organizational incentives, and training. It is not a matter of whether leaders are born or made. They are born *and* made."¹⁹ On the other hand, Hill observed, "But what we know for sure is that managers are mostly made, not born."²⁰ To the practical executive, all of this seems irrelevant; whatever portion of leadership that is derived from either genes or environmental factors is not susceptible to training, is beyond our control and therefore, the focus should be on what we can influence. Blagg and Young (op. cit. p.36) quoted John Kotter, "some people may have personality traits that make it more likely they will be leaders but many people have the potential for leadership, (but) they haven't developed it". Doh (op. cit. p. 58) quotes Mike Useem, "Some managers

have a head start in acquiring leadership capabilities, but everyone can improve.” Doh goes on to observe (p.64) “leadership skills are best acquired as part of a practical, experiential educational program, ... traditional classroom teaching methods are ... not sufficient for acquiring leadership skills.”

The number of courses being offered by the military, industry, and consultants on leadership strongly suggests that there are some skills that can be taught. But in every field of endeavor, whether in sports or in organizations, the level of skill achieved depends not only on the innate abilities inherent in the individual, but also on such factors as motivation to excel, the extent of training, and the quality of coaching.

Although a cursory look at the current literature reveals a host of vague, sometimes contradictory definitions of leadership, they seem to have a common component involving the skill to influence others. In essence, an effective leader is able to influence other people to do those things that the leader desires. For our purposes a person exerts leadership within an organizational framework consisting of a structure, cultures and subcultures, individuals and groups, a set of tasks in support of goals, various measurement systems, and probably many other factors which facilitate or inhibit various behaviors.

Historically, among the earliest concepts employed to look at leaders and managers was the trait approach which tried to identify the common individual characteristics that those identified as "leaders" seemed to possess. In an early study, Tead²¹ reported that the traits of an effective leader were nervous and physical energy, a sense of purpose and dedication, enthusiasm, friendliness, integrity, technical mastery, decisiveness, intelligence, teaching skills, and faith. Barnard (op. cit.) stated that the significant traits that distinguished leaders from their followers were physique, technical skill, perception, knowledge, memory, imagination, determination, persistence, endurance, and courage. Bass²² describes the characteristics of the transformational leader as charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Collins argues that a *level 5 leader* is an individual that blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will²³. Many other studies of leadership traits followed and these have been examined as a body by scholars such as Bass and Stogdill²⁴, Yukl²⁵ and others, while more recent successful leaders have been looked at by people such as Bennis²⁶, Conger²⁷, Kirkpatrick and Locke²⁸, Peters and Waterman (op. cit.), and Kotter (op. cit.). Since most definitions of leadership include some element of influencing others and we have looked at Kotter's work on this subject in Chapter 4, let's look at what he has to say about "personal requirements" or traits of successful leaders.

Kotter lists six personal requirements.

- I. Broad knowledge of the industry and the company. [This requirement is industry and company specific and therefore, an effective leader in one company or industry may not be an effective leader in another company or industry.]

- II. Broad set of solid relationships in the firm and in the industry. [Which describes effective "networks".]
- III. Excellent reputation and a strong track record in a broad set of activities. [Which is a source of power.]
- IV. A keen mind (moderately strong analytical ability, good judgment, capacity to think strategically and multidimensionally), and strong interpersonal skills (ability to develop good working relationships quickly, empathy, ability to sell, sensitivity to people and human nature). [This describes linear, non-linear, and contextual skills, (see Chapter 2) and the interpersonal skills which are the focus of this book.]
- V. High integrity. [Which includes ethics and honesty.]
- VI. And high energy level and a strong drive to lead. [Which derives from determination, motivation and confidence.]

An individual's "traits" do not seem sufficient by themselves to explain effective leadership. To a practicing executive it seems obvious that an effective leader's behavior is a critical factor and will depend not only on his or her own innate personal attributes including ethics and his or her own acquired skills but also on the situation, people and tasks involved. It is not the purpose of this chapter to trace the historical evolution of the theories of leadership; they are many and varied and Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (op. cit.) covers most of them for those interested.

But what do leaders actually do? What behaviors do successful leaders exhibit? Within this context, there are many approaches to leadership that have found some favor with both academics and practical, effective managers. Tichy and Ulrich²⁹ made a significant contribution to the transformational approach by asserting that three steps were required to transform an organization: 1. create a vision, 2. mobilize commitment, and 3. institutionalize change. The situational approach includes Tannenbaum and Schmidt's look at autocratic and democratic styles³⁰, and Fiedler's³¹ contingency model focusing on task oriented and relationship oriented situations. Blake and Mouton³² elaborated on this basic approach with their managerial grid approach and Hersey and Blanchard³³ added the followers maturity as a factor. In essence there are four leadership styles in the Hersey and Blanchard model:

- 1. Telling - high task and low relationship behaviors with low follower maturity,
- 2. Selling - high task and high relationship behaviors with moderate follower maturity,
- 3. Participating - high relationship and low task behaviors with moderate follower maturity, and
- 4. Delegating - low relationship and low task behaviors with high follower maturity.

