

Negative Leaders

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Negative leadership is damaging to the soul and functions to your ability to lead. Usually you lead by what you know and what drives you from within. This impact can cause you to be a negative leader or force you to be a leader that is not the leader you are called to be, because you're trying not to make the same mistakes. I know plenty of negative leaders (which is sad to say) in my lifetime. I will be talking about the top three leaders in my life that impacted me in a way that was soul damaging for how they verbally/physically/mentally/emotionally abused me or from how they lived their life, also depleted my confidence by discouraging the things that I did or said, It formed my relationship with God in a negative way. I will elaborate more on these later on.

Before I move on to my experiences, what makes a negative leader? A negative leader is someone who lacks respect for those they are leading. They talk in a demeaning way that discourages those around them to move forward. They abuse their power to do things their way and don't care for the group as a whole. A negative leader is someone who lies to get what they want or not to admit to their fault. Someone who abuses in any kind of way. Whether that be mentally, physically, verbally, or emotionally. Someone who takes shortcuts and doesn't think about the effects it may have on the group as a whole. Someone who lacks vision and purpose in what they are doing. Someone who has favorites and it is well known to everyone. Someone who is disorganized and lacks direction. Lastly, someone who doesn't have awareness of themselves so they blame their faults or the lack of growth on others so they don't have to look at themselves. When you can't be teachable and have a listening ear you cannot effectively lead anyone. I have come across many of these things in my lifetime and had to heal from these experiences.

The first leader in my life and the most important one is my dad. His style of leading is like a commander with no boundaries or structure. My dad was very abusive to me. He would physically abuse me when he didn't like something or just because he wasn't in a good mood and needed to take his anger out. In and out of church he spoke to everyone however he wanted and no one said anything about it. He wasn't good with money (although we never went without any food or clothing etc) He brought any and everything and never saved or taught us about stewarding your money. He rewarded my bad behavior at school and didn't care so much about my good grades or when I made it to honors class. The structure and organization in the home was whatever he said. He would undermine my moms commands for us to get our homework done or go to bed on time. If he wanted to watch a movie after bedtime or wake us up at four in the morning to clean it had to happen. Mohler talked about the conviction to lead. He said "When a leader walks into the room a passion for Truth had better enter with him" My dad had been a believer my whole life and he was active in the church. Yet he didn't lead with the conviction of Truth. Growing up I couldn't understand how he led us and what I would hear about Jesus. It took thirty years but I had to take steps back in order to heal from the dysfunction of his leadership. I had to learn my identity because his verbal abuse caused me to believe I was a nobody. I had to prove myself over and over. I had to realize that he is not the image of the Truth of Jesus. God the Father is not like him. Although many wounds have been healed I see how it shaped me as a leader. I lacked a lot of confidence as I led. I am learning to reframe my thinking. His leadership lacked Truth and love. Although he was an excellent provider, he couldn't find the balance. When you don't have self awareness you blame others for what you lack.

Another negative leader was actually a mentor who encouraged me, and made me a part of her family. She loved me and brought me to retreats where I had life changing moments. So how did she make it to the list of negative leaders? It wasn't what she did for me, it was how she lived her life. She would talk about her husband and children as if they were enemies. Whenever they got into arguments she would play the victim card and then call them out of their name. She was scary to be around. I tried to help her and show her love and one time she said to me and I quote "you are too clingy" So I pulled back a little and she got upset and said I was being different. She would make me feel bad for not hanging around her too much. To the point she got into an argument with another leader who took me under their wing. This gave me so much anxiety and I didn;t know how to escape. This type of leadership made me very closed off to letting people in and also being my loving self. Also, made me not trust church leaders to be who they show at church. I understand no one is perfect. But how you lead in your home speaks volumes. I finally found the courage to speak up and change the dynamics of our relationship. It took me some years (I'm still working on it) to trust another leader to be their authentic self in and out the church. Mohler spoke about passion in chapter one of his book "The Conviction to Lead" He spoke about how Reagan spoke with such passion it wasn't a political front but it was something he believed. He also named some negative leaders like Adolf Hitler as one. I am not comparing this leader to Hitler but when you can fool people to believe something you are not. Sounds like him. She talked the talk but she didn't believe what she spoke and that showed in her life outside the church. Another quote from that chapter that reflected her is "Many leaders are Masters of change and organizational transformation, but they lack the center of gravity in truth."

