

The Truth About Leadership: Leader Interview  
In Fulfillment of  
LEAD 704, The Leaders Role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Professor: Anyango Reggy Gregory  
Beulah Heights University

By  
Wendy Harmon  
June 13, 2020

## 2 LEADERSHIP

### Abstract

Leadership can be seen as a specialized and a social influence process, when the many varying definitions is taken into consideration. Supported by Yukl and Gardner (2020), “leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 26).

There is no time more important than now, to highlight the truths about leadership, with the wide range of discourse that has become increasingly complex, globally, as leadership in crisis, dominate news headlines. Leadership in its complexity, can be difficult to implement in this multifaceted society, as it remains elusive and misunderstood in the market-place due to the varying styles of leadership and their consequences. However, no matter the style of leadership utilized, there are fundamental time-tested truths about leadership that are the cornerstone for any leader to stand upon and partake of, which will generate success, through cultivated effective leadership principles, for all stakeholders involved.

### **The Truth About Leadership: Leader Interview**

As a doctoral student, to fulfil this assignment , I interviewed Peace Johnson a leader in the greater Atlanta community. She holds a PhD degree in Pharmacy along with an MBA and is an ordained pastor in the River of Life Church for All Nations in Marietta, GA. She was born in Nigeria, Africa, she is a descendant of the Ibo tribe, but was raised in Houston, Texas, but adhered to her strong African culture, customs, and beliefs. She was raised by both parents in an upper middle-class home and society, where males dominated the construct of their homes, mainly financially. Females were more dominate in the home, instilling the values and beliefs expected, however, her father would solidify the voice of her mother, overseeing the entire family.

Pastor Peace or Peace, stated, that she had a “Great Awakening” (personal communication, June 9, 2020) early in life , when she heard her Dad continuously say, “He was made to lead, he was not made to follow anyone.” In hearing and observing her father, always taking the initiative in his interaction with those around him, he became a successful entrepreneur, participating in two Presidential campaigns in the United States of America. Hence, she remembered being a child socialite, being educated in the best schools which were majority white, attending parties of the ‘The Socialites,’ doing the things that upper middle-class families did.

As an adult, she is married a black man with whom she shares three children. Contrary, to her up-bringing, both her and her husband work, equally sharing all responsibilities in the home, according Pastor Peace (personal communication, June 9, 2020),“both have footprints in the house.”

## LEADERSHIP

However, based on her Father's decree, that he was meant to lead, she believes he made an imprint in her heart, influenced her to be leader, and her desire toward entrepreneurship, what she considers a transgenerational blessing. Pastor Peace's view on leadership, or truths about leadership arose and were shaped when she attended an HBU and ran for Queen of the University. She learned that in order to lead, you need to know how to follow, stating, "Following is an art. Followers, teach leaders to lead, but as a leader, you should remain a follower, both needing an ear to hear, to actively communicate and lead effectively" (Pastor Peace, personal communication, June 9, 2020).

When discussing her strengths, Pastor Peace mentioned that she is first being a servant of God, who utilizes servant leadership, by focusing on and equipping people with all the resources needed, to accomplish job performance by meeting job satisfaction and expected goal performance of the organization. She is an active listener, full of compassion, empathy, all without prejudice or proclaiming judgements. A limitation that she is working on, is the desire to take over a project once it is delegated, because it is not being done fast enough, or the way she would have carried out the project.

As a servant leader, Pastor Peace's strengths demonstrates Gandolfi and Stone's (2018) commentary that "servant leaders are as proactive, ambitious, and driven as any other leader. They just have a different focus and set of motivations that guide their leadership and decision making. In fact what differentiates servant leadership from other styles of leadership is the primary focus on the follower first" (p. 264), that is a true servant of God who leads.

When looking at the book , "The Truths about Leadership," Pastor Peace has developed herself, with a marked self-awareness as to who she is, and what it is she believes in.

**Truth One: You make a Difference**

At the age of 6, Pastor Peace's leadership skills began to emerge. As the youngest of all her siblings, she was a neat freak, liking her environment clean. She, therefore, wrote signs of do's and don'ts concerning chores, laminated them, and posted them around the house, for which her siblings complied. Those signs remained posted in her parent's house until this day. As a young adult college student, her eldest sister became pregnant out of wedlock. She was the one who gave her comfort, advice and direction. Once the child was born, she took on the responsibility to care for the child, that is take to classes with her, to support and enable her sister time for self and preparation for her future. To this day, her sister, brother, and mother come to her for direction and support. " By believing in herself, and her capacity to lead, she opened herself to the call, to making a difference in the world" (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p.14).

