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## Managerial Leadership

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# The Foundations of Leadership

David S. Hefner and Katharine R. Becker

## OBJECTIVES

*To help the reader understand the difference between the realms of management and leadership*

*To develop an understanding of the importance of integrity and its relationship with performance*

*To clarify the misconceptions about operating with integrity by honoring your word, and why people may disregard it, thereby diminishing their power as a leader*

*To help aspiring leaders appreciate the inward journey of leadership and discover for themselves what it means to be authentic*

*To provide clarity about the relationship between being committed to something bigger than oneself and becoming a leader*

*To offer resources for the reader's continued education*

Q1

*Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.  
Boldness has great genius, power and magic in it!*

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

BEING A LEADER has everything to do with Goethe's quote. Every leader has faced the challenge to "just begin it!" This chapter offers access to actionable pathways for developing the foundational elements that are keys to leadership and exercising leadership effectively. You do not need to master the elements first, but they will be important for ensuring effectiveness in your leadership journey. Being a leader is a lifetime endeavor; once you step out, everything is different and there is no turning back. Healthcare today needs leaders at every level and in each discipline to succeed in solving complex problems with transdisciplinary solutions that can deliver cost-effective, high-quality care that ensures the health of all.

## Distinguishing Management from Leadership

### What Is "Leadership" and How Do You Become a Leader?

A 2012 Google search for leadership returned more than 113 million entries, but that is not really helpful, as you may only want the best 10 or 20. If you seek guidance from experts for a useful definition as a starting point, you will discover that faculty who teach leadership courses know there are as many definitions of leadership as books written about it. When checked in 2012, Amazon listed 96,883 book entries. Add to this the overwhelming amount

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of potentially contradictory information that conventional wisdom offers, such as that a really good manager will be a great leader, or that leadership is the same as good management, or that leadership is only available to those with a position near the top, or that people must be born with the inherent ability to lead.

The critical first step for answering the question posed above is to understand what management is and how it differs from leadership. Management and leadership operate in different realms (Table 8.1). Managers are accountable for a known scope and use a set of well-developed skills to manage in their area. Conversely, leaders are responsible for and function in an unknown scope, using quite different skills to exercise leadership effectively.

### Management

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term *manager* as deriving from an Italian verb, *maneggiare*, which means “to handle, train, be in charge of, control horses.” Today, managers are assigned accountability to oversee the processes dealing with or controlling things or people. Therefore, it should not be surprising that managers’ roles and responsibilities include coordination and interaction with employees; handling, sharing, and analyzing information; problem solving and decision making; producing the best results possible; operating within a budget; and accounting for the status of everyone and everything within their

scope of accountability. Larger organizations often have up to three levels of manager phenotype—top, middle, and supervisory—and at each level the scope of accountability varies, and in some cases overlaps.

High-performing staff members are often promoted to become managers. Some succeed and others learn that being a manager is not to their liking. The shift to a manager’s role challenges strong performers to delegate and to develop others. The role requires a shift from self-concern to one of mobilizing employees to tackle tough problems, as a manager’s success is frequently measured by the results of those they manage. Managers need to be taught skills to succeed in their new role, which cover a range from delegating, to building credible and reliable budgets, to delivering performance evaluations, to building a diverse, team-based workforce. Their roles cover a large span of activities and meetings, from providing incentives and recognition for work well done to implementing layoffs when the circumstances require it. Managers’ authority is limited and tends to remain within their assigned area or scope, and their actions must align with senior management and the organization’s articulated strategies. Tasks are frequently identified and assigned by middle- or top-level managers who have the authority to make such delegations. After 30 years of teaching and working with managers, the authors have found that managers are often interested in being taught how to “manage up,” or to