" We say we believe one thing but operate out of our mental habits that run in a very different direction" as Mohler said in his book "The Conviction to Lead" The last leader I will

be discussing was a Young Adult leader who I was under one year into being saved (12 years ago) She spoke of unity within the group and did group activities. Encouraged us to be transparent and share our stories. She appeared to be a good leader until truth stepped in the picture. She created a worship group for the Young Adults and it was good. Then one of the musicians' girlfriends came to visit and without knowing her added her to the group as a lead singer without any discussion with the group. It no longer was unity but what she wanted. We find out weeks later that the girlfriend was not a Christian. She believed in many things. We didn't want her out of the church, we wanted a conversation on what was the standard. The leader wanted to hear nothing we said and she actually became very angry and said we were being jealous. She would have meetings and gatherings about the group and wouldn't let us know. I chose to exit the group. I told her what she was doing was not right. One day she yelled at me in the temple in front of everyone. It caused me to not speak the truth about what is happening. I adopted the mindset of "that is in the realm of none of my business" even if I knew that it was wrong biblically. I became fearful of saying anything. Recently I had to meet with my Pastors and apologize for my silence in many situations they had to deal with that I knew the truth about and said nothing. I was a vital leader in my church and God allowed me to see many things and I kept shut. My pastor actually apologized for what happened because he said "I should have been more active in stepping in, knowing that the leader wasn't fit for the group. I have been less fearful in speaking the truth when I am led to. But favoritism in leadership causes division and blinds you to the Truth.

These three experiences were the standard for me on negative leadership. Their leadership lacked vision. There was no purpose, no goal to lead in an effective way that would build up into something good. There was nothing sustainable to hold on to. They weren't

trustworthy which is something important to have in someone who is leading you. If people don't trust you they won't follow you for too long. You have to be reliable, someone you can count on when you need them most, integrity, being honest about what you do and about yourself, having morals that hold truth and produce good fruits, and truthfulness, without truth you have nothing sustainable after awhile what you are trying to build will crumble. These leaders had no vision, trustworthy and lacked truthfulness which is why they failed at trying to build me up. They were performance focused which didn't leave room for what was best for me. Mohler's book "Conviction to Lead" has a chapter called "Convictional Leadership" Mohler spoke about emotional intelligence in which a person must have self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and social skill. He says it doesn't matter how smart you are, if you lack the emotional skill to lead (thinking of others) you will be less successful in leading because the ones who are following are there to learn and help you. If they don't feel heard, seen, or loved they will not pursue further with you or they will become like you. There has to be conviction in what you do, so that you can be aware when things aren't going well within your group and within yourself. Conviction is like the drive of your purpose for what you do. It is beautiful when the conviction is steered with a healthy way of thinking and doing. In which Mohler talks about "Convictional Intelligence" that is something that is learned and not innate. In my case these leaders lacked the foundation of Biblical truth and the fundamentals of the Christian faith so they lacked the knowledge to have a high Convictional intelligence.

As I said in the beginning, negative leadership is damaging to the soul and functions to your ability to lead. Usually you lead by what you know and what drives you from within. If you have not dealt with the things that negatively affect you, there is a chance that you will wear a mask that won't hold who you really are for too long. I was a leader for twelve years and I was

good at what I did, but because I didn't deal with the bruises in my soul I wasn't able to sustain my leadership in a positive way. I became overly people pleasing and gossipy (If that's a word) I also became inwardly irritated and angry with people. I knew it was time for me to sit out for a year and get the healing that I needed. Also when you lack the knowledge and training you need to become better, you miss out on the greater parts of what you can be doing. For example I have been singing since I was about 6 years old in my church and I sang very well but I got to a place in my adult life where I couldn't sing certain things properly. I couldn't hold a note for an extended time and I would lose my breath with a song that goes at a fast pace. It wasn't that I became a bad singer, I lacked the certain skills I needed to be better and train others. I had to go back to the basics and practice my breathing and scales. Now I can train others at a basic level and I sound so much better. As a leader you may be gifted and called, but you still need training to get better and well-rounded in your leadership. I have healed from my past by going to counseling, not keeping secrets, and doing the work for Soul Care courses. I also am learning about leadership skills. I chose to take this year (started in 2020 to not do any ministry and to get healthy. I started by being honest about where I am not only as a leader but a person. I have mentors and leaders around me who have overcome the things that I face. The greatest thing and I believe it was God. My last two semester classes are about leadership and your soul. Last semester I worked on my soul, engaging with others and trusting the Lord and this semester is all about leadership. Although it is a lifetime of learning and healing, the start of getting healthy and becoming a skilled leader, leads you into a place where you are making healthy choices for yourself and others. These leaders who guided me in my earlier years taught me some negative leadership skills but they also made me want to become a better person and a better leader.

Bibliography

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