



LIVING & LEADING WITH INTEGRITY

Explore how to be an effective leader through integrity, authenticity, empathy, and accountability.

You will get familiar with essential leadership behaviours, decision-making, motivation, and self-management. The book also draws attention to pitfalls such as loss of mission and toxic leadership traits.

Hedi Kovacs-Resnik

info@resnikconsulting.com



www.resnikconsulting.com



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Table of Content



01

HOW TO BE

02

ABOUT LEADERSHIP

03

WHERE LEADERSHIP
CAN GO SOUTH

Let's start it!



HOW TO BE



**Leadership is about how to be,
not about how to do.**

– Frances Hesselbein

I started my management career with global corporations in the first half of the 90s of the last century, and I stayed there for more than 25 years.

Starting in management positions in my 20s, I have gained an abundance of experience during these years: I climbed the hierarchy ladder, managed teams, I also managed myself, and worked with colleagues in a matrix organization without reporting lines. I was also managed by my uplines.

I would love to say now that I have always acted perfectly as a leader, and now I will pass you the stone of wisdom. Far from that, I made lots of mistakes, and I wish I had all the knowledge and experience that time that I have now.

I believed that I, as the manager of the department, had to be the most knowledgeable person there, to be able to answer all the questions from my team and to be able to define the goals and directions for them.

Although Peter Drucker had already completed the major part of his life achievement by that time, his teaching of “The leader of the past knew how to tell, the leader of the future will know how to ask.” didn’t yet arrive to us.

Most managers believed in holding the stone of wisdom and telling people what to do.

It is a difficult lesson for many people, who get into leadership positions, even today. They think that they have to lead with authority, they have to be sure of themselves, and they have to be charismatic.

All these beliefs are self-inflicting and put leaders under heavy pressure.

What is really expected from leaders is exactly the opposite:

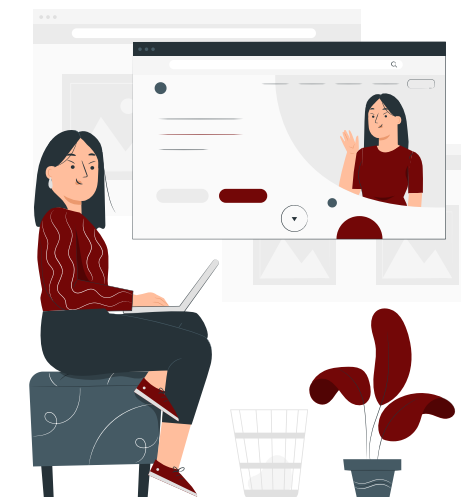
- you have to be humble,
- you have to listen,
- you have to ask for help, and
- you have to say "Thank you."

During these nearly 30 years, I had several positions in functional management, in general management. I made my mistakes, and I had my successes. I was also led by fantastic and by not-so-fantastic managers.

I have seen what a tremendous impact the character, behaviors, and example of a leader can have on the work atmosphere and on the success of the organization. I also experienced people quitting a 'Best Employer' award company because their direct uplines made their work and life unbearable.

Although I might not have exercised all the management skills with excellence, some leadership attributes came naturally to me: I am reliable, I could earn credibility, and above all, my primary goal has always been supporting others.

This is why, after 30 years of corporate life, putting all my knowledge, experiences, and enthusiasm in my back bag – I started a career as a leadership trainer and executive coach.



Who is a leader for you?

When I either teach or coach Leadership, the first question is always:

“Who is a leader for you?”

Students may bring real-life examples of leaders they have met and analyze why they look up to them as role models. They can also compile characteristics and attributes of an imaginary leader, who they would be happy to follow. In this latter case, the list of necessary characteristics is usually longer than an A4 sheet of paper.

Then comes the second question: if you compare yourself today with the person you describe, where are you standing?

This is the starting point of our cooperation, and we set to work on narrowing all the gaps during rather longer than shorter processes.





Role Model

I was short of a flesh-and-blood role model myself for the past decades. Then, I got familiar with the work and life of Frances Hesselbein, and I found my North Star in her.

Frances Hesselbein is one of the most highly respected experts in the field of contemporary leadership development. Over the past 50-plus years, she has been one of the most influential figures in the leadership movement, with her unwavering emphasis on value-based leadership.

Starting her documented career in her fifties, she has impacted millions of lives. She received the highest US civilian honor, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Clinton, as "a pioneer for women, volunteerism, diversity, and opportunity." She had a single mission: To Serve is to Live, and she remained faithful to this simple, short sentence her whole life.

She is my Kompas today. If I face any obstacle or any doubt about my mission, I think of Frances Hesselbein: would she have similar doubts? More important, would she ever let these obstacles distract her from her mission? This single question helps me through my actual issues and challenges and reminds me of the humility that she has been showing us during her life.



**It is the quality and the character of the leader that
determines the results and performance.**

- Frances Hesselbein

ABOUT LEADERSHIP



**You can say, "I'm in charge."
You cannot say, "I'm a leader."
That would be like calling yourself funny or good-looking.
It's other people who decide.
If others follow you as a leader, then you are a leader.
Otherwise, you are just in charge.**

- Rich Diviney

When we talk about leading and managing, we usually meet two kinds of people: leaders and drivers.

Drivers view their team or organization as a mechanical system, and they consider the people they're in charge of to be parts — buttons to push, levers to pull, pedals to press.

They impose control through strict direction and overt manipulation, sometimes with rewards - but more often with punishments - because they believe their vision is the most important one or the only legitimate one. If one of those parts doesn't perform as required, it's replaced without a second thought. There is no empathy because parts are expendable.

Drivers might achieve results for a while, maybe even in the longer run, if they churn through enough parts. But the gears eventually start to whirr.

Who would follow a driver? People need to be pushed instead.

Great leaders have one thing in common: They inspire.

They motivate and influence, so people are ready to follow them voluntarily. They might give instructions, but they will avoid dictating. They will motivate but not manipulate. People will do their best to perform because they want to, not because they are forced to.

Leaders demonstrate most of the leadership attributes - empathy, humility, authenticity, decisiveness, and accountability – this is how they inspire others.

Certain situations may require that leaders behave like drivers. And that is okay. When leaders inspire and influence, they also build trust, nurture confidence, and earn respect; others will follow them also in more difficult times.

During my management studies and decades of experience, I also had to realize that both leadership and management are crucial – and that either one without the other is insufficient.

Management plays a critical part simply because you can't "lead" things. You can't lead budgets, costs, and inventories. Neither can you lead time, tools, facilities, or processes. You have to manage them. Things cannot choose between options - only people can. This is why you manage and control things and lead people.

The issue is that the organizational cultures we've inherited tell us that we need to manage and control people.

Although I studied and practiced management of things extensively, I rather chose value-based Leadership Behaviour as my focus area. This book will summarize areas of effective leadership behaviors.

Executive leadership and effectiveness consist of three interconnected areas:

- Personal attributes
- Leadership behaviors
- Particular tasks that executive must perform





PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are the innate qualities that govern how a person will take in, interpret, and react to their environment. A person may have an advantage or disadvantage due to an attribute, but attributes themselves are neutral, neither positive nor negative.