**Table 8.1** Management and leadership: important characteristics and functions<sup>a</sup>

Management	Leadership
Overseeing processes dealing with or controlling things or people (known scope) that include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination and interaction with employees</li> <li>• Handling, sharing, and analyzing information</li> <li>• Problem solving and decision making</li> <li>• Operating within a budget</li> </ul>	Working within the unknown (something bigger than your current base of knowledge) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making something happen in the future that would not have otherwise happened</li> <li>• Navigating in uncertainty and ambiguity</li> <li>• Self-generating comfort to experiment (trial and error)</li> <li>• Having enthusiasm that inspires the engagement of others</li> </ul>
Typical organizational management levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top</li> <li>• Middle</li> <li>• Supervisory</li> </ul>	Available to anyone at any position in an organization who embraces important foundational elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity is a critical condition of performance</li> <li>• Understanding and being a person of integrity</li> <li>• Operating with integrity means honoring their word</li> </ul>
Shift from self-concern to mobilizing employees, with success measured by the results of those managed	Understanding the differences between keeping your word and honoring your word <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust is the outcome of honoring one’s word, and successful leaders engender the trust of those being led and/or managed</li> <li>• Your word is what you said you will do or will not do</li> <li>• Once agreed upon, this becomes your word</li> <li>• Communicating clearly what was or was not done is honoring your word</li> </ul>
Management authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited</li> <li>• Bounded within their assigned area</li> </ul>	Authenticity is the degree to which one is true to one’s self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without authenticity, one will not succeed as a leader</li> <li>• A leader acknowledges his or her successes and as well as failures</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup>While not mutually exclusive, leadership skills can be found among managers. The focal differences seem to be the willingness to work in the “unknown” versus the “known” arena and being committed to something bigger than yourself.

get *their* manager(s) to do what *they* think should be done. However, we find that after being given the tools, rarely do these same managers succeed or even try. If the concept of managing up is of interest, one needs to understand that it has more to do with being a leader than managing.

### Leadership

In contrast with the work of managing a known scope, a leader's work is to *make something happen in the future that was otherwise not (predictably) going to happen*. Leaders have the courage to take on being responsible for what is unknown, the sense-making ability to navigate in uncertainty and ambiguity, the comfort to experiment using trial-and-error methods to discover their way, and the enthusiasm to inspire the engagement of others to garner progress when the pathways are uncertain or current knowledge argues that the vision being articulated cannot or will not happen (1).

*How does one become a leader?* As your parents probably said, anyone (you) can be a leader in any arena of concern or from any position in an organization. However, to succeed in being a leader and to exercise leadership effectively requires the development of a foundation upon which your confidence to lead grows and is recognized by others.

*Can leadership be taught? Does understanding what other leaders have done or knowing the styles they used help someone to lead?* The editors of a recent book, *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership*, reported an interesting conclusion after interacting with 30 authors during the publication of this book about their varied teaching methods (18). In more than 25 years of using many methods of teaching about leadership and leadership styles and studying cases to learn what leaders do, the authors found “scant empirical evidence that any of these approaches work” (17). In addition, there is insufficient research and an inconsistent body of knowledge to validate whether the methods being used succeed in developing the kind of leaders needed for the uncertain future (17). While teaching skills and imparting knowledge are what educators best know how to do, “the current state of leadership education lacks the intellectual rigor and institutional structure to advance beyond its present (and precariously) nascent stage” (12). In fact, only one of the 30 different teaching methods in *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership* has the objective of leaving students actually being leaders and exercising leadership effectively (7, 9). Many of the perspectives in this book chapter are derived from, or are a synopsis of, the ground-breaking material developed to support the precept of actually being an effective leader (5–8, 14).

So, you may rightly ask, can this chapter possibly be different? While we cannot reach through these pages and shape you into a leader, the material in this chapter offers access to foundational elements that provide potency and

bring power to leading. While they can also improve your management, mastering them is critical for anyone desiring to be a leader and to exercise leadership effectively. The rest will be up to you.

