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What About Leadership?

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This article is a preview of a larger work I am writing on leadership. It should provide you with a tasty sample of things to come. It incorporates some of the best thinking of experts in this area (see suggested reading at end of article) and my coaching experience with knowledgeable leaders. These readings have provided additional insight into leadership values, leadership myths, behavioral styles and leadership styles. You may ask: “How does this apply to me?” Generally, it applies to anyone who is in or planning to be in a position of leadership.

Most of the authors agree that we have a leadership crisis – nationally and globally. Today, many people are questioning whether we have enough leaders – and if the leaders we do have are actually good leaders. Unfortunately, there appears to be a dearth of leaders both in *quantity* and in *quality* of personal values.

This disheartening fact is apparent just by observing how few government and corporate leaders seem truly concerned with the welfare of their constituents. Given the compromises in integrity, the convenient expediency and acts of opportunism that we see each day, our leaders appear to have *their*, not *our*, best interests in mind. And in our world of increased uncertainty, interconnectivity, social capital, global economy and pace or speed of change, it is apparent that we are in dire need of good, ethical leaders with strong values.

Early in our fledgling country’s history, George Washington observed: “Few men have the virtue to withstand the highest bidder.” Not much has changed, has it? Whether you agree or disagree with the existence or degree of a crisis, it still makes sense to explore the possibility of training more and better leaders.

I have created three separate tables on the most recognized leadership values, behavioral styles and leadership styles. I intend to emphasize the importance of these values, dispel some of the leadership myths and show the interrelationships between the behavioral styles and the leadership styles. Finally, I will illustrate what can only be understood but not changed, and what can and cannot be trained regarding emotional intelligence and leadership.

Table A lists some sample leadership values and some of the ways you can recognize them. We call the way these values are identified “deliverables”. The first two values, integrity and competence, were chosen as key values for leaders by a majority of the referenced authors and are readily accepted as indispensable. Under “integrity,” the last deliverable – “trustworthy” –

requires some explanation. For followers to trust leaders, leaders must be reliable or do what they say they’ll do, accept others as they are and be willing to receive, as well as give, feedback. These characteristics are fundamental for anyone who wants to be trusted.

To be effective and visionary, it is critical that leaders select their own suitable values and integrate them with their leadership styles. Ronald Heifetz, director of the Leadership Education Project, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard, writes: “Leadership engages our values. The term leadership involves our self-images and moral codes. We cannot talk about a crisis in leadership and then say leadership is value-free.”

Some of the prevalent myths about leadership are:

- Leadership is a rare skill.
- Leaders are born, not made.
- Everyone can be a leader.
- Leaders are charismatic.
- Leadership exists only at the top of an organization.

Table 1.
Sample Values and Deliverables

Value	Deliverables
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing the right thing now • Being honest at all times • Being trustworthy
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many years of experience • Investing heavily in training and development • Utilizing the most advanced tools available
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipating the needs of constituents* • Genuinely caring about constituents • Exceeding constituents’ expectations
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying on the cutting edge of technology • Encouraging and rewarding ideas from constituents • Employing consultants to keep thinking fresh
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying abreast of economic, political and social developments • Maintaining a global perspective at all times • Remaining flexible and adjusting strategies when appropriate

*Constituents include clients, colleagues and staff



- Leaders deliver business results.
- Leaders are great coaches.

Let me briefly address three of these myths and relate them to both behavioral styles and leadership styles.

Myth 1. “Leaders Are Born, Not Made”

First, check out Table 2 where the distinguishing characteristics of behavioral styles are listed. Note the Dominant style. Do you recognize these characteristics as those of some CEOs or other corporate leaders you know? We know these traits are not 100% genetic. They could be 40%-60% experiential. The point is that we observe this as the behavioral style of a large number of leaders. Intuitively, it may appear that these leaders were born with these qualities, and that is partially true. First, we know that everyone is born; and second, 18% of them have the Dominant behavioral style. Therefore, we can state that they were born with some of the characteristics that have made them leaders, but some of these traits have been nurtured as well.

Do you agree that a leader’s most important resource is people? Now look at the Orientation of the Dominant leader – “process,” not people. People with these behavioral traits need be trained or coached to soften the objectionable elements of their style. (Please note the “Weaknesses” of the Dominant and how they perform under stress.) President Eisenhower commented: “You do not lead by hitting people over the head. That’s assault, not leadership.”

Table 3 shows the six leadership styles that Dan Goleman, Ph.D., founder of Emotional Intelligence Services in Boston, introduced in his *Harvard Business Review* article, “Leadership That Gets Results.” The prevailing leadership styles for the Dominant are “Coercive” and “Pacesetter” – both of which are characterized as having negative impact.

Unless a person experiences a major life trauma, we know that it is extremely difficult to alter behavioral styles. This is a situation in which we coach toward a Dominant’s understanding of his/her weakness(es). We recognize that it is very difficult to train-out dictatorial and train-in empathy. That doesn’t mean we can’t try. It simply means we need a sensitive, pro-active and collaborative approach to addressing such issues.

