

Effective leadership and successful leaders



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A view of leadership as it pertains to equality in education for all students regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status will be reviewed during this 2010 Go Global experience in South Africa.

In preparation for this trip, different articles and books were reviewed for insight on management and leadership. Included in these readings were suggestions on how best to lead, as well as direction for handling toxic relationships.

Toxic relationships can be defined as those relationships that are shadowed with negativity and tend to be reactive and judgment based in nature.

Creating a sense of team building and acceptance were found to be key roles for those in leadership positions. Leaders should have a sense of direction, not misuse their power, and should be able to inspire others. A leader should also be humble in attitude and encourage all team members to brain storm and contribute to the task. Whether leading personally or professionally, in a business or in a school, a leader should recognize the dynamics of the group under their direction and be able to modify accordingly.

While great leaders should be flexible, they must retain their convictions and focus toward attaining the goal or vision. It has been through a conviction that great leaders have inspired others to desire and create change. These leaders have intelligently led by example, never condemning another's beliefs, but instead inspiring in others the desire to change. It is through charisma and intuitiveness that leaders are able to begin movements that create change.

Movements for change are not limited to only political greats, they are also found in our own school systems. Assuming the role of the leader in a school must be carefully considered. It should be a role that one assumes with the understanding that they will both directly and indirectly affect, either positively or negatively, many that will follow their lead. Staff and students alike will be affected by the type of leadership roles they have in their school systems, so it must be remembered that school leadership is not limited to the parameters of the school, it affects generations that in turn will affect futures.

“ Life is an echo— what you send out comes back.” Chinese Proverb

There have been many great leaders throughout history, including Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and even Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Each person was seeking to right a perceived injustice during a particular time in our history. Through history we have seen leaders who would initiate ideas that others would continue, some who would make contributions small, yet impactful, and others who would change the course of history. No matter the result, one thing was consistent, all great leaders throughout time possessed similar leadership qualities.

Reading Response to Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic...

Bohemian Rhapsody www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110010218

Living Responsibly: Vaclav Havel's View www.acton.org/publications/ranl/rl_article_284.ph?/view=print

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Vaclav Havel, former president of Czechoslovakia, has been compared to Nelson Mandela, being considered a “ saint in the West.” Havel, a playwright who put his career on hold to lead a group against communist totalitarianism, a man who would be imprisoned, and a leader who would later become president, is a man of conviction. Speaking and responding to the global force for freedom and the “ long struggle between conscience and tyranny”, Havel is the author of the essay on “ the Power of the Powerless” which deals with the indifference seen in our Western cultures.

““ It would be suicide for the world’ -the indifference to the freedom of others ultimately becoming indifference to freedom for ourselves.”

Vaclav Havel

The idea that if we assume apathy for circumstances that do not directly affect us, we will ultimately become indifferent to our own freedoms has much significance. It sends a message that we must work as a community in order to continue to move forward. Leaders play a crucial role in focusing their team. Their qualities must include the ability to persuade a group to work together for a common goal, and dissuade, without insult, those ideas that serve only a selected group. As future leaders, we must recognize that our beliefs should not be subjective, nor are they limited. Our goals should always serve the good of all.

“ The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart.”

Mr. Havel to the United States Congress

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Our ability to recognize ourselves as part of a greater good is central to becoming a great leader. Our leadership should have focus, yet be humble. Our ability to see others through ourselves, and lead others as we would like to be lead, creates such a salvation. Leadership must maintain a global view, with the leader part of the view and not the puppeteer of the view. I have read and reviewed leaders that possessed many of the characteristics of great leadership (Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson), but whose leadership qualities were outweighed by their self-centered separation of themselves from the human world. I see that leading “ with your heart” can be subjective, but I do not believe that is what Havel meant. I feel as if he stated that compassion, respect and understanding for all members within a particular dynamic, business, academic or otherwise, will create a stronger vision. A vision shared by many is not limited, but grows exponentially.

“ Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means.” Albert Einstein

Reading Response to Charles Manson as a charismatic transformational leader

Leadership Style No Easy Choice

<http://www.smartentrepreneur.net/charismatic-leadership.html>

Leadership needs enthusiastic involvement, by leaders who are not jaded by personal agendas. Charles Manson, one such charismatic leader, chose to use his gift of leadership for less than honorable reasons. Manson would be defined as a transformational leader using passion and energy to transform

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an organization. He sensed what his followers perceived they needed and then created a vision to fill that gap. Charismatic leaders create visions that seem to improve one's present circumstance by finding the missing link between what one is getting and what one desires. This type of leader is persistent and even willing to make personal sacrifices to attain the vision which has been set. Unfortunately, a negative charismatic leader manipulates their audience for their own good even seeking out audiences that are emotionally wounded. One's ability to discern between the honorable and dishonorable leader is just as important as one's ability to lead and be part of a productive team.

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen" Sir Winston Churchill

Reading response to Viktor E. Frankl, psychiatrist and Nazi death camp survivor...

Man's Search for Meaning, Beacon Press, 2006

"Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you." Viktor E. Frankl

This book was chosen not necessarily because of Frankl's leadership, but because of his responses to the effects of negative leadership during the persecution of Jews at Auschwitz. Frankl shares an honest view of the persecutions that occurred, while sending a message of "one's ability" to

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control their responses. He talks about not being one of the most muscled up men and that he was looked upon as one who would not make it (survive) long. Frankl had a choice, find himself condemned before his fight began, or choose to be positive and believe that this persecution would soon end.

Leaders must understand, as Frankl had to understand, we have no control of others. It can not be forced upon another my vision for change and growth, it can only be exemplified. Leadership is not a series of “ demands,” but commands. It is a cooperative effort in which all parties feel valued and respected. While Adolf Hitler possessed many qualities of the great leadership, he did not possess value and respect for all of mankind. This self-serving type of leadership serves a limited time; it can not be maintained or carried on because there is no collaboration and no shared vision.

As a leader, one will really have little to no control of anything except one's own responses. We have the ability to choose our response and through modeling teach this strategy to those among us. If I choose humbleness, invite feedback, and remain positive, my leadership will influence others to do the same. This communication strategy invites all members to take part, or have ownership, in the goals at hand. With members feeling valued and sharing ownership, leaders are able to maximize the strengths of a team. It will be the choice of all members, including the leader, to do this even when there is friction within the group. It is easy to respond negatively to internal and/or external negativity, but that response leaves unmet goals and does not promote growth.

Reading response to Nelson Mandela, seeker of a multi-racial democratic society and ex-president of South Africa...

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Nelson Mandela

Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, 1994

Invictus, (2009)

<http://www.mandelainstitute.org.za/>

“ If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.” Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela, 1993 Nobel Peace Prize winner, exemplifies a man of true conviction. He articulated a vision and led by example. At a time when Mandela could have been full of anger and revenge, he chose a much different voice, a voice of dedication to an end of racism. In his speech to the court that convicted him, Mandela said “ Whatever sentence Your Worship sees fit to impose upon me for the crime for which I have been convicted before this court, may it rest assured that when my sentence has been completed I will still be moved, as men are always moved, by their consciences; I will still be moved by my dislike of the race discrimination against my people when I come out from serving my sentence, to take up again, as best I can, the struggle for the removal of those injustices until they are finally abolished once and for all.” Mandela, a man of honor, sought for the end of racial discrimination in South Africa, and even through imprisonment maintained his desire to attain this goal. He did not seek race domination; he desired a multi-racial democratic country. Mandela understood the importance of communication and role-modeling in order to

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attain the desired outcome of his vision and committed himself to a non-violent resistance against the apartheid*, following the role model of Mahatma Gandhi.

Apartheid a social policy or racial segregation involving political and economic and legal discrimination against people who are not Whites; the former official policy in South Africa

wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Although Mandela voiced non-violent resistance, he soon saw a need to change the approach. He commented to this change from non-violent resistance at the Rivonia trial when he stated that “ after long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I and some colleagues came to the conclusion that as violence in this country was inevitable, it would be wrong and unrealistic for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands with force. It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto we Sizwe...the Government had left us no other choice.”