There are times when certain attributes will get you to an advantage; in other times, in other situations, other attributes will help you to succeed.

There are, however, a couple of attributes that are indispensable if you want to become a true leader.

The most important ones are integrity, authenticity, empathy, decisiveness, accountability, and humility.

Attributes are elemental, and we are born with them. And yet, the necessary attributes can and should be developed over time and with experience.

Integrity

The primary characteristic people look for and respect in a leader is credibility; it is the foundation of leadership. How would we believe the message if we don't believe in the messenger? And what is credibility behaviorally? The most frequent response we get is:

"Do what you say you will do!"

The two essential ingredients of earning and sustaining personal credibility are

- Leaders must know what they believe in, what they stand for, and they must clearly express it. That's the verbal part.
- Then, they must act according to what they say; they must put their beliefs into practice. That's the action part.

The commitment to credibility begins with clarifying one's personal values, visions, and aspirations. You cannot act according to your beliefs until you know without a doubt what you believe in.



Great leaders build their integrity by clarifying their personal values and then expressing those values in their own style. Then they lead by example by matching their behaviors with the values they share.

Integrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions.

The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective integer, meaning whole or complete. In this context, integrity is the inner sense of "wholeness" deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character. - Wikipedia

Those who are high on the integrity scale will act consistently, regardless of the personal consequences. If it means spending all of your savings on repairing the neighbor's fence, getting punched in the head for standing up for a friend, or getting fired for admitting a mistake, so be it. Having integrity, and acting upon it, implies having a clear conscience regardless of the costs to you.

Integrity is a crucial component of trust. If we cannot be sure that we act according to what we believe is the right thing to do, we will lose trust in ourselves. And why should you have confidence in anyone else if you don't trust yourself?

When individuals demonstrate integrity, that will naturally lead to integrity within the group.

When members of a group trust each other, unity and cohesion are easier to maintain. Each member of the team can rely on the others to do the right thing for themselves and for the larger group.

What that "right thing" is will be different from group to group.

The values and culture of the team will define what integrity means to them. Integrity within a group can't be defined by what a few leaders or executives want it to be. Ideally, those leaders have shown an example of and rewarded behavior that reflects their definition and have put together a team that mirrors it. But the group will always sort out its own values.



Leaders then don't just speak or act in their own personal interests. Leaders represent the group, and when leaders speak and act, they're doing so on behalf of others. Personal integrity is maintained when you do what you say, but leadership integrity means that you have to "Do what we say we will do."



By themselves, character and integrity do not accomplish anything. But their absence faults everything else

– Peter Drucker

Authenticity

While integrity is being true to principles external to yourself, authenticity is being true to who you say you are and to what you say you believe despite external circumstances.

By definition, authenticity cannot be faked. On the other hand, you decide who you want to be.

I have recently worked with a leader who complained that his colleagues hesitate to address him with challenges. It was obvious from the beginning – and the leader was well aware of it – that he did not have a friendly attitude toward his team. He never smiled, never said thank you, and his way of speaking was more of a directive style. When I addressed these points, he fast brought up the protective shield of authenticity. That's who he is, and if he is forced to smile or act kind when he does not feel like it, he will lose his authenticity.

This is a common argument, and you might start to think: 'Which is more important – staying faithful to one's true self or acting in a way that pleases others?' The issue, in this case, is not being inauthentic but rather choosing and living values that are incompatible with leadership.



Many people have a misguided belief that the way we behave today represents their fixed and constant selves. If they change, they are not being true to who they really are. This belief triggers stubbornness. They refuse to adapt their behavior to the situation because "that would not be me."

In fact, we can change not only our behavior but how we define ourselves. When we keep insisting on "That's not me," we ensure that we will never change for the better.

The simplest indicator of authenticity is consistency: consistency of values, thoughts, and actions. "If stepping on the brake pedal didn't consistently stop your car — if sometimes it made the engine race or turned on the wipers instead — you wouldn't trust the brakes, right? The same idea applies to humans." – Rich Diviney.

Authentic people do not behave substantially differently in private than they do in public. If you see a significant difference between how you act at work and at home, you are lying at one of those places.

Humans also have a strong tendency to model behaviors. Therefore, by being yourself, you inspire others to do the same. Especially for those in leadership roles, being open about who you are, even if it makes you vulnerable, encourages others to do the same.





Empathy

Empathy is the ability to fully and genuinely imagine and join another person's emotional state. You do not only know how someone feels, but you are also feeling how that person feels. There's one key rule about empathy: it can't be faked. False empathy stands out like a lighthouse in the fog.

Leaders don't lead organizations — they lead the people who make up those organizations. To do that effectively requires empathy. Empathetic leaders can see the world from their coworkers' viewpoint, and their decisions will consider employees' needs and feelings. This type of leadership is critical because it builds trust, fosters communication, and motivates employees. Consequently, empathy enhances productive relationships and organizational cultures, and it also drives results.

Decisiveness

Decisiveness is a two-component ability. First, it means making clear and well-informed decisions and – second - doing so in a timely manner. Speed is the factor that distinguishes someone who is highly decisive from someone who merely makes good decisions.

In today's fast-changing environment, taking too long to make even a great decision might be ineffective.

When you are decisive, it means that you can make decisions quickly, efficiently, and independently.

Your credibility as a leader also depends on your established and perceived decisiveness. A quick and well-thought-over decision that is supported by reason, instinct, and the readiness to accept personal responsibility for the result, inspires confidence.



Decisiveness implies making competent decisions and absorbing and processing the necessary amount of information as opposed to simply shouting out orders at random.



In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

- Theodore Roosevelt

Accountability

Accountability is taking responsibility for, and ownership of your decisions, actions, and the consequences thereof.

Imagine the leader who pushes their team in front of themselves when they want to 'sell' an unpopular idea to their upline:

"It's the team who are asking this, not me" And when they need to communicate a rejection, the rationale to the team would be, "It's the boss telling us this, not me."

This is when a leader lacks accountability, and it's dangerous in any situation. Trying to remain neutral, and therefore clean, is incompatible with leadership.

In complex environments, taking action is paramount. Even if that action is to decide not to do anything, it's important to know what you're doing and why. Recognizing that the consequences of this behavior are your liability is equally important; you must take full responsibility for your choices.



Being accountable has several benefits:

Being accountable requires that we understand why we're doing what we are doing, which in turn helps us to be fully committed to it.

Purpose provides clarity. If you take responsibility for your choices, you will know and be able to explain the reasons behind them.

Being accountable allows us to look objectively and critically at the results of a decision. If the project ends up not working as well as planned, the accountable leader and the team will carefully consider what could have been done better rather than dismissing any shortcomings as "the boss told us to do it."

Every leader, like every employee or teammate, will at times be asked to do something which they do not fully agree with. It sometimes happens that a request from the management is mistaken or simply wrong. Leadership means knowing the difference, speaking up, and standing firm on what's right.

Humility

Humility is the ability to be aware and transparent about one's strengths and weaknesses.

It is not to be mistaken for false modesty or the occasional humble brag but rather an honest assessment of one's abilities. That also means being vulnerable: admitting weakness requires vulnerability.

