

To Be or Not To Be:
How to Be a Good Leader

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Leadership and Management
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The hardest person to lead is you!

Leadership and management play a very important part in everyone's life. Not all leaders are managers but all managers should be effective leaders. We all know that is not the case. However, everyone plays the role of a leader or manager at some point in life, whether it is within childrearing or merely getting yourself out of bed in the morning. Opportunities arise for on-going education in the school of life to learn more about how to lead.

It is much easier to have basic knowledge of concepts, theories and trends within leadership and management roles prior to practicing leadership. However, that opportunity is not always available. Through formalized research and education society has learned some of the basics of leadership. The study of people has given us great insight toward effective leadership. There are theories and concepts in place to help us know how we lead and how to best handle a situation as learned through such research.

Through the use of motivation and empowerment leaders can use their own leadership style, tactics and techniques to create armies of productive employees. There is no cookie cutter answer to how management should be accomplished. The situations change with the wind and people, being uniquely and wonderfully made, cause an endless shift in management technique. Let's look at how some of these concepts and theories relate in practical ways.

Motivation:

Motivation is nearly as unpredictable as people. Different things motivate different people. When a manager is successful in determining an employee's motivator it can greatly increase productivity and creativity. Research has shown when a motivation factor is met the follower is more fulfilled and more willing to complete the work required. Motivators can range from money to recognition. The social aspects of a job motivate some people and some desire a sense of achievement. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can also play into the motivational theories. As the needs of people are met it is believed motivational factors change according to the triangle Maslow developed. Abraham Maslow has done research on human behavior and needs as far back as 1954. His diagram is considered a framework for human behavior.

Motivation and the research findings on its effects can help leaders and managers help their followers on various levels, to become the productive and effective assets within the organization. The theories from Maslow and others have helped managers and scholars of leadership learn to do it right.

Empowerment:

Employee empowerment is one of the most frequently discussed topics in the organizational setting. According to Oren Harari, a writer for the *Management Review*, an American management Association publication, "Power is a feeling, an experience. It is the consequence of liberation." (as quoted in *Management of Organizational Behavior*, Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2001). Different from the dictionary definition, Harari captured the essence of why empowerment works in an organization. Empowerment could be considered a motivator also. If an employee feels some sense of power or

liberation to do the job with an ownership to the task it makes the employee more effective and dedicated.

Empowerment, unlike motivation, has to be used sparingly and in accordance with the level of the employee and manager. Empowerment cannot be handed out to those with little or no experience. Given a situation where the competence of the leader has been proven but a confidence issue is still present, S2, the manager may empower the employee to help build some confidence while increasing ownership and competence. In a situation with a competent yet unwilling follower, S3, a manager may use empowerment to gain ownership and loyalty in the S3 employee to try to grow them into an S4 role. Again, empowerment can be like fire. If managers don't handle it correctly they will end up burned.

Leadership Style:

Leadership style may be the one innate thing about leadership and management. Although controversial I believe leaders naturally lead using one leadership style. It is the education and practice that can help a leader use all the styles of leadership, adapting to the situation, as it requires. Managers can use the Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) instrument to learn more about their own leadership style and their skills to adapt styles to various situations as they arise. There are four basic leadership styles as described in the LEAD tool. The leadership styles are Telling, Selling, Participating and Delegating.

The telling leadership style is most effective when used with followers who are unskilled in the task at hand and unwilling to do the task. I always think of a drill instructor marching a flight when I think of the Telling leadership style. When the

situation presents itself with a group of followers who are skilled or advanced in competency the Telling leadership style is not effective and should not be used. With a group of skilled workers having an authoritarian, telling manager, the morale and desire to complete the task will drop, making the person or group highly ineffective. The telling leadership style should only be used with followers on the low readiness category.

The suggested leadership style for those followers who are unable to do the task but is trying, R2, is Selling. A Selling-styled leader should ultimately lead those willing to learn and complete the task but are unskilled or otherwise unable. The Selling style of leadership will get the unskilled workers on board to learn the task and become competent to do the work. Recruiters use this style to sell the idea in which says, "I know you don't know how, but we'll teach you!" Selling is an effective leadership style because there are incidences, which call for effective leaders to take an unskilled work force and turn them into willing and able workers.

Participating leaders are needed frequently also. A leader who needs to motivate a work force that is skilled but unwilling (R3) to do the task at hand will do so more effectively by participating with the group. This style isn't used to put the manager back on the line and out of the office, but rather to allow the work force to participate in decisions that may affect them. The manager in this case will always retain the power to make the final decision but involves the group. This leadership style is effective when the force is skilled yet unwilling because it empowers the followers and gives them some ownership within the organization. When an R3 employee is empowered and feels a sense of ownership it may be enough to push them into R4 behavior.