**Truth Two: Credibility**

This refers to the leader's believability and the willingness of others to follower. Pastor Peace eloquently referred back to the scripture, " Many are called, but few are chosen"(Matt. 22:14, NIV), emphasizing the fact that God did not only called and chose her at a young age, but he also protected her from many experience, to allow his plan for her to come to fruition. Additionally, in her, she was actively involved in in many organizations that allowed her to hone in on her calling, while simultaneously cultivating leadership skills.

**Truth three: Values Drive Commitment**

Based on Pastor Peace's upbringing , culture and her parent's socialite status, being in the public eye, she did not see genuine friendships. The people she thought she knew; she really did not know at all. Therefore, she values honesty and trustworthiness, with no appetite for fake and

pretentious relationships, thus, “understanding who she is, where she came from, and staying true to the values that guide her” (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 31), as an effective leader.

#### **Truth Four: Focusing on the Future Sets leaders Apart**

Leaders who focus on the future, have the capacity to dream, imagine and articulate future possibilities. During this interview, Pastor Peace stated, that she just allows possibilities to flow organically out of her heart. She never looked at her experiences as leading, but realizes it was those same things that taught her how to go after the desires of her heart. For example, now in her early 40’s, she is realizing her dream as an entrepreneur, as she is about to open up her business, Pharmacy and Clinical Services to nursing and group homes. Not only, was a compelling vision of a servant established in her heart, but she deliberately took the necessary steps, to move forward, in the implementation of forward thinking.

#### **Truth Five: You Can’t Do It Alone**

Simply put, it takes a village, was the response to the question, what strengthens and sustains your relationship with your followers? Adding, when engaging others, patience and active and sensitive listening is imperative, when building strong, confident and competent teams through collaboration.

#### **Truth Six: Trust Rules**

To Pastor Peace, trust is everything, and it increases her influence with her followers, thereby realizing that trust begins with her. While working as a program manager in a major hospital, she realized her staff would stop talking, hide cell phones, when she would come in a room. In asking, one worker, why, the follower said that they did not trust her, because they did not know her. She proceeded to explain to them that she did not come to fire anyone, but to create a team, to work a common goal, to see the business succeed. She helped in removing

wrongful thoughts that caused distrust, “which led to greater acceptance, member interdependence and enhanced information flow among all group members” (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 77).

### **Truth Seven: Challenge is the Crucible for Greatness**

According to Pastor Peace, change is inevitable and challenging, but you should not stop it, rather embrace it, as it is necessary for people, things and conditions to evolve, in order to remain relevant. The challenge of change is an opportunity to embrace the infinite possibilities in life.

### **Truth Eight: You Either Lead by Example or You Don't Lead at All**

According to Pastor Peace (personal communication, June 9, 2020), “You Can't lead if you don't walk in the shoes of your follower's.” That is, whether walking as an ethical or unethical leader, it is not about you, therefore, if your going to lead, do it right the first time and every time, or not at all. Know what you are doing, why you are doing it, for whom you are doing it. Believe in and respect what you do, for the consequences of your leadership is felt by the hearts of those that surround you.

### **Truth Nine: The Best Leaders are the Best Learners**

Though leadership can be learned, whether one continues the process of learning or not, they can still be deemed a good leader, but “without fully engaging in learning”( Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 122 ), stagnation sets in which is negatively correlated to self-development, self-awareness, relevancy, effectiveness and sustained success.

### **Truth Ten: Leadership is An Affair of the Heart**

“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

## 8 LEADERSHIP

Everything in life is grounded in and around love. Love touches all, and “by creating caring workplace that yield friendships, deep personal connections, which allow growth personally, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and financially”(Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 145), “walls will fall, fear is cast out, and effective leadership thrives” (Pastor Peace, personal communication, June 9, 2020).

### **Conclusions**

We are all leaders, in our own rights, but leading is a personal choice, though culture plays a significant role in how we lead. Therefore, when leadership and culture marry, it can be a challenging union unless indoctrinations become deflated, that all people, followers and leaders may be viewed the same.

As cited by Torbert (2005), “the differences among leaders are not determined by their philosophy of leadership, personality, or even management style. Rather, it has to do with how they read and interpret their surrounding and how those interpretations influence reactions leaders have in various situations. This requires a high degree of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and environmental context both inside and outside the organization.” (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018, p. 263)

## References

Gandolfi, F., & Stone, S. (2018). Leadership, leadership styles and servant leadership. *Journal of Management Research*, 18(4), 261-269.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2010). *The truth about leadership: The no-fads, heart-of-the-matter facts you need to know*. San Francisco, CA: The Leadership Challenge.

Yukl, G. A., & Gardner, W. L. (2020). *Leadership in organizations (9th ed.)*.

Albany, NY: Pearson

Education, Inc.