A key strength of high-performing teams is understanding their weaknesses. If you are transparent about your own ones, others can understand where they can help.

Great leaders understand the importance of vulnerability, even if unconsciously. They demonstrate it by not emphasizing their own experience, knowledge, and strengths. That, too, is a component of humility, and it has a similar effect to admitting weakness.

A boss who brags about his strengths can be intimidating. Yet by remaining humble while still confident in those abilities, they encourage others to come up with ideas that might be better.





A lack of humility can be regarded as arrogance. While it is almost always a result of fear or insecurity, arrogance is damaging.

It creates resentment, blocks communication, and, as a result, can be detrimental to results.

Too much humility, on the other hand, risks meekness, which in turn can lead to inaction. Empowering others is necessary for optimal performance, but there are times when you need to step up and take the lead. You will need to take charge and perform with confidence. Great leaders understand this balance. They will defer until they've squeezed all the potential out of their team, but they will not hesitate to assume control when required.

An overabundance of humility may also hide an underlying lack of confidence. A lack of confidence, real or perceived, inevitably will begin to erode trust.

How do you encourage a healthy level of humility in others and yourself? Start with being generous on your team. Generosity with your time, effort, your compliments, your giving recognition, and respect will establish a tone of giving instead of taking.

Sincere, expressed appreciation of each member's contribution sends a powerful message: I need you because I can't do what you do.

That's what we call humility.

Where is Charisma in the Line?

You may notice that – although regularly mentioned by students as a necessary attribute to a leader – charisma is intentionally left out from the key attributes.

We have recently seen leaders leading with charisma, impressive appearances, and rhetoric - more for the show—and with the way they dressed.

The younger generation, millennials, don't care about that anymore; they want to know who you are. Are you the real deal? Can I trust you? If they cannot trust you, they are not going to work with you, much less follow you.



**The three most charismatic leaders in the past century
inflicted more suffering on the human race
than almost any trio in history:**

Hitler, Stalin, and Mao.

What matters is not the leader's charisma.

What matters is the leader's mission.

– Peter Drucker



LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Both in personal and professional relationships, what you do has a far greater impact than anything you say.

You can say that people are your most important asset. You can say your company puts the customer first. You can say that you won't engage in unethical practices, that you will comply with the rules, that you will respect confidence, or keep a commitment.

You can say all of that, but unless you actually do them, your words will not build trust; on the contrary, they will destroy it.

The following behaviors are powerful because they are based on the principles that will build trusting relationships:

- **Be Straightforward**
- **Pay People Respect**
- **Lead with Transparency**
- **Right Wrongs**
- **Demonstrate Loyalty**
- **Prepare for Life-long learning**
- **Practice Accountability**
- **Listen First**
- **Keep Commitments**
- **Say Thank You**



Be Straightforward

By being straightforward, we mean telling the truth and leaving the right impression.

Talking straight is honesty in action. It's based on the principles of integrity, honesty, and straightforwardness.

Many management letters in annual reports sound like public relations platitudes to make their companies appear as great as possible under the law. When a letter begins with a statement such as, "2021 was a challenging year for XYZ Corp...." you know that the company probably had a lousy year but will try to "put makeup on the pig."

According to a Mercer Management Consulting study, only 40 percent of employees trust that their bosses communicate honestly—which means that six in ten believe their managers are not honest about what they're saying. What kind of impact could that possibly have on credibility and, consequently, on results?

When Being Straightforward is Taken too Far

Like all of the other behaviors, straightforwardness can be taken too far too. We know leaders who, in the name of talking straight, justified cruel, brutal communication.

While straight talk is vital to establishing trust, in most situations, it needs to be tempered by skill, tact, and good judgment.

If you wish to improve your being straightforward, ask yourself: What keeps me from talking straight? Is it fear of the consequences? Fear of pain? Fear of being wrong? Fear of hurting others' feelings? Is it a desire for popularity? A lack of courage? Identify the rewards of being honest and straightforward and the cost when you're not.

Learn to get to your point quickly. Avoid long prologues and giving excessive context. The general rule is that, in most cases, less is more.

Be honest. Use simple language. Call things what they are. Let people know where you stand. Demonstrate integrity. Don't manipulate people or distort facts. Don't leave false impressions.



Pay People Respect

Respectful leadership is defined as treating everyone, no matter what rank or status, with genuine respect and regard. We honor the internal value and worth of the other person and recognize it through our words, actions and behaviors.

The one key behavioral trait that makes great leaders stand out is that they are deeply respectful to others. This includes respecting and valuing their ideas, opinions, differences, and views of the world. And they show compassion and respect for every single person they encounter. This doesn't mean they don't have their differences with others or always see eye-to-eye. It means that whatever the situation or challenge they're presented with, they respect the individuals they are dealing with.

If you don't treat others with respect, you'll alienate and lose exactly those whom you're trying to lead. People with great leadership potential who are mature, self-aware, and self-actualized won't put up with disrespect. Only those who do not value themselves or who believe they can become more powerful due to your positive impression of them will continue to work with you or remain in the organization.

"In a study of nearly 20,000 employees around the world (conducted with HBR), I found that when it comes to garnering commitment and engagement from employees, there's one thing that leaders need to demonstrate: respect. No other leadership behavior had a bigger effect on employees across the outcomes we measured. Being treated with respect was more important to employees than recognition and appreciation, communicating an inspiring vision, and providing useful feedback—or even opportunities for learning, growth, and development. How you show up and treat people means everything. However, even when leaders know that showing respect is critical, many struggles to demonstrate it." - Christine Porath, *The Leadership Behavior That's Most Important to Employees*, (HBR)



Removing open disrespect — such as being impolite, offensive, or demeaning in words and behaviors — will not create respect.

Respect is an action: we *show* respect, we *act* respectfully, and we *speak* with respect. Respect is an action that we take by demonstrating it, acting with respect, and speaking with respect.

While demonstrating respect may come across as a "soft" behavior to some, it absolutely has a direct relationship to trust and, therefore, to the bottom line.

What can you proactively do to show others that you care about them? Call people. Write thank-you notes. Give acknowledgment and recognition. Never take existing relationships for granted—particularly relationships with loved ones, family, and friends. Avoid the common mistake of putting more energy into new relationships and assume that people in existing relationships know you care.

Unintentional disrespect may start very quickly once management routinely follows the traditional “leadership bullshit” in their communication. Nobody is interested; no one wants to hear it. The time when you increasingly needed to say things that had no content or meaning at all as you got higher and higher in your corporate career is over. Employees’ knowledge and access to information are growing exponentially with time. They immediately see through your platitudes, bullshitting, and lies.

At that moment when that happens, the “we” cease to exist; there is only “us” and “them,”; and instead of working together, there is a good chance that the two sides start to protect their own interests and work against each other.

I lived through a great example when the owners of a company decided to centralize two dozen local units with base processes into a Shared Service Center at a single location. The idea was to lay off the local employees and hire them at the new center’s site instead. The reorganization would have been a painful process even if leadership had been honest and transparent about the changes. Unfortunately, the official communication mentioned “only” a 10% decrease in the total employee number. They did not really lie: 30% of the previous staff was released, and 20% of new employees were hired at the new location. As everybody straight saw through the lies, leadership lost the trust of even those they most wanted to count on in the future.



