

Leadership = The 16 Inch Connection

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Leader behaviors...16 inches? Leader excellence is stimulating increasing levels of Associate excitement about their tasking... 16 inches? Leader behaviors in starting, sustaining and succeeding in relationships with staff and peers...16 inches? Behaviors of leaders16 inches of demonstrated consistency of planning actions, responsive reactions to support a wide range of constituencies?

Sixteen inches is the usual distance between the leader's head and the leader's heart.

It is suggested that not only decision making should be based on BOTH heart and head considerations, but also leadership actions and responsiveness in confronting issues should be intertwined with BOTH "a business head" and human considerations.

Career ascent is buoyed in the political organizational waters of who is, and who is not, promoted based on the track record of persons who (1) thought with a business head and (2) demonstrated the caring feelings of the heart.

Is it possible that undue emphasis in Graduate Schools of Business Administration is placed on logical decision making & critical thinking as the "be-all and end-all"? Is it possible that an over-emphasis in Schools of Business is placed on the "touchy-super sensitivity" for manager psychology in organizations? Both in-house and "out-house" educational seminars can become lopsided in leaning too far in leadership development.

The consistent DEMONSTRATION of these interlocked competencies are core to leader effectiveness, leader acceptability, leader career success! The two "C's" = caring and critical evaluation... are either the stepping stones or "stumbling stones" of leadership....the connectivity of actions filtered through head and heart.

The "head" of the leader, the weighing of opportunity options and the creation of alternatives, is the critical analysis process for the solving of problems. I call this weighing and evaluating-judging ...the "B---B" process. The numerator is the "B" of desired or perceived BENEFITS.

The denominator is the "B" of BOTHER. Leader logic considers both the numerator and the components of the denominator....a ratio.

The BENEFITS are the desired outcomes of the logical decision making process. The benefits are the key success areas, the objectives and goals toward which the leader is providing direction for Associate focus.



These benefits include achievement pay-off, reward value and profit for the organization and the Associates. Such goal-seeking benefits usually include the words “needed, wanted, necessary, critical or highly desired”.

The effective leader’s decision making would be remiss if the BOTHERS were not logically estimated and emotionally considered. Some of these components are:

- Emotional impacts of the change on Associates
- Reactive (-) political impacts in the organization
- Time availability & the hassle of getting resources
- Costs; the hustle to mobilize financial assets
- Possible career harm and hurt to self and others
- Headache and stress of taking on addition(s)
- Estimate of heartache pain if failure is the result
- The difficulties of climbing a new “learning curve”
- Gain or loss of an opportunity window
- Risk of destructiveness to teams & danger to the well being of human assets
- Relative impacts on the multitude of other priorities
- Degree of effort and time to gain Associate emotional ownership & identification with the meaningfulness/usefulness of the addition
- Building new supportive/collaborative coalitions
- Innovation risks of all kinds (the unknown factors)
- Ethical and morality considerations
- “Fit” with vision and mission =worth-full
- Enhance or diminish leader & others’ credibility

Upon a review of these BOTHER issues, it is apparent that these and many others aspects in decision making contain heart and head components. The leader who builds sustaining relationships integrates critical problem analyses and sensitivity to others’ feelings/perceptions/needs. That is, problem solutions are best obtained through the connectivity of these “16 inches” between the cognitive process and psychological sensitivity.

The Bookends Of Leadership

There are multitudes of managerial textbooks that espouse and elaborate the “laws” of managerial success. Surely these standing upright texts are helpful in posturing the manager to ‘stand upright’ in handling the multi-dimensional aspects of the “C’s”...Communicate, Command, Control.

As the opening paragraph above addresses “books”, let us address the bookends that hold and help leadership. At one end of the array of leader-GUIDE books, not laws of leading, is the bookend of listening. At the other end of guidebooks are two words.... thank you.



One is reminded of Dr. Frasier Crane's regular statement on the television show "Frasier".... " I'm listening!" One of the hallmarks of a leader is the sincerity of asking questions and fully hearing the responses.

At one time the emphasis was on being the expert with the expert answers. Today the emphasis is on being an expert....an expert at asking expert questions with the sincerity of seeking honest responses.

Leading begins with listening, making the transition from impressing others to facilitating others' expressing. The focus shifts from self expansion to the releasing enrichment of the other person. The other person is valued as his and her ideas, suggestions, excitements and concerns are valued because the leader genuinely cared by asking and by listening.

Many times one has to hear with "a third ear". The third ear is hearing (a) what the person does NOT talk about, (b) begins to mention and quickly withdraws from the subject, and (c) states certain things at first and then contradicts these things midway or at the end of the monologue.

Interpersonal leading has another bookend, the bookend with the words on it....thank you. Associates want to please with pleasing performance. Organizations seldom, if ever, hire individuals who do NOT want to please.

