

The last castle – leadership styles

Life



ESSEY THE LAST CASTLE This movie presents the internal structure of an organization and also a parallel between two leading styles.

The leadership style of two individuals will have consequences on the people they lead and on the final of the conflict. The whole action of the movie is compressed in the elements described by Gen.

Irwin at the beginning of the movie: he says that a castle must have four key elements, which include: the location, positioned on high ground, it must have protection from its enemies with a high wall, it must include the garrison (men willing to fight and kill for the castle), and lastly, a castle must have a flag, that the men have to protect by any means. These symbols truly describe the organization presented in the movie and forecast the taken over and the change of the leader.

The officially named manager of the prison is Winter who is presented as the "bad guy" who commands its subordinates. But the true leader of the prisoners will be Gen. Irwin, presented as the "good guy" that will lead its subordinates by offering them self-respect and setting a positive example. Both of them have strong characteristics of leaders but one is dominated by negative features and the other one by ethical and moral principles. One has legal authority but one has the real power over the prisoners.

Gen Irwin is appointed as leader by the prisoners due to his reputation outside the prison, his values and charisma but also his position of prisoner. The others saw him as one of them that will truly represent their interests. The way each leader will impose his power is presented in an antithesis. Irwin tries to lead its men by creating value and positive attitude but the

other one tried to lead by severe punishments. He controlled them through fear and unethical behavior taking advantage of his superior position. People trust one and fear the other one.

Winter only wanted benefits for him, to be recognized as a good leader between his peers and had no regard for the prisoners. He was proud of his performance as a prison director where no one intended to escape and no murders took place. He totally ignored the treatment he himself applied to the prisoners including killing them. In contradiction with Winter, Irwin cared about his men rather than caring about himself and how could he benefit from his position. He entrusts his men and reactivates their self respect and their attitudes of soldiers.

If at the start of the movie the prisoners were not collaborating with each other and were even fighting for insignificant reasons, after Gen. Irwin takes command, the prisoners become a team and start to trust and to help each other. (as for example when one prisoner suggests that the wall isn't built correctly he is aggressed, but Irwin delegated a small degree of power to him and makes the other ones listen to that young prisoner who will supervise the wall construction). Regarding the characteristics that made Gen.

Irwin a good leader I could mention morality and ethical principles, the respect for the members of his team, ability to plan ahead using the resources available, ability to build confidence in people and motivate them to achieve a common goal, personal commitment to that goal (that led to his death) and also viewing only the best in the members of his team, in

contradiction with Winter who only searched for the worst in the people and use those negative traits to manipulate the prisoners and achieve his own goals. Winter is clearly intimidated by Gen.

Irwin, recognizing in this way his character and power. He will treat differently the general at first because he was a national hero and later because he is afraid of the power the general has over the inmate and that minimizes clearly his authority in that organization. Finally when he sees he cannot win the General by his side he will lose his control and try by any means to state his position. In a small degree I would agree with the type of leadership Winter practices, taking into account the environment. That was still a prison with convicted soldiers and therefore extreme rules have to be adopted.

Punishments have to be used to maintain the order between prisoners but this does not mean that the commander of the prison has to take advantage of his position and manipulate and mock the prisoners. (The best example would be with the basket ball. That action had no educational purpose, it was only a statement of power). Although it can also be mentioned that Gen. Irwin didn't know how to comply with the commands given by the major authority (Winter), actually think Irwin could not ignore the bad treatments applied to the inmates, the constant rule breaking and also the respect and trust that the other prisoners had in him.

Seeing the punishment that Aguilar received for saluting him was probably the decision point where the general agreed to take over the command of his team. The wall that was demolished by the prisoners is the symbolic act of

recognizing their new leader and of accepting to follow his order. In the end of the movie, Winter loses command on the prisoners, on the guards and finally on himself. Gen Irene will take his place, becoming the true leader for the prisoners but also for the guards that will prove their respect by refusing to shut him down.

This story is perfectly valid for the real world business environment . In a company, the manager is not that preoccupied about the subordinates, but prizes with his performances it obtains. Also, the managers create lots of strict rules to maintain disciplines and a sustained working schedule. At first, people might obey the rules because of fearing to break the rule and losing their jobs. But they will still appoint another leader that although does not have official authority has the respect of all the employees and might help them change the situation and gain their rights within the company.

This movie points out that leadership is a powerful tool with which you can bring together people and accomplish a common goal but if it is not used correctly it can bring you or your organization to self-destruction. The message displayed by the movie about the two different points of view regarding leadership is definitely found in the business world on a large scale and with other types of implications (that that violent but surly very important for the well-being of the company and of the employees).