*Few will have the greatness to bend history itself. But each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all these acts will be written the history of this generation.*

ROBERT F. KENNEDY

### The Foundational Factors for Being a Leader: The First Foundational Factor Is Integrity

*The softest pillow is a clear conscience.*

NARAYANA MURTHY, FOUNDER AND FORMER CEO, INFOSYS

When you ask people what *integrity* is, their answers are often expressed as values and norms. For instance, someone with integrity does not lie or steal. While there are moral, legal, and ethical underpinnings in every situation, organization, or professional group, integrity (as described here as a foundation for leadership) is not a normative or relative phenomenon. Integrity is independent and yet it underlies everything, and without it nothing works. Without being a person of integrity, you can set aside the notion of ever being a leader, and to be a person of integrity is a never-ending undertaking.

### The Definition of Integrity

To understand this area, we start with the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* definition of “integrity”:

1. firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: INCORRUPTIBILITY
2. an unimpaired condition: SOUNDNESS
3. the quality or state of being complete or undivided: COMPLETENESS

Rarely do people notice the second and third components of the definition, though they are critical to having an actionable access to operating with integrity. If you focus on the second and third definitions, the notion that integrity establishes the underpinning for workability and performance becomes clear. We ask you to consider the following heuristic: as integrity (unimpaired, complete) increases, the conditions that allow for maximum performance also increase; therefore integrity is a critical condition of performance.

But what does it mean for a person or a leader to be unimpaired and complete? What it means for a person to operate with integrity is to *honor one's word*. To clarify what that means, we will examine what *honoring* your word is, and more specifically, what is meant in detail by *your word*.

Q1a

Q2

Q2

Q3  
Q4

### Honoring Your Word

Honoring your word means doing what you said you would do, or if you cannot or will not be doing what you said, letting others know as soon as you know that you will not be doing what you said, and dealing with the resultant consequences. Though this concept sounds relatively simple, many people do not understand (or they disregard) how important and fundamental it is to optimal performance. We are sure you can think of instances in which people say they will do something, do not do it, and never talk about it again. Common misconceptions become pitfalls that often prevent people from honoring their word.

**Q5**

### The Pitfalls in Honoring Your Word

Many people fail to let others know what they did or did not do, sometimes even after the fact. Have you ever awakened in the middle of the night in a panic about a passed deadline, because you didn't know if your team member(s) delivered or not?

**Q5a**

The first pitfall in the arena of honoring your word occurs when people think that integrity is only a virtue. If integrity is understood to be a virtue, rather than a necessity, it conceals the fact that honoring your word is a necessary condition for performance. As a virtue, integrity can become more easily sacrificed, especially when it appears to a person that he or she must do so to succeed, or that it really does not matter. For instance, reporting only the good news, or the news you think others want to hear, can seem to be acceptable or smart behavior, as can saying you finished something that you in fact did not, simply because it sounds better and you know you can complete it after the fact, on an evening or weekend. What is unseen or not easily recognized in these situations is the resulting damage to the individual and/or the organizational performance. When integrity is understood as *honoring your word*, then saying both what is and is not happening—the good, the bad, and the ugly—becomes dependable behavior. In environments where reliable information is readily available, managers can make more appropriate decisions about what is (or is not) getting done. For instance, if a manager knows what was not done, and the stakeholders who are expecting the deliverable have been advised of the potential delay, they can decide together if the deliverable can be delayed until a later date or if it must be completed immediately. As more people learn to speak openly about what is and is not done, individual and organizational confidence grows and overall performance increases. Honoring your word helps to establish workable relationships that enable others to develop a sufficient sense of security so that they can provide complete information.

A second pitfall occurs when managers are *unaware* that they have not honored their word or have missed a deadline. For years, we authors have discussed with people the importance of honoring their word. Many have admitted

that they take better care of their automobiles than they do their word, because they can “see” their car but they cannot “see” their word. Managers have much to do; it seems almost impossible to know what outstanding commitments are yet to be completed (especially when many commitments are delegated via e-mail, often without discussion). Even when managers *do* know what has not been done, their energy may be focused on explaining *why* they did not complete the commitment (and constructing a report justifying their nondelivery) rather than communicating what was not done and focusing instead on the impact and possible solutions. When managers and staff operate without full awareness of their commitments, they frequently are unaware of the increased potential for a decline in performance in their area of accountability, their organizations, and/or themselves. It does not take staff long to determine if deadlines are reliable or not, or if their managers know the outcomes they are working on (or not), and reliable performance declines in such settings. If you see performance decreasing *and* it seems like everyone is honoring their word, you should ask, “When was performance last progressing at necessary or acceptable levels and/or when did it go off track, and at that point, what happened, what commitments were not being honored?”

