

# Artikel oppapers

[People](#), [Barack Obama](#)



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From the moment people live in groups, leaders exist. Although groups can function without, the leader role is usually the first to emerge. Especially large groups are in need for one to make rules clear, keep members informed, and make group decisions (Forsyth, 2006). Leadership is does not necessarily mean power. A leader of a group has more power with people than over people. A transformational leader for instance heightens group members' motivation, confidence and satisfaction by uniting members and changing their beliefs, values and needs (Burns, 2003). In October 2008, a few weeks before the presidential elections in the US, Colin Powell declared he supported Barack Obama because he thought of him as "transformational". Forsyth (2005) defined a transformational leader as to be self-assured, determined, eloquent and enthusiastic. After analyzing Barack Obama in his behavior and appearances over the last years, many typical examples of transformational leadership can be found. Guided by the four components of transformational leadership (Bass, 1995) we will discuss examples of transformational leadership by Barack Obama. 1. Idealized influence Leaders express their conviction clearly and emphasize the importance of trust. Whenever something happens, like Fox News reporters who were beaten in Tahrir Square (1. 1), the disaster with the mines in Virginia (1. 2) and something nice like a soccer championship (1. 3) Obama shows that he supports people and he encourages people to continue their good work. He also emphasizes that everybody is family, so he stimulates the group feeling. This shows that Obama's conviction is that people are

equal and he has a lot of trust in people. Obama made some controversial decisions. For instance he ignored the DOMA (law that made same sex marriage very difficult), and reviewed it as unconstitutional. This shows that Obama takes a stand on difficult ethical issues and by showing his opinion he can urge or persuade others to change their opinion as well. (1. 4) 2.

Inspirational motivation A leader shows inspirational motivation when they articulate an appealing vision of the future. Barack Obama really focuses on the future of the US, especially in the elections. Convincing the voters there will be better times particularly for affordable healthcare, becoming independent on Middle-Eastern oil, retreating military troops from Iraq (2. 1). This is also related to the fact that a leader with inspirational motivation challenges followers with high standards. An affordable healthcare for every inhabitant in the United States is a very progressive and optimistic position to take. Just like it's also very attractive that fathers, husband or sons return safe from Iraq. Obama tried to convince his followers that this is really going to happen by talking optimistically and with enthusiasm, and he provides encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done. Obama often mentioned that not every goal can easily be achieved, it may need some setbacks. Or things first need to be worse, before things can be better. So he makes his ideas realistic, he also makes tough times for people more easily to handle by encouraging his followers by the slogan; YES, WE CAN! 3.

Intellectual stimulation Intellectual stimulation is another important quality a transformational leader should possess. It is defined as the ability of a leader to keep those following him thinking about the task at hand, asking questions, and solving problems. The best example is when Obama won the

Nobel Peace prize in 2009. For winning this prize Obama used his leadership qualities, as the Nobel Committee says (3. 1), ' for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between people'. And stimulating: ' Now is the time for all of us to take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges.' Obama has the strong capability to stimulate others to think of big issues like world peace, the environment and economics. As a good transformational leader should, Obama has a strong convincing power by explaining his vision and his possible solutions for it (3. 2). Also Obama stimulates students to go to school and finish their education, by a national address to students (3. 3), he makes the problem personal and shares his own experiences: ' I know that feeling, when you would like to stay in bed a bit longer'. By saying ' Everyone has something good', he coaches, teaches and advises students to stay in school and take their own responsibility for their education. 4. Individualized consideration

The last aspect of being a transformational leader is individualized consideration. This entails that a leader deals with others as individuals. Obama pays a lot of attention to the individual accomplishments of citizens of the USA. For example, last March Obama called the ISS-astronauts. He told them: ' it is a great sentiment of dedication of you and your colleagues... That is something that all the countries involved can be proud of '(4. 1). The phone call shows Obama is interested in the individual needs, abilities and aspirations. By expressing his proud, Obama coaches people to continue their good work. Another example of Obama being concerned about individuals is that next April 20th, Obama will answers questions of citizens through Facebook( 4. 2). With room for discussion Obama there will be a

possibility for individual interaction. This and many other examples show Obama really cares about the individual and treats people as individuals as well. On the other hand he underlines the fact that they are all like family, but this goes well together. Looking at the four aspects of transformational leadership and the many available examples, we can clearly conclude Barack Obama to be seen as a transformational leader. Appendix References 1. 1

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