However, through time of employment some individuals' attitudes and behaviors BECOME negative, restive and resistive. Could it be that these evolving changes reflect the 'missing bookend' of management. Managers who failed or stopped saying....thank you?

THANK YOU is the minimum for an Associate suggestion and performance. THANK YOU is the craved recognition from a leader. THANK YOU undergirds and strengthens the bonding, present and future, of leader-follower.

Recently I saw a person carrying a cardboard fastened on a tall stick stating, " I will work for recognition". Recognition is the food for the motivation spirit, the rewarding food that feeds the psychological nutritional requirement for performance.

Time and active attention are 'connector wires' between Associates and leaders. The preceding paragraphs highlighted active attention. What about time commitment needed between leader and Associate(s)? Time is a resource to be valued by BOTH persons in the interface. With all of the time pressures to allocate time, it is a wonder that Associates obtain time with managers.

DO NOT SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE. INVEST TIME WITH PEOPLE. Relations with people are an investment. Just passing time with Associates is only a pastime.



Spending time so often is wasting time....even generating the feeling of “doing time”!
Often the spending of time with staff members is seen as a ritual and done ritualistically.

Ritual time is soon seen as artificial. The boss is seen as a phony, as a person obligated to go through the motions. Compare this behavior with the effective leader who INVESTS time in sharing and being in the present when with others. This is not lost time, but an opportunity to gain through this mutuality.

The investment of time is the saliency and building block of trust. The “us” in the word trust is formed and nurtured by seeing time as an interpersonal investment.

PERformance versus CONformance

What are L.O.E.s ? What is the critical relationship between leadership and L.O.E.s? L.O.E.s = level of expectations. Performance results when leaders communicate expectations, then track and monitor evolving performance, critique with feedback and surely reward/reinforce goal achievements. Performance starts and sustains with high, yet realistic and attainable leader expectations that are mutually created and clearly understood.

Please note the words above....high expectations of attainable objectives. Expectations (L.O.E.) need to be neck-stretching, but not neck-breaking! Leaders are usually aware that Associates welcome task challenges, but are also aware that human beings have self-doubts at times over their capabilities and competencies. This is the psychological tug-of-war as new, ever higher levels of expectations, are forged out between staff and leader.

Being sensitive to this internal tug-of-war possibility, leaders make a transition from “cop to coach”. The SERVANT LEADER appreciates the need for coaching & emotional support as Associates hit these internal conflictual points. At the same time the Servant Leader expects results...task performance of high quality to match or exceed agreed to neck-stretching expectations.

Reference is made to the second paragraph in this section. Tracking performance roll-out is salient to keeping performance aligned with agreed to objectives. The B.C. and A.D. Roman armies, as they marched and conquered, set mile markers (the noting and marking of accomplished miles). Effective performance monitoring and reviewing is vital to accomplishment as well as offering the leader an appropriate time to praise the Associate(utilization of positive reinforcement).

Reality is faced at these times of proactive tracking. Deviations and mistakes from the L.O.E.s are part of the reality of managing progress. How do leaders confront and handle these errors and mistakes? Is this a time for punishment or a time for learning? Three primary questions have ‘a fit’ at these times:



- Shall we review our agreed to L.O. E.s and compare them to the present performance to date?
- What have you learned as a by-product of these errors or deviations?
- If you would do this task(s) differently next time, what would you do differently?

Mile marker time between leader and Associate is a time for learning, not punishment and put-down rebuke. Leaders utilize these feedback time for lifting spirits, not a time for administrator impressing or depressing.

Dialogue exchange is surely more valuable than administrator monologues! Both leader and Associate are mutually 'planting' the mile markers. It is a time to exchange updated information to both directions of the communication loop.

Examining the word AUTHORITY, please note it is two words = AUTHOR---IT. As children mature into adult self-accountabilities, they push back and actively seek more autonomy or self-choices. As leaders recognize the differences in maturity levels between and among Associates.... maturity being individual differences in self-initiated task responsibility and accountability....differential empowering can be key.

Differential freedom levels of decision making, differential 'room to roam', differential encouragement of creative exploration and differential empowering provides job joy and task identification. Effective leaders are sensitive to individual differences in competencies, accountability maturity, strength of differential desire for choice-making freedom, attitudes toward new learning, etc. and etc.

Differential leader styles relate to a saying, "Different folks need different strokes". Cultural diversity in organizational populations is core to releasing exceptional and break through achievements. Diversity of leadership style and diversity in handling leadership situations (situation leadership) are vital to exceptional progress, profit, performance and personal relationships.

Leaders stimulate the winning ways of winners. Leaders should handle humans as if humans had on their forehead the words.....

“FRAGILE = HANDLE WITH CARE“

