

# Essay on power and leadership

Countries, United States



## **Introduction**

A true leader has the hallmarks of power pertaining influence on the people. Leading by example and acquiring the necessary knowledge are also qualities of an exemplary and focused captain of a formidable team. Malcolm X just like Nelson Mandela exhibited insatiable desire for knowledge to a point where they utilized their time in incarceration to get knowledge in different fields. This ultimately gave them an upper hand in getting leadership positions. Their profound knowledge about societal matters and morality helped them clinch political and religious leadership opportunities. From numerous biographies, documentaries and scholarly articles done about both Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela, I am totally convinced that they exhibited exceptional leadership characteristics; they were adored for their insatiable desire for knowledge and diligence in their service to humanity. Determination and undying hope is necessary for any leader to be successful in steering their constituencies to prosperity. Malcolm X when being incarcerated had gone up to eight in the United States of America's education system. After his basic schooling, he also joined the street life where he was involved in drug use and gang life. However, when he got into prison, he made a conscious decision to study the dictionary so as to get literate and understand other books. Further, he studied a wide range of books which shaped his believe religious wise and his understanding of history. Upon his release, he became an antiracism activist and a religious teacher. Nelson Mandela also used his time in prison at Robben Island to study for a distant degree. Though the conditions were disheartening he never gave up in his quest to quench his knowledge thirst (Limb 2008).

Charisma makes a leader popular and powerful in the region they head. Mandela upon his release from prison charismatically addressed the nation concerning what he believed in as being the best for the independent republic of South Africa. He preached peace, tolerance and inclusivity of all groups of South Africans irrespective of their color of skin or political affiliations. Many called for the dissolution of the national rugby team, spring box which was seen as representative of the whites who had been brutal to blacks. However, he led the country by example in accepting the team and it later became the pride of the nation, even after leaving power (Limb 2008). Malcolm X also displayed a great deal of charisma in his speeches to congregations and at press conferences. He preached the gospel of black Islam as he knew it from his interaction with Elijah Muhammad and other scholars. He opposed racial isolation of the black community both in practical life and in scholarly articles. Through his influence, many came to accept black Americans as part of the society in the United States of America. Power is displayed by firmness in decisions when leading people. Though the decision may not be popular, they stick to them because of believe in what they consider right (Burns 1982). Malcolm later in life disagreed with his mentor Elijah Muhammad concerning the view of white supremacy. He literally changed his initial view of the role of whites in the perceived alienation of the black community. He paid for his decision with his life after he was assassinated in a meeting in Manhattan. Nelson Mandela also had to serve twenty seven years in jail for opposing apartheid regime. He stood by his decision to fight for equality in the South African nation. When serving his sentence, he was offered amnesty if he denounced his campaign, but

refused. Consequently, in the year 1994 he was released and led the nation in embracing diversity for the prosperity of the ‘rainbow’ nation (Limb 2008).

Believe in freedoms of all sections of the society is core to a good and powerful leaders. No matter how small a group is in the society, they have a right to be listened to and given a fair chance in life (Goldman 1979). Both Malcolm and Nelson had this in their ideologies. In America, people of color were viewed as inconsequential and lesser beings, which led to the uprising by civil rights groups and Malcolm was a member. Nelson Mandela was also a strong believer in freedoms of all groups whether white or colored. After inheriting a divided nation, he sought to unite all groups, which led to prosperous South Africa (Limb 2008). It is this drive that made Nelson not disinherit the white South African settlers of the land they had acquired from the black population. Malcolm also made it known that he supported the rise of China because they also had been down trodden by the Europeans. He believed their empowering would enable them rise to the same level as their counterparts in Europe and America. He also strongly advocated for the recognition of Africa as having a history.

## **Conclusion**

An outstanding leader is supposed to be powerful and influential to their subjects. Charisma leads to influence. It is this ability to charm and push ideologies that makes a leader revolutionary. With the support of the people, substantial changes can happen because the populace has the will. In a democratic system of governance, the will of the people is supreme. This will is brought about by good guidance from the leaders. Consequently, the

society can achieve their goals for the sake of current and future generations. Logical use of power helps a society to grow, while negative use leads to destruction. Good leaders use their power for the benefit of the people they lead.

## **Works Cited**

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