
The Kind Of A Leader I Would Want To Be

Leadership is an influential process. The leader is in a position to shape, regulate, control and change the attitudes, behaviour and performance of his group members. The latter are supposed to comply with the leader's desires and directives and partially suspend their own judgment. There exists a particular relationship between the leader and his group members which is characterised by interpersonal and social interaction. In a group, the leader and his followers play the roles expected of them and thereby seek to justify their respective positions. Some leaders may be able to play their role effectively where they succeed in getting the willing cooperation and commitment of their followers, beyond the normal call of duty. The utilization of these interpersonal skills is a key component to becoming a great leader. This skill set helps leaders gain more credibility in the eyes of people; they often tend to ignore other deficiencies in him/her. They resolve to adhere to them and allow themselves to be further exposed to his/her influence.

Various theories over the years have been formulated by psychologists to explain the traits of a leader. Certain traits of a good leader were listed by the researchers as: intelligence, extraversion, and adjustment, openness to experience, general self-efficacy and conscientiousness. It has been noticed that an individual possessing these traits results as a good leader. Another theory suggests that great events lead an ordinary individual to emerge as a leader. Then there is a third theory which emphasises that leadership is a transformation or a process. Anyone can become a leader by learning the leadership skills.

With all due respect to all these theories, I believe all of us deserve to work for inspiring leaders. Inspiring leaders are individuals who are committed to developing their leadership effectiveness and are incredibly intentional with their efforts to grow as leaders. I believe that one of the key ingredients to inspiring leadership is emotional intelligence, which can be developed in us if we are attentive to the domains of emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman writes "Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal. Great leadership works through emotions."

If more leaders were comfortable with the idea that they need to tap into our hearts, as well as our heads, we would be more inspired to rise to challenges, work hard to achieve the mission, while staying motivated in the day to day grind. It takes a very self-assured and self-aware person to lead in this manner, and often the kind of vulnerability that is required to lead in this way is so uncomfortable for people, they steer clear of it and lead to our heads.

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I have noticed the division between these two ways of leading, head and heart. During my learning years in university, I had the benefit of working for one leader who was incredibly intelligent, strategic and courageous as a leader, while also showing vulnerability, compassion and empathy with his team members. This leader developed a high performing team that was infused with trust, high quality work and commitment to achieving goals. I remember discovering my own potential during this team project. I knew he believed in me and that inspired me to rise.

On the heels of this leader came a person who had embodied that "head only" style of leadership and while he was strategic in his approach to the work, he was completely ineffective at bringing along the team with a shared vision. The prior trust that we enjoyed quickly eroded as our own emotional state deteriorated when we did not feel valued, trusted or included. The leader's inability to demonstrate his trust in us quickly undermined the positive culture we previously had built and enjoyed.

A leader is someone who stands not only for his cause but takes responsibility and motivates other individuals also. There is a clear difference between being a boss and a leader. A great leader is a motivation for others and inspires individuals to aim high and attain that aim.

However a boss only supervises over his subordinates. Power naturally comes to a leader but that power is not a tool of leader. Hence, why inspiring leadership is what the world needs most, and it will require a shift in the way we think about leadership and what we celebrate about leadership. This is the style of leadership we all crave; so we can be our best and develop our potential. The role of a leader is to help others rise. That is the kind of leader I want to be, an inspiring one.

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