Another useful and popular "model" of effective leadership, based on extensive field research and which seems to incorporate much of the earlier literature, has been put forth

by Kouzes and Posner (op. cit.). They list five fundamental practices and ten (two each) "commitments". They are:

I. Challenging the Process

1. Search for Opportunities (including those presented by subordinates, Chapter 11)
2. Experiment and Take Risks

II. Inspiring a Shared Vision

3. Envision the Future
4. Enlist Others

III. Enabling Others to Act

5. Foster Collaboration
6. Strengthen Others

IV. Modeling the Way

7. Set the Example
8. Plan Small Wins

V. Encouraging the Heart

9. Recognize Individual Contribution
10. Celebrate Accomplishment

Within this "model", the behavior of leaders may vary considerably depending on their own unique set of skills as well as the specific skills of the other people involved, the nature of the tasks to be performed, the environment and cultures involved, and a host of other factors, only some of which may be identified.

Kouzes and Posner (op. cit.) also observe that "leadership is inextricably connected with the process of innovation". Therefore, since innovation can occur at any level in an organization, so can leadership. Kanter³⁴ describes three steps middle managers take in the process of innovation. They are: define (and redefine) the project; build a coalition; and take action to handle interference and maintain momentum. These various approaches to leadership seem more similar than different. Kanter's step one looks like a combination of Kouzes and Posner's 1, 2, 3 & 4. Her step two could be a combination of their 4, 5, & 6 and her step three could be a combination of their 7, 8, 9, & 10.

Goleman lists four fundamental capabilities:³⁵

1. Self-Awareness (including the ability to read and understand your emotions, a realistic evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses, and a strong and positive sense of self-worth.)
2. Self-Management (including the ability to keep your emotions under control, a consistent display of honesty and integrity, the ability to manage yourself, skill at adjusting to changing situations, the drive to meet an internal standard of excellence, and a readiness to seize opportunities.)

3. Social Awareness (including empathy with other people's emotions, the ability to read the currents of organizational life, build decision networks, and navigate politics, and the ability to recognize and meet customers' needs.)
4. Social Skill (including visionary leadership, ability to influence others, developing other people's skills, skill at listening and at sending clear, convincing, and well-tuned messages, proficiency in initiating new ideas and leading people in new directions, managing conflict, proficiency at cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships, and competence in building teams.)

Goleman (op. cit.) also postulates six styles of leadership: Coercive, Authoritative, Affiliative, Democratic, Pacesetter and Coaching.

Kotter describes an eight-stage process:³⁶

1. Establishing a sense of urgency.
2. Creating the guiding coalition.
3. Developing a Vision and strategy.
4. Communicating the change vision.
5. Empowering employees for broad-based action.
6. Generating short-term wins.
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change.
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Although we would all like to find the quick and easy, step by step, "textbook" answers to complex issues, a blind reliance on "crutches" such as checklists, someone's "panacea", or an all inclusive leadership theory or model seems counterproductive. Indeed, Senge³⁷ argues that effective "leaders are designers, teachers, and stewards...(with) the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models and to foster more systematic patterns of thinking". Clearly, this is a time consuming, complex process, NOT a quick fix. Using models such as those developed by Kotter (op. cit.), Goleman (op. cit.) or Kouzes and Posner (op. cit.) or others may provide potentially useful tools but those who wish to be effective administrators and leaders need to develop an understanding of themselves, their innate characteristics, emotions, values, background, strengths and weaknesses to the extent possible. They must develop the drive, motivation social skills and awareness and determination necessary for the hard work of honing their interpersonal sensitivities and skills, and exercising their linear, non-linear, and contextual capabilities. They need to find a coach in some form who can help them develop more rapidly and to a higher level than might be possible otherwise. They need to take advantage of every opportunity to gain the kind of experiences which will build confidence and shape future success. Indeed, Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood observed, "Ultimately, all leadership development is self-development, and the most powerful self-development takes place on

the job.”³⁸ They need to use the models of leadership to remind themselves of some of the things that need to be done and they also need to use their own skills and capabilities to build upon these models to identify other actions or behaviors that will contribute to the success of their leadership effort. They need to accept risks and shun complacency by recognizing that "failure teaches leaders valuable lessons, but good results (may) only reinforce their (tendency to accept) preconceptions and tether them more firmly to their 'tried and true recipes or biases'"³⁹. Further, as Farson and Keyes observed, “leaders don’t just accept failure; they encourage it”.⁴⁰ In short, effective leaders learn from failures and do not punish failure. But how they should go about doing these things must be decided by each individual for ones-self. As in all walks of life, reaching the highest levels in one's chosen profession requires hard work with few, if any, short cuts or easy paths.

Whatever our personal attributes may be, we can improve our leadership skills by understanding and by work. How far any of us may go is limited by many factors including our personal attributes. This book is intended to provide the basic interpersonal concepts, tools and techniques and larger strategic issues necessary to build leadership skills. We can improve. It's up to us.

Questions for Reflection and/or Discussion

1. What are the differences and similarities between administrative and leadership functions of today's effective manager/leader?
2. What are the differences and similarities between the "trait" and "behavioral" theories of leadership?
3. What types of power do effective leaders acquire and use?
4. If leaders influence people, how can they do so more effectively?

FOOTNOTES

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