“ The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there.” John Buchan

Leaders must be able to maintain a vision when circumstances and the world around them seem to stand in the way. Mandela exhibited this quality unlike no other, no matter how provoked he never answered racism with racism

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and he stood solid in his dedication to democracy. He recognized the greatness in humanity and strived to help others find it as well. Mandela understood the need “ to make peace with the enemy.” He knew that it was not the person who was the enemy, but the actions of the person that becomes the enemy. In other words, he recognized that the answer for change was in the people themselves.

“ Being a leader is not about what you make others do. It’s about who you are, what you know, and what you do. You are a reflection of the people who follow you. An effective leader is not a one-man show or do-it-all-yourself hero. Effective leadership is about recognizing and taking advantage of the skills and talents from different people to form a cohesive unit. “ All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.”

John Kenneth Galbraith

Mandela recognized that in order to create change that he too must “ confront... [his] anxiety.” He knew that he would have to forge a partnership with all of South Africa (black and white alike); he would have to stand for a united country and put in the past his memories of racial discrimination. Mandela would have to learn from his past, modeling himself as a man of acceptance of all men, both black and white.

Like many other black South Africans, Mandela’s disapproval of government discrimination was shown in many ways. One such non-violent means to show disapproval was to cheer for any team opposing the “ white” Springbok

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Rugby team. In the movie, *Invictus*, Mandela, then president, is questioned by the media about his new found support of the Springbok Rugby team. Without waiver, Mandela replies “ how can I expect others to change if I, myself, am unwilling to do the same.” Realizing the need to mediate difference respectfully and setting an example to others of own willingness to change is crucial to dynamic leadership. If we create an environment that invites open and positive communication along with respect, the overall health of an organization or in this particular circumstance for Mandela, a country, will be positively impacted.

“ Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Nelson Mandela

Mandela was driven not only by his belief in equality for all people politically; he was also an advocate for other non-political issues affecting his country as well. Mandela would address, problem-solve, and advocate for the AIDS epidemic, poverty, and education. Mandela was also instrumental in having South Africa house the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

http://www.mandelainstitute.org.za/about/mandate_and_vision/

University of the Western Cape meeting with staff and students (oral interviews)

Mandela, an educated man himself, saw education as a tool in the fight against the apartheid. When South Africa won its fight and Mandela became President, he remained focused on the benefits of quality education for all children in South Africa. He would continue to strive for quality education

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even after his presidency. In 2007, the Nelson Mandela Institute (a partnership between the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Department of Education, and the University of Fort Hair) would be founded to continue his work in education.

“ There can be no contentment for any of us when there are children, millions of children, who do not receive an education that provides them with dignity and honor and allows them to live their lives to the full.” Nelson Mandela, 2006

A man among men, Mandela believes that in order to create a sustainable future South Africa must invest in the education of the country's youth. The statistics for children of poverty who matriculate is devastatingly low. The education system had not been meeting the needs of the majority of children in the nation (the poor black child). Matriculation (graduation) of the rural working-class has been as low as 1% with a child needing to score well on this exit exam in order to enroll in a university. Of those who do manage to matriculate, they still struggle to read and write at a level of success for the university because of inadequate academic preparation. To change these statistics and recreate an educational system that can provide education success for all children, resources in addition to a focused and strong leadership are a must. Mandela advocates change in education, and brings others together to share the same vision. The Nelson Mandela Institute mandates “ to work globally to achieve Mr. Mandela's visions for education and rural development” and “ is inspired by a common future shaped by the minds and creativity of all children.”

“ It is not beyond our power to create a world in which all children have access to quality education. Those who do not believe this have small imaginations.” Nelson Mandela, '07

<http://www.ncrel.org/policy/pubs/html/leadersh/goodschl.htm>

<http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/gardner.htm>

Whether the leader of a country like Nelson Mandela or the leader of a school system, one must be able to communicate the vision of the organization. School systems, like countries, need dynamic leadership by individuals that realize the potential of the young people following their guide. School leaders have a responsibility to their public; they should both influence and inspire the students and the staff. They should act less like a boss making commands and more like an artist creating unbounded imaginations. They must be able to develop a clear sense of purpose as it is important for people to see where they are going. In addition to direction, effective school leaders should elicit from their staff and students both trust and respect. It is important to remember that both trust and respect are earned by the leader through their actions and are not a guarantee.