The third pitfall that managers confront with honoring their word occurs when people think integrity means *keeping* your word or that you must always do what you said. *Keeping one's word* and *honoring one's word* are not synonymous as presented in this chapter. However, most people think the two are one and the same.

What happens when it is not possible (or when it is inappropriate, perhaps due to legal reasons, strategic reasons, force majeure, etc.) to fulfill what was previously committed? Working to *keep* your word, when it might be more appropriate to *honor* your word by letting others know what you will not or did not do, enhances performance. When transparency is not embraced, it often leads to counterproductive behaviors, like not responding to e-mail in a timely manner (or ever) or avoiding people or meetings, and therefore impairs the overall coordination of performance. When a manager cannot keep his or her word and opts for the apparent short-term gain of concealing it rather than courageously acknowledging it, he or she may forfeit the power and respect that will accrue from honoring one's word. And without the respect of others, you can forget about being a leader.

Once you are aware of what it means to honor your word and how to honor your word, it becomes important to understand what constitutes your word.

### What Is Your Word?

To be a person of integrity requires that you understand fully how your word is constituted, and that you own the implications of having constituted your word from the following five different areas.

**Q5b**

**Q6**

First, your word is what you *said* you will do or will not do, and in the case of saying you will do something, doing all of what was specified and doing it on time. When someone asks you to do something, what they have asked you to do becomes your word unless you respond to the person in a timely fashion saying that you will not be doing it.

Second, your word includes what you *know* to do or not to do. The case of doing it includes doing it as it is meant to be done, on time, unless you have said something explicitly to the contrary to the relevant parties. When you know what there is to do (or not do), it becomes your word unless you respond in a timely fashion saying that you will not be doing what was asked.

Third, your word includes doing what is *expected* of you to do or not do (and in the case of do, to the specifications and on time) unless you have explicitly said to the contrary. Please take note of an apparent paradox: while your word includes all that is expected of you, what you expect from others is not for themselves their word unless they have said they will do it.

Fourth, and also related to what is expected of you, are all of the *moral, ethical, and legal standards* for your roles or profession that you have not explicitly declined. These standards, whether spoken or not, are part of your word.

Fifth, your word includes *what you say is possible* or *what you stand for*, as a declaration made to one or more people or even to yourself, and it includes taking the actions necessary to realize what you stand for or declare.

### What Is the Current State of Your Word?

Take a moment to reflect on the current state of your word, where is it honored and where there might be work to do. After reflecting for yourself, consider your staff, your department, and your areas of accountability. Have there been missed deliverables, or is there an interface your staff has with another part of the organization where performance is lower than it could or should be that has been tolerated and unmentioned? In your areas of accountability, do you have the necessary tracking, reporting, and measuring in place to manage the myriad commitments you and your teams are accountable for? Reports and metrics should help you and your department to succeed, not be a waste of time to prepare. What you can see, you can move and manage. What you cannot see, you cannot manage with integrity. Do you and your staff have sufficient tracking tools to record and manage all the commitments you are responsible for in a timely manner? Investing time to restore your word where commitments are incomplete or unaligned in the areas you manage, or inconsistent with your leadership objectives, will result in a noticeable increase in performance.

### Trust and Its Relationship to Honoring Your Word

The literature on trust talks about “walking the talk,” saying that to be trusted you must keep your word. Everyone learns at an early age the consequences of not doing what

they said they would. In some cases such people are called liars, but no matter what people are called, it is a very uncomfortable position to be in. To avoid getting caught in this bind, people frequently report that they have learned to never make promises and to avoid commitments altogether. However, keeping your word is not the same as honoring your word, and as discussed, you may not always be able to keep your word. In fact, unless you give your word to virtually nothing of significance, or make only certain-to-happen commitments, you will not always be able to do what you said. When it is impossible or inappropriate to keep your word, either what you said or by the deadline, or when you choose not to or find you cannot keep your word, honoring your word allows you to operate with integrity.