**Table 2.
Distinguishing Characteristics of Behavioral Styles**

	Dominant (18%)	Influencer (28%)	Steady (40%)	Compliant (14%)
Seeks	Control	Recognition	Acceptance	Accuracy
Orientation	Process	People	People	Process
Strengths	Decisive, Direct, Independent	Persuading, Enthusiastic,	Listening, Team Player Methodical	Analytical, Conservative, Exacting
Growth Areas (Weaknesses)	Impatient, Argumentative, Poor Listener, Tactless	Impulsive, Attention to Detail, Time Management	Prioritizing, Multi-Tasking, Resisting Change	Perfectionist, Analysis-Paralysis, Defensive
Irritated By	Inefficiency, Indecision	Routines, Complexity	Insensitivity, Impatience	Disorganization, Impropriety
Under Stress	Dictatorial, Critical	Sarcastic, Superficial	Submissive, Indecisive	Withdrawn, Headstrong
Decision Making	Decisive	Spontaneous	Conferring	Deliberate
Fears	Being Taken Advantage Of	Loss of Social Recognition	Sudden Change	Criticism of Personal Efforts
Gains Security Through	Control	Playfulness	Friendship	Preparation
Measures Personal Worth By	Results, Impact	Acknowledgement, Compliments	Compatibility, Contribution	Precision, Accuracy

Myth 2. “Everyone Can Be A Leader.”

In Table 2 above, the Steadys represent 40% of the behavioral styles. They are excellent team players, but they resist change and under pressure are submissive and indecisive. Leadership is about change. Leaders take us through adaptive and technical change. In this case, we recognize how difficult it is to train someone of this behavioral style to be decisive. Steadys prefer being methodical and supportive. Accordingly, many Steadys not only don’t want to be leaders, but they aren’t hardwired to be so.

Myth 3. “Leaders Are Great Coaches”

Dan Goleman reports that of his six leadership styles listed in Table 3 (next page), the “Coaching style is used least often.” Perhaps the reason for this is that coaching leadership requires listening and empathy – qualities which many leaders lack. Coaching also takes time, of which most leaders don’t have much.

In discussing a few of the leadership myths, we also have covered some of the material on behavioral style and leadership style. According to Goleman, few leaders have more than two of these styles in their repertory. He states: “Leaders who have mastered four or more – especially the authoritative, democratic, affiliative and coaching styles – have the very best climate and business performance.” Goleman continues: “Our emotional intelligence determines our potential for learning the practical skills The good news about emotional intelligence (EQ) is that – unlike IQ (which changes only slightly) – EQ can improve throughout life At the individual level, elements of emotional intelligence can be identified, assessed and upgraded.”

So, where do you go from here? The following are eight questions to ask yourself:

1. Do I share the values of good leaders?
2. Can I overcome most of the myths about leadership?
3. What is my behavioral style?
4. Does my behavioral style affect my ability to lead?
5. Does it affect my ability to communicate?

Table 3.
The Six Leadership Styles At A Glance

Leadership Style	Modum Operandi	Style in A Phrase	Underlying EQ Competencies	When Style Works Best	Overall Impact on Climate
Coercive	Demands immediate compliance	“Do what I tell you”	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control	In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround or with problem employees	Negative
Authoritative	Mobilizes people toward a vision	“Come with me”	Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst	When changes require a new vision or when a clear direction is needed	Most strongly positive
Affiliative	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	“People come first”	Empathy, building relationships, communication	To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances	Positive
Democratic	Forges consensus through participation	“What do you think”	Collaboration, team leadership, communication	To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees	Positive
Pacesetting	Sets high standards for performance	“Do as I do, now”	Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative	To get quick results, from a highly motivated and competent team	Negative
Coaching	Develops people for the future	“Try this”	Developing others, empathy, self-awareness	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths	Positive

6. What is/are my leadership style(s)?
7. Is/are my leadership style(s) positive?
8. What leadership style(s) would I like to learn?

Conclusion

Finally, here are five action steps to consider:

1. Take a behavioral assessment. (Table 3 will help you identify your dominant behavioral style.)
2. Select the leadership style(s) you wish to develop.
3. Review your emotional intelligence competencies. (Take an assessment test, if necessary.)
4. Work on strengthening your empathy. (This emotional competency appears as a requirement for many key leadership styles.)
5. Work with a coach to improve your emotional and leadership habits. (My results have demonstrated that habits can be altered in 3-5 weeks.)

As stated in the introduction, this article is a sampler. In the expanded version, all of the values, myths, behavioral styles and leadership styles will be addressed in depth. But for now, this preview briefly has identified some of the issues regarding leadership and leadership training. Simply put, leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. It has been said that “if you think you are a leader and no one is following, perhaps you are just out for a walk.” Which is it in your case? ■

Suggested Reading

Maxwell, John. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*.
 Tzu, Sun. *Art of War*.
 Daniels, Aubrey. *Bringing Out the Best in People*.
 McKenna, Patrick and David Master. *First Among Equals*.
 “What Makes a Leader?” *Harvard Business Review*.
 Kouzes, James and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*.
 Heifetz, Ronald. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.
 Bennis, Warren and Joan Goldsmith. *Learning to Lead*.
 Bridges, William. *Managing Transitions*.
 Rosenberg, Marshall. *NonViolent Communication*.
 Maister, David. *Practice What You Preach*.
 Ciampa, Dan and Michael Watkins. *Right From the Start*.
 Blanchard, Ken and Phil Hodges. *The Servant Leader*.
 Tzu, Lao. *Tao Te Ching*.
 Goleman, Daniel. *Working With Emotional Intelligence*.

About the Author

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