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Effective Leadership with Fragrance of Relationship

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Abstract- Leadership is a relationship between a leader and a follower, ideally, a relationship of shared vision, shared responsibility and shared leadership. It is an intentional purposeful relationship and therefore, a relationship of influence. The character of the leader that adds value to the organization and contributes significantly to the shaping of the organizational culture. Who you are matters! What you believe and how that shapes your character does in fact make a difference to the people you lead. The relationships you build within your organizational setting deeply affect the way the organization's mission is carried out and the daily experience of those within whom you work and whom you empower. The world around us keeps changing. Our organizations continue to change. The people we lead are changing. Leaders and leadership must change as well. Leadership is a relationship and leaders must invest in the people for whose success they are responsible. Servant leadership is community-directed using power for growth. It is a position of responsibility and service and not just status and authority.

Keywords: Leadership, Influence, Purpose, Empower, Servant-leadership.

I. Introduction

It is an undeniable truth that, it's always by following that a leader begins his eventful journey of getting pruned into a leader. There are no 'born leaders'. We step forth by following our parents, our siblings, older children in the neighborhood. Later we follow teachers, coaches, bosses, managers. And then somewhere along the line, whether we intend it or not, irrespective of our desire to be so, whether we realize it or not, people start following us. In a small or a big way we become leaders, all of us. It's because someone else now has begun their journey by following us!

We are leaders before we know how to be one. For some of us this is invigorating. Leadership seems a position of power; it is a place of prominence where we are looked up to, we are respected. For others of us it seems a fearsome platform to be on. Leadership requires armour of responsibility on to our very existence as a person. We find we don't like being in-charge, it interferes with our autonomy and our privacy.

When we realize that we are inevitably all leaders in some degree or other and that 'leader' is not a role confined to a job description, we know that we need help. Being a leader, whether in prominence or in obscurity, can fuel our ambition and a lust for power, that ends up using people and organizations to enhance oneself. It is tempting to lead by coercion or manipulation and end up valuing followers primarily as a means to further our own strategies and goals.¹ On the other hand, leadership can scare us into recoiling into a privatized seclusion where we tend to withdraw from others and their need for compassionate considerations, motivating guidance and justice, thus separating ourselves from those ardent people who follow us. We end up leading through means of remote control, perceiving followers as a bothersome hindrance. We scheme to avoid them and when unsuccessful, we humiliate them.

Leaders of every position and kind; mothers and fathers, friends and neighbors, presidents and chairpersons, teachers and administrators, which is to say, all of us, need help. The seductions and pressures of un-mentored leadership can easily ensnare and eventually ruin us. Leadership is a relationship between a leader and a follower; ideally, a relationship of shared vision shared responsibility and shared leadership. It is the character of the leader that adds noteworthy value to the organization and contributes significantly to the shaping of the organizational culture. The relationships you build within your organizational setting deeply affects the way the organization's mission is carried out and the daily experience of those with whom you work and whom you empower.

As profound was the magnitude of its reality so deep was the essence of its meaning when D.J.DePree said, "In the long run, all businesses and business leaders will be judged not by their profits or their products but by their impact on humanity."²

Max DePree, retired Chairman of Herman Miller, Inc. and author of three bestselling books on leadership, and a man of character whose deeply held values permeated his relational approach to leadership, tells a marvelous story³ of an empowering factory supervisor:

A young man who operated one of the machines in a Herman Miller plant had an automobile accident on the way to his girlfriend's house. He was seriously injured physically and suffered some brain damage. He obviously could no longer perform his job and when he came out of his long stay in the hospital he lived with his parents. Several months after the accident, his supervisor was walking in downtown Grand Rapids and saw the young man, hobbling along with a walker, beside his mother. The supervisor greeted them and asked the young man why he wasn't at work?

The young man's mother was quite upset; pointing out that her son would never work again. He was permanently crippled, and would not talk anymore because of the emotional trauma. The supervisor found out that the young man was living with his parents, both of whom were retired. The supervisor then told the young man and his mother that Herman Miller had been holding a job open for the young man and expected him to be at work the next Monday morning! And if his mother did not think he could do the job, then the supervisor expected the mother or the father to cover the job for him. And he said that he would be at their home Monday morning to pick up one of them for work!

