

A Reflection: “Leadership does not Change!”

Part 2

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As I continue with this series, I am ever reminded that good leaders are made and not born. If you have the desire and willpower, you can become an effective leader. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Bad leaders develop from just the opposite. The best and most effective person to judge your leadership is you. When performing this assessment always look in a mirror so you can see the person looking right back at you performing the same movements and with the same mannerisms. As I stated in a previous article, the question will always remain same in regards to your life and that question is; “What type of leader do you want to be?”

According to Clark (2008), leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills. Although your position as a manager, supervisor, lead, etc. gives you the authority to accomplish certain tasks and objectives in the organization, this power does not make you a leader, it simply makes you the boss. Leadership differs in that it makes the followers want to achieve high goals, rather than simply bossing people around.¹

According to Bass (1989-1990)², theory of leadership states that there are three basic ways to explain how people become leaders. These theories are:

- Some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is the Trait Theory.
- A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. This is the Great Events Theory.
- People can choose to become leaders. People can learn leadership skills. This is the Transformational Leadership Theory. It is the most widely accepted theory today.

Clark further posits that when a person is deciding if they respect you as a leader, they do not think about your attributes, rather, they observe what you do so that they can know who you really are. Followers will use this observation to tell if you are an honorable and trusted leader or a self-serving person who misuses authority to look good and get promoted. Self-serving leaders

¹ Don Clark (2008). Concepts of Leadership

² Bernard Bass (1989). Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership: A survey of Theory and Research. New York: Free Press and (1990), From transactional to transformational leadership learning to share the vision. Organizational Dynamics, Vol. 18, Issue 3, Winter, 1990, 19-31.

are not as effective because their employees only obey them, not follow them. They succeed in many areas because they present a good image to their seniors at the expense of their workers.³

The basis of good leadership is honorable character and selfless service to your organization. In your employees' eyes, your leadership is everything you do that effects the organization's objectives and their well-being. Respected leaders concentrate on what they *are* [be] (such as beliefs and character), what they *know* (such as job, tasks, and human nature), and what they *do* (such as implementing, motivating, and providing direction).⁴

A question that is generally raised is what makes a person want to follow a leader? This is a serious question that leaders sometime overlook and underestimate. But, all in all, people want to be guided by those they respect and who have a clear sense of direction. To gain respect, they must be ethical. A sense of direction is achieved by conveying a strong vision of the future.

³ Don Clark (2008). Concepts of Leadership

⁴ Ibid