Respect the dignity of every person and every role. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can't do anything for you. Show kindness in the little things.



**I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the
garbage man or the president of the university.**

- Peter Drucker



Lead with Transparency

Being transparent is about being open. It's about being real and genuine and telling the truth in a way people can verify. It's based on integrity, authenticity, honesty, and openness. Leaders communicate openly and regularly with their teams. An open organizational culture is indispensable for creating transparency at work. It will also help enhance productivity and trust in

In general, transparency means being open and honest with your team, customers, and everybody else you communicate with.

Of course, that doesn't mean sharing confidential information. Neither does it mean overloading others with a flood of unnecessary information. It is rather about sharing relevant information with the right people at the time they need it, so you can come to the best decisions together.

Transparency may play a significant role in your leadership and can give you a competitive edge when used well.

Setting clear expectations for your team is a critical element of transparency. Employees might easily lose motivation if leaders are not actively involved in defining expectations for their team members. Employees will find no purpose in their work; they will concentrate on the wrong measures, which in the end, will result in their disengagement.

Transparency goes hand-in-hand with vulnerability and humility. While it is tempting for many leaders to advertise their successes, it can be harder to admit when they make mistakes.

Owning your wrong choices and failures can be inspiring. If you are also honest with your clients, when things do not work out the best, you will earn their confidence.

You will not appear to be trying to conceal information in order to show a better picture than reality. Essentially, by being transparent, you demonstrate that your business is committed to development and growth. This will give you a competitive edge with clients and will engage your employees.



Transparent companies are constantly disclosing relationships and interests. Leaders tell the truth in a way people can verify. Everybody gains in an open, honest culture. Employees become more productive and will even become active advocates for your company. Costly misunderstandings can be avoided. Your brand will be stable in the long run because customers will trust you and feel comfortable giving you their business.



**Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable.
Be honest and transparent anyway.**

- Mother Teresa

Make Wrongs Right

Apologizing is the most magical, healing, restorative gesture people can make.

Without the apology, there is no recognition that mistakes have been made, there is no announcement to the world of the intention to change, and there is no emotional contract between you and the people you care about.

Some people think that saying sorry means they lost a contest. For chronic winners, as many leaders are, this is a particularly tough exercise. The paradox is that all the concerns that make us resist apologizing — the fear of losing, admitting we're wrong, ceding control — are erased by an apology. When you say, "I'm sorry," you turn people into your allies, even your partners.

Once you are ready to apologize, you have a very simple script to follow:

Say: "I am sorry" You may add, though it's optional: "I'll try to do better in the future" - it's nice to hint at a brighter future. And then.... add nothing. Don't explain, don't complicate, don't qualify it. If you talk more, you only risk saying something that will dilute it.



When it comes to apologizing, the only sound advice is to make it as short and as quick as possible.

However, saying sorry is never the goal. It's only the first step. Decent, human behavior, where you don't need to say "I'm sorry," is the goal.

Righting wrongs is more than simply apologizing; it's also making restitution. It's making up and making whole. It's taking action. It's doing what you can to correct the mistake... and then a little more.

The reality is that everybody makes mistakes. The issue isn't whether you will make them; it's what you will do about them.

Make things right when you're wrong, apologize quickly and make restitution where possible.

Demonstrate Loyalty

Give Credit to Others

One important way to show loyalty is to give credit to others, to acknowledge them for their part in achieving results. By giving credit, you not only affirm the value of an individual's contribution, but you also create an environment in which people feel encouraged to be innovative and collaborative and to share ideas freely. Jim Collins is using a great metaphor by saying that when things go well, you look through the window; in other words, you look at everyone out there and all they did to contribute, and you acknowledge, respect, and appreciate them. When things don't go well, you look in the mirror. You don't look out there and blame and accuse others; you look at yourself.

It is not only important to give credit to people for what they do, but also to acknowledge people for who they are. Both at home and at work, there are many ways to thank people and recognize their achievements. You can celebrate. You can create legends through the stories you tell. You can send thank-you letters, cards, or flowers. You can publicize success stories.

Speak about Others as if they were Present

People who gossip about others often appear to believe that doing so will foster a sense of friendship and trust among the people who participate in gossiping. But it is the exact opposite that usually happens. If you speak negatively about others behind their backs, those who listen will think that you'll do the same to them when they're not there.

Speak about people as if they were present, don't bad-mouth others behind their backs. Speak for those who are not there to protect themselves. Don't disclose others' private information.





Develop Yourself and Others Around You

Learning is a never-ending process. The world of work is rapidly changing - technology, globalization, and the knowledge-worker economy have increased the degree of difficulty, and people need lifelong learning to advance their skills and stay relevant.

Unless we keep improving our capabilities dramatically, we're going to be inadequate for the challenges.

You have lots of options: you can go back to the university, you can take online courses, or attend different seminars and workshops; just make sure to fit one or more of them into your program for growth.

Getting Better Builds Trust

When people see you as a learning, growing, renewing person—or your organization as a learning, growing, renewing organization—they develop confidence in your ability to succeed in a rapidly changing environment, enabling you to build high-trust relationships and move with incredible speed.

- Steven Covey, Speed of Trust

How to Get Better

Seek Feedback

In order to get better, we need honest, helpful feedback. Without feedback, we wouldn't have results. We couldn't keep score. We wouldn't know if we were getting better or worse. We all need feedback to see where we are, where we need to go, and how we can get better.

This process is not supposed to be difficult. Getting feedback is the easy part. Dealing with it is hard.

It may happen that we start to argue with someone who's giving us advice, offering feedback, or otherwise trying to help us. We go on defense and unthinkingly respond by expressing our (usually different, sometimes straight opposite) opinion.

No matter what we say or how subtly we phrase it, our point will come out as defensive. It will look like an objection or a denial. Stop doing that. Say "Thank you" for each piece of advice and take them as gifts or compliments. Nobody expects you to follow every piece of advice.

There are a hundred wrong ways to ask for feedback—and one right way. Most of us know the wrong ways. We ask someone, "What do you think of me?" These types of questions are particularly pernicious in power relationships where the boss is asking the downlines, "What do you think of me?" In a power relationship, you have all kinds of issues that influence the answer—because the answer has consequences.

In soliciting feedback for yourself, the only question that works—the only one!—must be phrased like this: "How can I do better?"

Feedback tells us what to change, not how to do it. But once you know what you want to change, you're ready to start your behaviors and how people view you.





Learn from Mistakes

Often people aren't willing to make mistakes because they're either afraid to fail or they're focused on looking good. But smart people and smart companies realize that making mistakes is part of life.

Albert Einstein said, "I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times, the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right."

Soichiro Honda, the founder of Honda Motor Co., said: "Success represents the one percent of your work that results from the ninety-nine percent that is called failure."

Development is, however, a double-edged process. One cannot develop oneself unless one is actively engaged in the development of others.

We all know the case so often used in management training: invest in your team and bear the costs, or do not invest in your team and bear the costs.



I didn't fail ten thousand times. I successfully eliminated ten thousand materials and combinations that didn't work.

- Thomas Edison

Practice Accountability

There are two key dimensions to practicing accountability.