It is often surprising to people that research shows that you will engender a greater degree of trust and admiration, even when you do not keep your word, if you honor your word by saying that you did not or will not be able to do what you said. In research about service encounter satisfaction, 23% of the reported “most memorable satisfactory” encounters involved situations where there had been a failure in a core service delivery, and it had been acknowledged openly (3). This finding is striking, as it suggests that service delivery system *failures* can be remembered as highly satisfactory encounters. One generally assumes that failures can be mitigated by employees who are trained to respond, but the fact that such incidents were remembered as very satisfactory is somewhat surprising (3). Results like this can occur when an organization or person responds in a forthright manner, saying what did or did not happen, and offers to clean up the resulting mess or says what will be done to ensure that it does not happen again, rather than hiding, denying, or covering up some of what actually happened.

Successful leaders engender trust, but trust is not something one can build or work on directly. It is the result of your being recognized by others, through your actions, as a person who honors his or her word. Trust is not the same as likeability—you certainly have the experience of people whom you like but do not trust. To be trusted by others is incredibly important for leaders. The path to being someone who is trusted is by operating with integrity, and the path to operating with integrity is by honoring your word.

### Preparation for Making a Commitment or Giving Your Word

With so much at stake in the area of integrity, trust, workability, performance, and power, it is important to consider fully, *before* you give your word, what it will take to keep it. Multiple discussions and analyses of the benefits and costs over a designated period of time may be needed among stakeholders to fully determine whether to give your word or make a commitment. When you are ultimately asked for a yes or no, if you are uncertain, do not give a flippant

answer; rather, ask for some time to do the analysis with your team, and say when you will respond with a yes or no. Seeking the counsel of others and getting their ideas and input for determining possible pathways and strategies to accomplish the outcome build the alignment that is a hallmark of great leaders. The time to do this type of analysis is before giving your word, not afterwards. After your word is given, you need to honor your word, not deal with whether you should have given it or not.

The most common source of failed leadership today comes from being irresponsible or casual about one's word and, by extension, the word of the organization. Operating without integrity is a major source of operational mistakes and declines in performance and often leaves a mess in people's careers or lives. In some cases, it has destroyed large, seemingly indestructible corporations. People who lack the strength to operate with integrity are dangerous when faced with difficult counterforces that challenge their judgment. To be a leader, you must know yourself as a person of integrity, have the courage to maintain your core values in the gray areas, consistently honor your word to others, and be known to do the appropriate thing, time after time. There is more discussion about this in the next section on authenticity, and for more on the subject of integrity and its importance in leadership, see reference 5 and Appendix 8.2.

Q7

## The Second Foundational Factor Is Authenticity

*The price they have to pay for leadership is unceasing self-discipline, constant taking of risks, and the perpetual inner struggle.*

Q4

CHARLES DE GAULLE

*Authenticity* has historical underpinnings in philosophy, art, and psychology and today has become important to both managing and leading. In philosophy, the conscious self is seen as coming to terms with being in a material world and encountering external forces, pressures, and influences that are very different from itself. Authenticity is reflected by the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, despite these external forces. Without authenticity you will not succeed as a leader.

### The Definition of Authentic

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* definition of "authentic" is as follows.

Q8

1. *obsolete*: AUTHORITATIVE
2. *a*: worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact  
*b*: conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features  
*c*: made or done the same way as an original

3. not false or imitation: REAL, ACTUAL
4. *a*: of a church mode: ranging upward from the keynote  
*b*: of a cadence: progressing from the dominant chord to the tonic
5. true to one's own personality, spirit, or character

Will the *real you* please stand up (20)? Sounds bizarre, right? However, many people spend their lives being the way they think others want them to be, for instance, doing what their boss says, whether it provides the optimal solution or not, rather than what they know best to do. What about you? Is your freedom to express yourself diminished in a meeting with people you do not know, or those with higher positions in the organizational hierarchy than you? Authenticity is gauged by expression. It reflects both the extent to which you know and show your true self and the extent to which you deploy yourself in ways that are appropriate to the situations you are facing (12).