The leadership style more effective for followers in the R4 category is a Delegating leader. The followers in the R4 category are both skilled and willing to complete the task assigned. A manager who has an individual or group who is competent and has the willingness to do the job they can let them do it. Caution should be exercised while working with R4 employees or followers to ensure the task being delegated is one, which can be trusted to the group and can further grow the individual or group. Ultimately the manager is responsible for the decision but trusts the group to be competent enough to leave the power to them. This style is effective when used in the right situation but can prove to be fatal in the wrong situation. Can you imagine how a flight of new military members would act if the drill instructor used delegating style for training? I know a few airmen who would run at the first chance! Just as with the other leadership styles, Delegating has its place within the organization.

Leadership Tactics and Techniques:

There are several good ways to do leadership and management. In order to be successful, leaders should benchmark ideas for best practices to learn tactics and techniques to refine the art of leadership. The tactics and techniques of some of the leaders studied in the books and videos used in the classroom can show all studying leaders a few tips. We learn different ways of leading from the managers of Johnsonville, automakers, furniture makers and authors among other brilliant teachers.

The writer of the small book named *The Management Methods of Jesus: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business* (1996) gives his readers a plethora of knowledge he's accumulated over years of being a manager. The book is filled with short chapters with pearls of wisdom from the experiences of Bob Brine its author. Some of the wisdom

shared is ideas like eating with your troops and being a servant. These are just two of several tactics leaders can use from the book to be more effective as leaders. By eating with the troops, or followers, Brine explains there are benefits gained by spending the time getting to know the people who follow your lead. The idea of being a servant as delivered by Brine comes from Jesus' model in Matthew 23:11 when he says, "The greatest among you will be your servant." Brine explains that leaders cannot go wrong when they follow Jesus' example of being a servant to his followers.

More examples of useful leadership tactics and techniques come from the movie *Twelve O'clock High*. The military leaders in this fairly new squadron of bombers used key management tactics to get the members of this elite corps to do the job that was so important to the outcome of the war. From timely promotion and demotion to direct involvement in getting the mission done, the leaders did what needed to be done to get their followers on track and get the mission done. Sometimes the tactics had to be harsh and sometimes more personable but it seemed to work depending on the situation. The goal of the squadron leaders was to get the team working together to complete the mission of targeted bombing. These leaders proved there are better ways to get things done.

Tactics and techniques are the fine-tuning of the leadership and management art. The techniques we can learn from other leaders who have experienced more in leading can only add to the choices we make given any situation. Tactics can also add to the way we lead. By leading and being around other successful leaders we will learn more tactics and techniques from which to choose.

Personal Leadership Style/Philosophy:

During study of leadership and the various styles of leading I took an evaluation of my own leadership style and adaptability. Using the LEAD tool I discovered a little bit about my own style. The tool was somewhat uninformative only because the results showed a profile of what I had already known of my leadership style.

My leadership style is highlighted in the S3 Participating Style with a score of six out of a possible twelve. Following the S3 style is a score of four in the S2 Selling style. The shocking part to me, being of military background, I scored a two in the S1 Telling grid and zero in the S4 Delegating grid. I realize it depends on the aspect in one's life how someone taking the LEAD self-assessment tool answers the questions. I believe I wear many hats and the questions were answered with only one of those hats in place. Currently I wear the hats of a single mother of boys, a non-commissioned officer in the Air Force Reserves, a member of a leadership team within the church scene, a full-time college student and aircraft mechanic, among others as situations that arise. I believe anyone would react very differently given different situations. If I had answered the questions as a mother instead of a manager I believe I would have ended up looking more like a Telling manager than a Participating manager.

Research in the management of people is a fairly new science. The LEAD tool was established and copy written in 1979. In the twenty-four years since the copy write I believe there has been much more accomplished in learning the ins and outs of managing effectively. I don't know if there is a more useful tool that has been published more recently but it would seem to me there should be something to gauge leadership traits a bit more accurately based on newer research findings. As society involves there will

inevitably be newer and perhaps more effective ways to lead. The followers perpetually change; therefore, the leader must also change.

Contribution to your organization:

My leadership style innately is a Participating style. Through my continued education and further training I can broaden my styles and learn to be more diverse and adaptable according to the situations as they arise. As an up and coming leader in today's church I feel I can bring my new, scholarly knowledge to the organizations in which I belong and ideas to help things run more smoothly. I hope to not be threatening to the leaders currently in place but some of those leaders have already displayed displeasure in my continued education. I hope to not be judgmental of the textbook failures of my current military leaders.

This course is filled with multiple lessons on management and leadership theories, practices, tactics and techniques. I enjoyed the textbooks for the most part and the films and additional literature used to expand the knowledge of the class. The instructor used a strong S4 style of leadership with a fairly strong R4 readiness class to effectively facilitate the learning we were able to accomplish. The classroom for effective leadership and management continues as we leave and even after graduation. The lesson we can learn from senior leaders around us will continue to develop highly qualified leaders.

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