On Monday, he was there and the young man did come in to work. Over the next weeks either he or his mother or father was there every day, filling the position and drawing the pay-checke. However, there was still the problem that he would not talk. The supervisor went to two of the women who worked in the same department as the young man and told them about the situation. They agreed to bring an extra lunch each day and eat lunch with the young man to see if they could get him to talk. Slowly he began to open up to them and then to others at the plant. This progressed for a period of several months, until the young man was able to return to his original position as a machine operator. Several months later, the supervisor was surprised one morning by a car honking outside his house. He went out and found the

young man driving his own car, specially fitted for his handicaps and expressing deep joy and pleasure that he had his job, his income and now his own car again.

This is an astounding yet a simply practical illustration of an empowering leadership where in one person uses his or her position entrusted, to serve and nurture another, visualizing in another the potential to be more than is visible at the present time and commits him or herself to the development of that potential in the individual who is a follower either due to the rank or by free choice.

In today's changing times where meaning of organizational effectiveness continues to dwindle between the fundamental nature of its core concepts and actual scenarios displayed in organizations, it's worth revisiting a model of leadership that revolves around relationships of service. James MacGregor Burns, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Leadership*, argues that transforming leadership is a relationship that raises the vision, values and aspirations of both the leader and the follower to new levels of expectation.⁴

II. Principles of relational leadership that yield fruitfulness

1. **Leadership comprises of influence and service.** A influential servant-leadership is community directed and uses its power for the growth of those who are being led and the accomplishment of the shared mission of the community. Hence it is evident that on personal grounds, leadership is a relationship of influence while on organizational grounds, it is a relationship of influence with a sure purpose of maintaining the community cohesiveness and achieving the shared mission.
2. **Leadership instills vision and hope.** It is about the coming tomorrows, about hope of accomplishing the mission. Leadership articulates a fine cycle of achievement by bringing to sight the compelling vision for tomorrow that engages the imagination of the followers and energizes their attitude and actions in the present. It gives meaning and immeasurable value to living. It empowers people and definitely makes a difference.
3. **Leadership depends on character and trust.** Leadership is a relationship of trust and there is a direct link between leadership and credibility. We listen to people we trust. We accept the influence of a person whose character we respect. Leadership is grounded in the faith, beliefs, commitments and values of the leader. ***“Leadership that produces fruit is rooted in the character of the leader.”***³ Warren Bennis, the distinguished Professor of leadership at the University of Southern California, says that the three things people want from leaders are direction, trust and hope. Leadership believes in people and fosters relationships of trust between members of the community⁵.
4. **Leadership entails purposeful relationships and power.** It is a relationship of power. It denotes the character or resources that others see in you which cause them to accept your influence. Power is at the heart of leadership, but power exists only when someone sees in you a reason to accept your influence. At the point of such acceptance is the blissful liberty to exercise power and have the opportunity to lead. Otherwise it's mere oppression with regretful outcomes of both relationships as well as the gruesome display of power. Power needs purpose. ***“Power without purpose leaves a wake of debris, a trail of litter. Power needs to be leashed to purpose. The power that permits leadership in communities must be directed to the mission that forms the community. Leadership must be responsible and accountable. Leadership is a relationship of influence with a purpose.”***³

5. ***Leadership is about dependency and accountability.*** False leadership is like wandering stars, for which blackest darkness has been reserved forever. These leaders are like shooting stars, streaking onto the scene with flash and excitement but eventually fading and disappearing with fate of no return to former glory. There are short term gains but no long term perseverance. It brings in momentary pleasure of conquest but unleashes a lasting future of futility in terms of permanence of life-work. Such leadership that may offer a quick fix but does not nurture the long range health of community lacks dependency and accountability, the two edges of a sword that mark the royalty of a leader. Only a lot of activity, but no relationship, a huge display of power but no dependency and accountability renders a bunch full of men-pleasing, falsely coated wolves in sheep's clothing thus depriving the leader of true honor, genuine followers and valuable lasting accomplishments.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, leadership is about people. It is about relationship. Leadership is a finely woven fabric of relationship of influence with a purpose; the achievement of the shared mission and the nurturing heart towards the community. Leaders are dependent upon the people and hence they owe the followers their gratitude in word and deed for making a leader out of the crucible of their being. Max DePree, the author of the best-selling, *Leadership is an Art*, says that one of the responsibilities of a leader is to say thanks.²

“In the final analysis, it is always the one who follows who determines if leadership is being exercised. It does not matter how much power or charisma you think you possess, how exciting you think your vision is. What matters is, does someone choose to accept your influence and alter his or her vision, values, attitudes or behaviours.”⁶

When one perceives himself to be a Leader, its so much needed to build, grow and sustain relationships of influence with a purpose perceived by those who choose to follow.

IV. References

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They have two blessed and amazing sons, Jeruel [meaning 'Founded by God'] and Ariel [meaning 'Lion of God'].

