

The Most Essential Leadership Quality In the 21st Century

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Leadership is one among the most critical roles a person can have because of a variety of reasons that are dependent on the leader and the effectiveness of that leaders towards fulfill the needs of those that depend on him/her. Many books have come up with different definitions as well as antidotes on what they think leadership ought to be. According to Maxwell (1999), a good leader is one who can gain followers. Great leaders' most essential quality to me is the character. Crossan (2016) defines character as "an amalgam of virtues, traits, and values." (p.6). A character in leadership means a person that can be trusted, a leader with character can achieve a lot because people have confidence in the person and his/ her ability. Character builds a circle of trust between leaders and subordinates, where followers need to know that the leader has their back. Maxwell (2018) says that a leader of character rises on above failure and pushes on.

When talking about great leadership character, I try to wonder from a personal perspective what to me is great leadership and what makes it essential and effective. When I was growing up, I always had a portrait in mind where I saw the kind of leadership that existed in my home and always thought to myself that that is what I wanted the future society to look like. Even though my world growing up was not perfect, there always existed a sense of mutual respect, shared responsibility as well as well as loyalty. In the political arena, on the other hand, I saw a portrait of Dedan Kimathi as a good leader because he was among those who fought fearlessly and resisted the command of colonizers for all Kenyans to live freely in their own country. Njengere and Obonyo (2003) describe Kimathis as the most fearless, selfless as well as the most dedicated man in Kenyan history. Someone like Kimathi disregarded his safety to ensure that the future society that we have today demonstrates freedom not only for Kenyans but

for the world at large. Those who have heard and those who will hear his story will have the courage to stand up and fight for human rights for more generations now and in future.

People like Dedan Kimathi, Nelson Mandela bring an up to date idea of what leadership ought to be and what qualities are to be emulated. Becoming a leader is about being a person of character and remaining a symbol of character even when one seems to be at their lowest.

Leadership is not just about the ability to memorize a speech with eloquence or making a public appearance. Groundbreaking leaders who truly live their mark on the world demonstrated essential abilities and contributed us with a better pathway in life.

Leadership requires that leaders be aware of who they are as individual, understand principles that guide leadership and learn various characteristics of leaders of character. Rhodes and Hart (2016) say that despised leaders are always at risk of being overthrown and disregarded. That teaches us to be always aware and cautious of the character we show others and how it may affect us in future. This paper elaborates on various characters of leadership utilized by leaders all over the world, the principles that govern effective leadership and the characteristics of leadership as well as what makes these characteristics beneficial in the 21st century. In today's society, people learn through history which helps guide and understand the various changes that have taken place, adopt them and use them to guide us. Apart from traditional learning many people observe the leaders around them and analyze their behavior and use it to guide them in deciding whether to emulate those leaders or work to the best of their ability not to become those leaders that they may so much despise. Mokhber and Ismail (2013) state that influenced followers to search for behaviors in leaders that create respect, trust, and devotion. The way a leader perceives himself/ herself help in the personal development and enhance their behavior when faced with a different situation, also the way some leader treats

others can build or break them. Throughout leadership classes, we see how a leader can determine the rise and fall of a subordinate's career by the way they treat them. There are some characteristics that prove effective when possessed by leaders which help them earn the complete trust of society.

Intelligence

Intelligence can be defined as the ability to learn and utilize that knowledge to help in accomplishing a task. An intelligent leader knows to learn how to utilize every experience to reach a much higher level; intelligent leaders know how to learn from and accept failure and use failure as part of growth. Intelligence is among the key requirements for successful leadership and overall performance. There are ways in which a leader can improve personal intelligence by being well informed and obtaining information on areas of interest on what leadership entails which will help them in being knowledgeable and insightful

Commitment

Commitments mean being invested in something. McCauley and Fick-Cooper (2015) define commitment as the common sense of accountability and commitment to an organization. A good leader needs to be focused with what they aim to achieve commitment brings strength in moving forward to achieve desired objectives. Commitments require a leader to never giving up on what they want even if things get hard.

Visions

Vision means having a greater picture of an expected outcome. Snyder, Dowd, and Houghton, (2010) are of the view that "what is true for nations is true for corporations, too-Companies whose leaders have no vision are doomed to function under the burden of mere traditions" (p.73). A great leader needs to visualize success. All great leaders can tell you that to

reach the top; it is necessary to visualize what the top is for you to know how to get there. A good leader has the desired outcome which helps them see what to do to get there. Greenleaf, 2008) “foresight is the lead that the leader has.” Before a leader knows how to get there, they need to know where there is. A leader is required to visualize success in their minds and know what success looks like to them to help them have a clear perspective each step as they set their target.

Trust/Security

Trusting in what you want to accomplish is another key quality of a leader. Cohen (2010) says that “if you say something, make certain that it is the exact truth. If you later realize you have misspoken, correct yourself, if you say you will do something make certain you do it, no matter what” (p.16) In order for a follower to follow a leader, they need to know that a leader is sure and secure in all decision they make, security lives no room for self-doubt, questions, self-judgment. Maxwell, (1999) says it is incredibly impossible to be in charge of leading people if you need those people to help you lead, it is the self-insurance of leaders that gives a subordinate a sense of loyalty to see through to the set goals and objectives

Charisma

The first impression creates a lasting impact on someone that might mark the way that person will always see you. In leading the way you present yourself and the way other people see you matters, a leader needs to attract followers to want to follow their endeavor; the followers need to be drawn to what leader wants to achieve. Borek, Lovett & Towns (2005) say that every leader has a degree that impacts a degree of people within their circle of influence.

Integrity

Integrity symbolizes leaders who possess the qualities of honesty and dependability. Cohen (2010) takes integrity to be something that goes beyond honesty; it means doing what is

right irrespective of conditions or inconvenience to the leader or organization. People who follow strong moral principles and take responsibility for their actions are always said to be demonstrating integrity. Doohan (2007) say that integrity to people means that people need have confidence knowing that they will stick to what they promised. Leaders of integrity inspire confidence in others because they can be trusted to do what they say they are going to do. They are loyal, dependable and transparent.

Conclusion

Many people can tell you for the fact that leadership is an experience that requires learning in the day to day life, different experiences encourage leaders to be open-minded and always be prepared to practice new ideas that tend to stimulate the brain. In the times of change, many people look at a leader as the image of the organizations which makes it necessary to understand the essence of ethics in leadership as well as the ethical role of leaders towards their people. Banks and Ledbetter (2003) believes that some people exercise leadership through their character and the competence they contribute to a task, as well as, the recognition they acquire through the quality and effectiveness of what they do. To be successful in organizational settings one needs to build a character to be.

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