“ The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.” Henry Kissinger

<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/plessy/plessy.html>

<http://brownvboard.org/summary/>

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American schools, not unlike the South African schools, have seen many struggles. It has been because of dynamic people (principals, teachers, and students) that our systems have evolved to where they are. Like South Africa, racial discrimination is not a stranger to the American school systems. It was the voice and dedication of a few that allowed our school systems to change and grow.

A little over sixty years ago the states overturned Plessy v. Ferguson. Plessy v. Ferguson was an 1896 Supreme Court ruling most remembered as the “separate but equal” ruling. It was a decision that served as justification for racial discrimination until Oliver Brown and others brought complaint against the school systems. In Topeka, Kansas Linda Brown, an African-American student, lived right across from a school, but because of the color of her skin could not attend this “white” school. Under the counsel of Thurgood Marshall this discriminatory practices were being challenged. The ruling in Brown v. Board of Education not only affected the educational system, it ended legal racial discrimination. Discriminatory practices can damage the good of the whole, but strong leadership can build bridges and fill gaps.

“ Good schools, like good societies and good families, celebrate and cherish diversity.” Deborah Meier

School leaders create exponential change simply by caring for people and giving them a chance to succeed. When inspiring the minds of children in a school setting it can be thought that success is never final. Our behavior and our beliefs are carried on through the minds and actions of many. That is a great responsibility knowing that as an academic leader we can affect so

greatly, so many. This undertaking has to be done with openness of ones mind and willingness to celebrate other's successes and not our own.

Imagine yourself as the principal of one of those "white" schools when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Imagine the strength and character needed to moderate such a change. During world change, it takes great character to evaluate how your personal ideals fit into the role that you must serve. Leading is not limited to times of progression when everyone is inviting openly whatever circumstances may be needed for the change. The test of a great leader comes during times like that 1954 ruling when faced with legal obligation and social conflict. An academic leader must be able to separate oneself from who they are right now and look into the future to where they have dedicated themselves to lead others. A leader must be willing to deal with conflict head on, not with aggression, but with insight and intuitiveness. All leaders, especially academic leaders, must always err on the side of action. They must not just clean up a mistake, they must problem solve and eliminate it. It is especially important that a school leader view problems as an opportunity for growth. Not all visions will be met without conflict, and if we perceive as an opportunity to grow, then we maximize the effects of our leadership.

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." - William Arthur

School leadership is not limited to only those in administration, teachers play a huge role in influencing and changing lives. A teacher's full charge is to enable students to become independent citizens of society. It is more than

math or english, it is one of the most influential roles in our communities. Teachers not only provide academic knowledge, in combination with administration and the community, they provide clean, safe and healthy environments for the students to learn. All school leaders, administration and teachers, must possess and be proficient in instructional leadership, management, community building, and communication.

<http://cecp.air.org/download/MCMonographFINAL.pdf>

He writes, “ A leader is an individual (or, rarely, a set of individuals) who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals. Most acknowledged leaders are “ direct.” They address their public face-to-face. But I have called attention to an unrecognized phenomenon: indirect leadership. In this variety of leading, individuals exert impact through the works that they create.

Whether direct or indirect, leaders fashion stories: principally stories of identity. It is important that a leader be a good storyteller, but equally crucial that the leader embody that story in his or her life. When a leader tells stories to experts, the stories can be quite sophisticated; but when the leader is dealing with a diverse, heterogeneous group, the story must be sufficiently elemental to be understood by the untutored, or ‘ unschooled,’ mind.”

Daily Journal of Observations of team members, and leadership roles within these dynamics.

Sunday, 11, July...

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Meeting at the airport getting ready to depart for a two week trip away from family and not knowing anyone you are traveling with can heighten anxiety in even the best of travelers. GoGlobal trips allow many observations of group members, but it also allows one to observe the practices and strategies of the school sponsors in their “ real-life” leadership role.

As I am waiting at the airport, as I always do, I spend a great deal of time looking at not what is being said, but at all the non-verbal communication that is also being seen. Understanding a little of those I will be traveling with is very important. My opinion through my various experiences and readings is that there is a high correlation between a leader’s intuitiveness and their effectiveness. While not asked, I would assume that there would be a degree of this used when interviewing the prospects of such trips.