***Holding yourself accountable
and holding others accountable.***

Leaders who generate trust do both.



Hold Yourself Accountable

Accountability means responsible behavior. Means ownership. And it is fully required at every single organizational level. However, at a basic level, accountability is often misunderstood by leaders who relate it to others but not to themselves.

Leaders practicing accountability take full responsibility for decisions. Clear decision-making and action plans are essential for effective leadership. When misunderstandings happen, they do not pick on the mistakes made by their team members but on their own role in miscommunicating their message. Accountable leaders take ownership of negative results. While not tolerating nonperforming individuals, they make themselves responsible for the positive performance of those around them.

Hold Others Accountable

In truth, people respond well to accountability—particularly the performers. They want to be held accountable. They feel trust grows with managers, leaders, team members, and other stakeholders as they are given the opportunity to account for performing well.

In addition, performers also want others to be held accountable. They thrive in an environment where they know that everyone will take the initiative and be responsible, where they can trust that slackers will not get away with poor performance.



Get good people and expect them to perform. Terminate them quickly and fairly if you make the wrong choice.

– J. Willard Marriott jr., Chairman and CEO, Marriott International

Listen First

The first active choice you have to make in listening is to think before you speak. You cannot listen if you are talking.

"Frances Hesselbein does a lot of things well. But she does one thing superbly above all else. She thinks before she speaks. As a result, she is a world-class listener. If you asked her if this was a passive gesture, she would assure you that it requires great discipline, particularly when she is upset about what she's hearing. After all, what do most of us do when we're angry? We speak (and not in the carefully measured tones of a diplomat). What do we do when we're upset? We talk. What do we do when we're confused or surprised, or shocked? Again, we talk. ... Not so with Frances Hesselbein. You could tell her the world was about to end, and she would think before opening her mouth, not only about what she would say but how she would phrase it." - Marshall Goldsmith: What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful.

Listening is a two-part maneuver: there is the part where you actually listen, and there is the part where you speak. What we say is proof of how well we listen. This approach is a highly active, decisive choice. Telling your brain and mouth not to do something is no different than telling them to do it.

It's not enough to keep our ears open; we have to demonstrate that we are totally engaged. Understand. Diagnose. Listen with your ears, with your eyes, and with your heart. Find out what the people you're working with value most. Don't think you know what matters most to others. Don't assume you have all the answers—or all the questions.





Not listening to others is the most passive-aggressive form of disrespect for colleagues. When you fail at listening to others, you're actually sending out negative messages. You're saying:

- "You're wrong."
- "I don't understand you."
- "You're wasting my time."
- "I don't care about you."
- **"You're stupid."**

All of the above and some more

Do you really expect people to ever talk to you again?

Ask yourself: "Is it worth it?"

The trouble with listening for many of us is that while we are supposedly doing it, we are actually busy composing what we are going to say next.

This is a double negative: you are not only failing to hear the other person, but you are also phrasing a comment that may annoy them. Either because it misses the point and adds meaningless value to the discussion or injects a destructive tone into the mix.

Asking, "is it worth it?" forces you to consider what the other person will feel after hearing your response. It forces you to play at least two moves ahead.



Asking, "is it worth it?" will make you think over

- how the person regards you
- what the person will do afterward and
- how the person will behave the next time you talk

What happens when you start to talk without asking, "Is it worth it?": people not only think you do not listen, but they will be hurt, and they will harbor bad feelings towards the person who hurt them. In the predictable response, they are less likely to speak up again at any time in the future.

The weird part is that all of us already know this. So the question is, why don't we do it? Answer: we forget, we are distracted, and we don't have the mental discipline to make it automatic.



**This one is so important that I will elevate it to a rule:
Listen first, speak last.**

– Peter Drucker.

When you listen first, you get information, insight, and understanding that you wouldn't have had otherwise. You make better decisions. You also show respect.



Keep Commitments

Always deliver what you say you will. Never make a promise that you can't follow through on.

You have to show that you will do your part, even if it is difficult.

In almost any discussion of trust, keeping commitments comes up as the number one influencing behavior. On the other hand, "not doing what they say" is the number one trust breaker.

Make commitments carefully and keep them. Make keeping commitments the symbol of your honor. Don't break confidence.

Say Thank You

Thanking is effective because it touches one of our most basic feeling: gratitude. When someone does something nice for you, they expect gratitude—and they think less of you if they are not getting it. Just think about the last time you gave someone a gift. If they did not say thank you for it, what did you think about them? A fine human being? Or ungrateful s.o.b.?

Failing to express gratitude is the most basic form of bad manners. When somebody gives you an idea or makes a suggestion, you're either going to learn something, or you are going to learn nothing. But you're not going to learn less. So, thank them for trying to help.

The best thing about saying "Thank you" is that it also creates closure in any potentially explosive discussion. What can you say after someone thanks you? The only response is to utter two of the most gracious, inviting, and sweet words in the language:

"You're welcome."



What to Stop

We keep training and teaching leaders of behaviors that would foster trust in their environment. We believe that others will follow you voluntarily once you demonstrate these behaviors.

It is, however, equally important to avoid certain behaviors that leaders are often susceptible to showing.

As Peter Drucker put it, "We spend a lot of time helping leaders learn what to do. We do not spend enough time teaching leaders what to stop. Half the leaders don't need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop."

Following Drucker's tracks, Marshall Goldsmith listed numerous habits that leaders are commonly observed to perform. Although these individuals often believe that they are successful because they behave that way, in reality, they may be successful despite behaving that way.

You are unlikely to practice each habit, but – when their environment is surveyed and asked for feedback - even great leaders are claimed to show several of these unproductive behaviors.

Hubert Joly, previous CEO of Best Buy, today a true role model for leadership, admitted during an interview to have had at least 13 of these habits before starting to work with Marshall Goldsmith.

Here is a summary of the undesired, counter-effective behaviors:

- **Winning too much:** obsessive winning is always in the first place because this is usually the origin and the reason for all the other negative behaviors. Leaders are by default, achievers; there is no issue with their drive to be among the best. The problem comes when someone wants to win consistently, everywhere, against everybody, independently of what is at stake.
- **Adding too much value:** this happens when somebody comes to you with an idea, and you say, "Great idea, but it could be better if you tried this way" You may have added a 5% value, but you have reduced the other person's enthusiasm by 50%, by taking away their ownership of the idea.

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- **Being judgmental:** A leader in a meeting asks a question and receives several answers. To the first respondent, he says, "Great idea," to the second, "Good idea," and to the third, he nods his head. What happens? The first individual will be pleased, the second not so much, and the third disappointed. At the same time, everyone else in the room will take note of the different comments and will seriously consider whether to speak up themselves.
 - **Making destructive statements:** this might happen when honesty is taken too far. People allow themselves to issue damaging statements under the excuse of being honest. The fact that a destructive comment is true is irrelevant. We should not ask, "Is it true?" but rather, "Is it worth it?"
 - **Using sarcasm and cutting remarks** starting with "no," "but," or "however". When you start a sentence with "no," "but," "however," or any variation of these, no matter how friendly the tone you use is, you actually communicate, "I'm right, and you are wrong."
 - **Speaking out of anger:** emotional volatility is not a management tool. When you get angry, you usually lose control. You might say things that will shut down people, which you will be sorry for later.
 - **Negativity or "let me explain why that won't work":** we all know negative people who would never get enthusiastic even at the brightest idea they are offered. Those whose glass is always half empty, even if it's topped. "It is great. The only problem with it is..." This behavior is most harmful because it disguises destroying negativity as offering help.
 - **Withholding information:** a widespread practice with managers. "Information is power," says the proverb, and certain leaders take it very seriously. They are worried that their power will suffer if they share information. They also block their colleagues from doing their work properly, lacking the necessary information. In the end, the whole organization suffers the consequences.