### Knowing Yourself

Let us start with who the real you is. As attributed to Socrates in some of the earliest accounts about authenticity, "The unexamined life is not worth living" (2). Becoming a leader requires you to take an inward journey, or quest of introspection and reflection, in order to develop a profound sense of yourself, your spirit, what made you that way, and what your values are (19). For guidance on this journey, we recommend the exercises and questions designed to assist you in reflecting and discovering important personal insights that are available in *Finding Your True North*, by Bill George, a former CEO who teaches a semester-long course on authentic leadership at the Harvard Business School (11). This journey is not about changing who you are; rather, it is about revealing the limiting ways *you wound up being*, which include your knee-jerk behaviors and outdated opinions of whatever may have happened in the past (15). The process frequently involves reframing your life's stories and experiences to date, and when done well, it will leave you with sufficient grounding or stability to tackle tougher challenges involving greater risk and ambiguity. Leaders rarely fail from lack of raw intelligence. Research has shown that hundreds have failed due to lack of emotional intelligence, which is composed of self-awareness, motivation, empathy, social skill, and self-regulation (13). When people are left with the sense that there is a fundamental congruency between who you are and your life story, the values you espouse and your actions, and that you have made a transformation from self-concern to concern for empowering and inspiring others, they are likely to see and experience you as authentic and someone whose leadership they could follow.

Q9



### How Do You Respond in Various Situations?

The next step is considering how you deploy yourself, and whether you act appropriately to the situations you are facing. Understanding how you got to be the way you are supports this aspect of authenticity by enabling you to recognize past situations in which you have responded with an inappropriate reaction and the fallout that resulted. Once you fully understand your responsibility for the consequences, you can take steps to repair any remaining disorder, restore the relationship(s), and learn other, more effective or appropriate behaviors with which you can respond differently to similar situations in the future.

Consider this bold assertion: in every leadership situation, your actions and behaviors will always be correlated with the way in which the situation occurs to you (6, 7). From a neuroscience perspective, “occurs” corresponds to that which is generated by the activated neural networks in the brain that produce experiential perceptions, via our senses, that we project onto the external world (15). For instance, if a situation occurs for you as exciting, you cannot wait to begin; if the same situation seems frightening, you dread having to participate and delay beginning. In either case, your behaviors and actions will be synchronized with your interpretation of the situation or, in this vernacular, how the situation occurs or appears for you (6, 7). For being a leader and providing leadership effectively, when something occurs to you as hopeless, your ways of being and acting will convey hopelessness to others, and no matter what you say, they will perceive the inauthenticity and will be disengaged or unsuccessful in addressing the situation.

### The Importance of Context

What people often fail to recognize is that the context they bring to any situation is decisive and has a direct relationship with how the situation will occur for them (6, 8). Being a leader and taking the effective actions of leadership are an outcome of the way in which the situation you are facing occurs for you (7, 9). Self-reflection helps to reveal your unexamined contexts, many of which originated in childhood and often leave us with blind spots and unable to see things others can see. Scientists have discovered that we “see” with our brains (i.e., unexamined or examined contexts), not with our eyes.

If visual sensations were primarily visually received rather than constructed by the brain, you’d expect that most of the fibers going to the brain’s primary visual cortex would come from the retina. Instead, scientists have found that only twenty per cent do; eighty per cent come downward from regions of the brain governing functions like memory. Richard Gregory, a prominent British neuropsychologist, estimates that visual perception is more than ninety

per cent memory and less than ten per cent sensory nerve signals (reference 10, p. 9).