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- **Failing to give proper recognition:** the inability to praise and reward. You might think that it is enough to accept that our colleagues do great things and that they contribute. "That's what they are paid for. They know how much they are appreciated." You could not be more wrong. Everybody needs recognition, and praise; otherwise they will only half-heartedly perform.
 - **Claiming credit that we don't deserve.** Claiming credit is topping the missing recognition with an added insult. It's not only that we don't give the credit to those, who deserve it, but we claim it for ourselves. When delivering the results to your uplines, how many times do you use "I," and how many times "we" or "the team"?
 - **Making excuses.** "Sorry for being late, but the traffic was horrible," "The dog ate my homework," etc. The problem with these excuses is that it shows that everybody and everything else is responsible except you. A leader is rarely appreciated – not for the responsibility they take but – for the quality of excuses they can produce.
 - **Clinging to the past** is the need to deflect blame onto events and people from our past. You may blame your deficiencies on the schools you are coming from, the teachers you had, your parents, etc. There is little sense in going back to the past; as a leader, your task is to change the future. Behave in a way that will allow you to do that.
 - **Playing favorites.** If you have a dog, you will know that most dog owners give the most attention to our dogs at home. Why does the dog get the most attention? Because the dog is always happy to see us. The dog gives us unconditional love, no matter what we do. In other words, the dog is a suck-up. If we don't pay attention, we can end up treating people at work like dogs: rewarding those who give (worse case: pretend) unconditional admiration of us, those who always agree with us, no matter how wrong we are.
 - **Punishing the messenger** is our need to attack the innocent who are usually only trying to help us. This can be the angry response we heap upon an employee who tells us something we don't want to hear. It can be snapping at people, who catch us in a weak moment with the intention to help. Who are you angry at? Them or yourself? If somebody wants to help, say "Thank you" and move on.

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- **Passing the buck:** the need to blame everyone but ourselves, finding a scapegoat. A leader unwilling to take the blame is not someone we will follow blindly anywhere. We righteously question that individual's character, dependability, and loyalty to us. In return, we will also hold back on our commitment to them.
 - **An excessive need to be me.** We all have positive and negative behaviors that we define as "this is who I am." If we are regularly late for meetings – this is because that's who we are. If we can't remember our colleagues' names – our memory is so bad. To change would be going against the deepest, most genuine part of our being. We would not be authentic anymore. This misguided loyalty to our authenticity is one of the biggest obstacles to making positive changes in our behavior. The less you focus on yourself, and the more you consider those around you, the more it will benefit you. Because, as a general rule, it's not about you. It's about them. And mostly, it's about what other people think of you.
 - **Goal Obsession:** Consider, what the real reason is that you are pursuing a goal. Is it because the goal is reasonable or because you were told to pursue it? Corporations usually have short, mid, and long-term goals. It is common to give annual objectives to employees and measure them against achieving these goals. The system works well as long as yearly goals are modified as the external and internal circumstances keep changing. It can be parodic to watch how leaders push their teams to launch a product, for example, that has turned out to be obsolete during the year; however if it is not launched, how can they justify their achievements?



SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP TASKS

There are certain tasks that executives must perform to lead their organization to be effective.

Among others, such tasks include

- Objective setting
- Decision-making
- Motivating and communicating
- Establishing measurements of performance
- Managing oneself and one's career and developing others

Objective Setting

Setting the Mission

While this may not seem relevant to leadership, the mission is actually crucial. The leader sets the organization's mission, and if this mission does not resonate deeply, then those being led will merely go through the daily tasks. Many actual organizations have exemplary missions that exist primarily in framed statements in the boardroom, on websites, and in company brochures. That kind of mission statement never works.

The mission should resonate, and it should be clear to all what is the guiding principle of the organization. Nobody gets passionate about gaining market share or reaching market dominance, or maximizing shareholder value. In fact, a leader who puts any of these or similar metrics forward immediately and silently loses much of the support.

The purpose of a business is to ensure that every person who comes into contact with it reaches their highest potential. This includes employees, customers, suppliers, lenders, shareholders, and all other stakeholders.

Such a statement immediately raises a couple of questions: How is 'highest potential' measured? Who should define what it is and measure it? How can this be turned into action?



All of these are very legitimate questions. The important question is not whether there is agreement or disagreement. What is important is that the debate should be taking place. A leader phrasing their company's mission accordingly will inspire engagement at all levels.



When I think of what makes the Girl Scouts and, later, the Drucker Foundation tick at their best, I think first of the people that freely give of themselves to the mission of each organization. ... For, in the end, commitment to the mission ultimately means commitment to other people who share the mission with you. To fail the mission is one thing; to fail other people is entirely another. Leaders of the future know that leadership has little to do with power and everything to do with responsibility. The dispersed leadership that marks a great organization starts with a shared commitment to mission and purpose.

– Frances Hesselbein

Setting the Objectives

The objectives of the organization and of the individuals are derived from the mission and the goals of the enterprise.

Each manager, from the “big boss” down to the production lead and the admin team, needs clearly spelled-out objectives. Those objectives should lay out what performance is expected from the functions, the departments, and the individuals. They should lay out what contribution they are expected to make to help others obtain their objectives. They should also describe what contribution the manager can expect from their and other teams toward the attainment of their own objectives.

The objectives of every leader need to clearly show their contribution to reaching the company goals in all areas of the business. Obviously, not every manager has a direct contribution to make in every area, but each manager must understand that business results depend on a balance of efforts in most areas.



- 1. What is our mission?**
- 2. Who is our customer?**
- 3. What does the customer value?**
- 4. What are our results?**
- 5. What is our plan?”**

— *Peter F. Drucker, The Five Most Important Questions You Will Ever Ask About Your Organization*



Decision-making

Peter Drucker leads us through the mechanism of executive decision-making in *The Effective Executive*.

A decision is a choice between alternatives. It is rarely a choice between right and wrong. It is rather a choice between “maybe right” and “possibly wrong”—but much more often a choice between alternative actions, neither of which is clearly better than the other. Most books on decision-making tell the reader: “First, find the facts.” But executives who make effective decisions know that one does not start with facts. One starts with opinions. These opinions are untested hypotheses and, as such, worthless until tested against facts.

To ask people to search for the facts first is undesirable. They will simply search for the data that matches the conclusion they have already reached. And no one has ever failed to find the facts he is looking for.

The effective executive encourages opinions. But he insists that the people who voice them also think through what it is that the “experiment”—that is, the testing of the opinion against reality—would have to show. The effective executive, therefore, asks: “What do we have to know to test the validity of this hypothesis?” “What would the facts have to be to make this opinion tenable?”

If we start to analyze the way a truly effective, right decision has been reached, we will find that a great deal of work and thought went into finding the appropriate measurement. Defining the right measurement is not a mathematical task: it is a risk-taking judgment.

Decisions are made well only if based on the clash of conflicting views, the dialogue between different points of view, and the choice between different judgments. As Peter Drucker put it, “The first rule in decision-making is that one does not make a decision unless there is disagreement.”



Disagreement alone can provide alternatives to a decision. And a decision without an alternative is a gambler's game, no matter how carefully thought through it is. There is always a possibility that the decision will prove wrong—either because it was wrong, to begin with, or because a change in circumstances makes it wrong. If the leader has thought through alternatives during the decision-making process, they have something to fall back on, something that has already been thought through, that has been studied, that is understood.



Life is an ongoing process of choosing between safety (out of fear and need for defense) and risk (for the sake of progress and growth). Make the growth choice a dozen times a day.

– Abraham Maslow



The Motivation of Others

Probably, the greatest misconception about employee engagement is that everyone is motivated by money. Managers believing in it proceed to ignore the many other actions and rewards they control, which are just as important as money. One size doesn't fit all, and the secret to being an effective motivator is understanding each individual's unique needs.

Human beings are four-dimensional — they have a body, mind, heart, and spirit.

These four dimensions also represent the four basic needs and motivations of all people: to live, to love, to learn and grow, and to leave a legacy, that is, to have meaning and purpose.

Based on these elementary needs, people make choices. Consciously or subconsciously, they decide how much they will invest themselves into the work depending on how much they are respected and what opportunities they have to use all four parts of their nature.

Unless you value people and enable them to contribute in all four areas of "pay me fairly" (body), "treat me kindly" (heart), "use me creatively" (mind), "in principled ways that serve mankind" (spirit) — they'll rarely choose to give more of themselves than absolutely necessary.

Managers also need to understand that what motivates them personally may have little or no effect on others. Motivational drives vary from person to person and from situation to situation.



The examples of two young managers

I have two young manager clients with similar challenges. They face issues motivating their team.

Joan, a young manager of 27, completed her graduate studies on student loans, and her family could not largely contribute to her costs. She is aware that she has been indebted for many years and needs every additional cent that can come in from well-paying extra projects. She was truly excited when she could acquire several extra projects for her team, where the pay was higher than expected for regular extra work. She could hardly wait to share the great news with the team. Then, she was standing baffled when nobody showed any enthusiasm. The team members were not motivated by money; in fact, they did not want to work any more than necessary. Joan had to realise that her colleagues came from wealthier families, where the money had never been an issue. They would have needed very different motivators to get engaged in extra work.

Helen is a hyper-achiever who is triggered by newer and newer goals by over-achieving them and harvesting all the recognition that's coming with them. She was so engaged in driving her team the extra mile that she never noticed that they could not follow her anymore. In fact, she realized the trouble only when HR had to warn her of her behavior. She failed to notice that her team included a parent with a child needing special care and a colleague who takes care of an immobilized parent. None of her team members shared her enthusiasm about over-achievement.

What could go wrong?

We all work by natural law. We make every choice, big or small, by a risk-reward decision where our thinking is, "What's in it for me?"

If I want to get you to do what I want, I have to prove that doing so will benefit you. This is natural law.

Whatever motivates us might not motivate others. Everyone has a hot button that can be pushed; it is self-interest. All we have to do is find it. It's different for every people.



If you want to align your team behind your goals, you need to find the specific drivers for every team member. The majority of people identify their motives in the areas of money, power, status, popularity, recognition, meaning, and freedom.

You need to identify what drives your team members through constant communication, discussions and by listening carefully. If you listen well, you will also hear what's unsaid.

Another crucial function of a leader is to identify what is demotivating the employees and get rid of it. Management structures and workplace procedures that were once helpful can easily ossify into obstructions. The leader constantly needs to examine these and break up the obstructions as quickly as possible.



You do not build company culture by putting in football tables or having open seating. You build culture by actually talking to people one by one and understanding what they care about.

What you will learn is that some people want money, some people want time with their family, some people want a title, and some people want creativity. And it is your job to know every single one of those things about every single person every single day."

– Gary Vaynerchuk



Managing Oneself and One's Career

Managing oneself

When it comes to leadership coaching, it is common practice that companies foot the bill of coaching for their leaders.

The dilemma of career/life coaching relates to the whole-person approach. Leadership (and any other) coaching supports people to develop on their own terms. That's an important point because it says that the client is the individual being coached, not the organization paying the bill.

If a coach helps a manager become more authentic and lead based on their strengths, this will necessarily involve the private aspects of one's life as well as the professional part.

The reason why a manager can't function well as a team leader, for example, maybe because they find it difficult to place trust in others. Although this might look like an interpersonal or leadership performance issue, the root cause of that distrust may be an internal issue of personal authenticity.

For a leader to be an efficient executive, it is crucial that they manage all aspects of their life and that they have a balanced personality that is authentically reflecting their values at home, with friends, or at the workplace. If any part goes out of balance, it will drag the other parts with itself. Your support to your teammates will be deficient if you, yourself, are in need of support. Like the safety instructions on an airplane: first place yourself in safety; only then are you wholly capable of placing your children in safety too.

When you are whole, when you feel intact and happy with your situation and position, you will then automatically look around and seek who you can support.



If you are insecure, if you cannot identify with your position, with your tasks, if you are unsure whether you are the most fit for your position, if you cannot ultimately rely on your values and principles, every step forward of your colleagues will be a threat to you. You will feel they may become dangerous challengers for your position anytime, so you might do everything to block their development.

Leadership begins with defining what is important for you and what you truly care deeply about. Some call this passion, vocation, or mission. One must determine where one belongs—in a large or small organization; as a freelancer; in a corporation, government, or social sector institution; or perhaps as an executive or a technologist.

The biggest secret of successful leaders is how to stay in love with leading, with the people who do the work, with the outcome of their organizations, and with those who honor the organization by buying or using its products. Leadership is not a business of the mind. Leadership is an affair of the heart.

Managing oneself requires the individual to establish a process for determining what one is good at (in other words, one's strengths) and for determining where one's efforts in their work will make the greatest contribution.

Am I a listener or a reader? How do I learn most effectively? Is my job aligned with my values? These are important issues to settle in order to set the direction of one's career.

Developing others

Leaders must also understand how the people around them work so they can help these people maximize their contributions. Managing these relationships is crucial to effectiveness. Leaders also must take responsibility for developing the abilities of team members and coworkers around them. This process is crucial for cultivating future leaders of an enterprise and for helping employees acquire skills that will prepare them for the future.



WHERE LEADERSHIP CAN GO SOUTH

How Can Psychopaths Blend in as Leaders?

I tirelessly keep teaching the 'how-to-be' to leaders. The integrity, the quality of character, the principles and values, and how they (should) treat others. I believe in this. I believe that only these traits can bring a team to the highest possible performance.

And I also must admit that practice sometimes contradicts us. What we can see in real life - all too many times - is that supervisors, managers, and directors, all the way up, are abusive of power; they are mobbing and bullying their team members. The reasons can be different from person to person, but the hope to reach better results and higher efficiency will come in the very end. The most common reasons for such behavior are enjoying the feeling of power complemented with negative emotional intelligence (that is, lacking the ability to feel empathy and being impulsive). We often observe scheming, interpersonal manipulation, and moral indifference to others.

The key question is when we are all perfectly aware of the leader's character that we would like to hire, how can the Machiavellian, narcissistic psychopaths still get to power?

If corruptible people seek power more than the rest of us and if power corrupts — both of which statements are true — how do we re-engineer society and redesign processes to ensure that honest people with integrity seek and gain authority and that power doesn't corrupt people but rather purifies them?

A recent documentary on Netflix, - Downfall, The Case Against Boeing, - spectacularly spotlights the difference between the Boeing company before the merger with McDonnell Douglas and the recent ruthless, emotionless leadership.



Alan Mulally, whose leadership is currently being taught around the world as an example of empathetic efficiency, appears for a couple of seconds in the movie, only to symbolize the feeling of belonging to the organization where safety was above all, and engineers were encouraged to report every error that came to their attention. Along with the previous culture, he also left Boeing at the beginning of the 2000s.

At the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, two Boeing commercial air flights fell down due to a technical error that would have been avoidable if the by-all-means cost saving had not overruled safety considerations.

There can be hardly any more tragic and more spectacular illustration of how things can go wrong when leadership is assumed by emotionless autocrats whose only drive is the higher and higher share price.

How do abusive, corruptible people get to power?

Research data has shown that corrupt, abusive people are highly inclined to seek power, they are disproportionately capable of getting it, and they are likely to become worse once they gain it because power does indeed corrupt.

We have created a recruiting system that favors extroverted, narcissistic, Machiavellian psychopaths in how we hire people and how we promote them. Many of the processes used to evaluate candidates, promote them, or recruit them in the first place entail "performances": brief displays of superficial charm and narcissism - the two traits most closely linked to psychopaths or narcissists.

The above suggests that leadership selection might be far less rational than we think it is.

It is essential to understand the cognitive biases that play a role in leader selection in order to overcome them and make better decisions regarding who will lead the organization.

We have some human flaws and some weak processes, but these can be fixed, and the end result should be an organization that is much more just and free from corruption.

How can we change the existing systems?

Often times simple and easy changes in selection processes can improve results considerably. As an example, many university professors do not see the names of students whose papers they are correcting. There is an identification number, which eliminates bias toward or against a person. What if we similarly started to invite and accept only no-name, no-picture, and no-gender resumes, with an identification number only in our recruitment processes?

When controlling employees, much corporate surveillance involves low-ranking people in the company who simply don't have the capacity to bring the company down. There are gadgets that have weight sensors in chairs and webcams that are continuously monitoring if you're taking an additional five minutes for your coffee break, so everyday employees are being observed in ways that frequently verge on dystopia.

When you think about systemic risks to a company, to an organization, it's usually the people who work in corner offices behind closed doors, who can cause the biggest harm if they do not have proper control mechanisms.

If you are going to have some level of oversight, audits, or actual checks – randomized integrity testing -you don't need to apply them constantly. Instead of focusing on those who might take a paperclip, they should be more targeted toward those who might genuinely wreck the business or have access to embezzling millions.





Losing your Mission

There are great risks in trying to get ahead too fast, especially for young leaders. This is especially true if you jump into major leadership roles without first knowing who you really are. You will navigate among the temptations of external gratification—money, fame, and power—and these great tempters can easily take control over you and your decisions, even without your noticing.

Why do so many leaders avoid facing their true selves? They may lack close friends who can help them face themselves, or they may fear vulnerability. They may also try to bury their past and put on a new mask.

The consequence of denying or repressing your real you and where you've come from can be severe. This can emphasize your shadow side—the dark parts of your personality you try to repress.

Many leaders with great potential lose their way because they do not face this dark side and find themselves losing their Kompas.

Most of them do not start off as bad people, yet somewhere along the way, they lose their direction. They get fascinated by their own success and are encouraged to push the limits even further. They eventually go too far, and everything falls apart.

If your true motivations to lead are power, prestige, and money, you are at risk of derailing. Only if you have the desire to serve something greater than yourself, eventually, these rewards will come to you without seeking them.

Leaders who focus on external gratification instead of leading with integrity have trouble staying grounded. They surround themselves with sycophant supporters telling them what they want to hear instead of honest critics who would hold a mirror and speak the truth. Over time, they lose the will for honest dialogue, and people will learn to avoid confronting them.

There may be a fear of failure hiding behind all these behaviors. Many leaders gain power by controlling others and stomping on their competition. By the time they get to the top, they are convinced that someone is trying to knock them off their pedestal.

Their arrogance masks a fear that they are unqualified for such high positions and that their identities would be revealed.



To mask their fears, some leaders push themselves so hard to achieve the results that they lose sight of reality and become unable to admit their flaws. When faced with their shortcomings, they attempt to hide them or find an explanation for why the problems are not their fault. They frequently look for scapegoats to blame.

By using charisma, power, and charm, they convince others to accept their viewpoints. As a result, their organizations will lose touch with reality. In the end, it is the whole organization that suffers the greatest harm.

Example of Mission Lost – Elizabeth Holmes

Elizabeth Holmes, the founder of Theranos, was recently sentenced to more than 11 years in prison for defrauding investors.

She used to be a promising chemical engineering student at Stanford University and worked at the Genome Institute of Singapore, testing blood samples for SARS-CoV-1.

She had the vision that she would become the new Steve Jobs, so after her freshman year, Elizabeth dropped out of college (as did Steve Jobs) and – at the age of 19 - used her tuition money to found the blood testing company Theranos.

A young and relentlessly focused CEO, Elizabeth studied Silicon Valley founders and modeled herself after them. She deepened her voice to increase her gravitas. Like the late Steve Jobs, she wore black turtlenecks.

With powerful politicians and investors behind her back, Elizabeth became the favorite of Silicon Valley. She cast herself as a disruptive leader who aimed to personalize health care with revolutionary blood tests.



There was only one issue: her blood testing device did not work.

Elizabeth was not guided by a moral compass, nor did she try to develop herself as an authentic leader.

She ignored serious patient health risks presented by the issues, treating them as a public relations problem. Obsessed about her image, she directed employees to edit her Wikipedia page and hired law firms to threaten anyone who publicly challenged Theranos.

She had a great mission statement: "Creating a world in which no one has to say goodbye too soon.", which, tragically, has been a phrase for public relations purposes only.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth Holmes had one real mission only, and this was to build her ego and become the new Steve Jobs. She badly missed what made the real Steve Jobs a success: a mission – "Bringing the best user experience to its customers through innovative hardware, software, and services" – that is far beyond egos and personal successes and that he and his successors have truly been following as their North Star.



"We must have the courage to always place the mission first, to be demographics driven and to be values-based. We don't cut corners and do just two out of the three.

The worst mistake I see leaders make is abandoning the mission. Some leaders find themselves taking on projects ... because of the money that is attached to it."

– Frances Hesselbein



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