Once unexamined contexts are discovered, in many cases they can be shifted to be appropriate with the situations you are facing today as a fully competent adult. Having a strong sense of yourself, how you got to be the way you are, and your values provides an anchor when you find yourself in a swirl of conflicting pressures, and leaves you with the courage to follow through—even when you are directly threatened or challenged—in a way that is consistent with your values and those of the organization.

You need to answer the question “Why would anyone be led by you?” This is a strange question, and it can only be answered by making reference to personal qualities that are authentically yours, and not as attributes of the position you hold. Effective leaders have reached an equanimity and inner peace with themselves, both their strengths and weaknesses, so they are not compelled to hide their weaknesses or be caught in the fatal error of thinking they must always appear to be perfect.

### The Path to Authenticity

The path to developing authenticity is increasing your ability to be courageous enough to be open about your failures, your weaknesses, and where you are being inauthentic (everyone is inauthentic from time to time or in certain situations) (7, 8). Being open is not meant to imply that you divulge everything to everyone or in every situation, but that you come to terms with your shortcomings by fully owning who you are and how you grew to be the person you are today and understanding that you can move beyond your historical ways of being with a freedom and ease in talking about your life’s developmental path with others.

Personal insecurity is a petri dish for breeding inauthentic behavior. When you pretend to be what you are not, people recognize it immediately. Asking others for input and subsequently disregarding their input because you had already made a decision conveys pretentiousness. Alternatively, if you are not open to input, do not ask, and thereby be authentic.

The more you grasp that you are not able to fully see objective reality as it is—the role of context in coloring everything—and that leading is not about you being perfect or knowing everything, the more you will grow to seek and rely on input from others. Recall the data from medical science mentioned above, and consider that one could consciously accept that there is an objective reality that is independent of our perception of it but that we only have access to the reality generated in our brains. However, most people don’t operate as if this is true. Understanding that the challenges in healthcare today do not *occur* as the same for all the stakeholders increases the need to form teams to address them, expands one’s appreciation for diversity of

thought, and opens one to input from multiple and even conflicting sources as a natural way of operating while leading others. Knowing yourself, knowing your strengths and weaknesses, and being open about them empowers the people you lead and manage to make more relevant contributions, engage more authentically, and derive more satisfaction from their job.

What de Gaulle said is true of anyone aspiring to be a leader. Why would anyone subject themselves to that? Both the answer, and what actually distinguishes leading from managing, are found in the third foundational factor, discussed next. Leaders are responsible for, and function in, an unknown scope. Their job as a leader begins the moment they commit to something that they, and perhaps others, have never done before. They must have the courage to commit to be responsible for what is unknown. Where does that courage to make such commitments come from? Why would someone make such a commitment?

### The Third Foundational Factor Is Commitment to Something Bigger than Yourself

Q9a

*Seek, above all, for a game worth playing. Such is the advice of the oracle to modern man. Having found the game, play it with intensity—play as if your life and sanity depended on it. (They do depend on it.) . . . Move as if your movements had some purpose. If life does not offer a game worth playing, then invent one. For it must be clear, even to the most clouded intelligence, that any game is better than no game at all.*

Q10

ROBERT S. DE ROPP, *THE MASTER GAME: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS*

#### Succeeding as a Leader

Your success in being a leader has a lot to do with discovering or inventing what matters enough to you to be unreasonable with yourself and others about making it happen. Some call this “purpose” and say that without purpose, leaders are at the mercy of their desires for power, prestige, or financial rewards (11). Purpose, or being up to something bigger than yourself, drives you as a leader, becomes the source of your power, and gives you the courage and confidence to keep going and the strength to take risks. It also helps when the time comes to explain to others what it is that inspires you, where your passion and energy comes from, and it may, in some cases, motivate and empower them. How can you discover your purpose? If you are going to be authentic, you cannot adopt someone else’s purpose; you must find your own. What is it that you want to make happen that is unlikely to happen otherwise?

Answering requires reflection and, in most cases, conversing with others. You can begin by considering what

really matters to you, or thinking about times when you read the news and something resonated with you or made you think this should or should not be happening, or why can’t we do that, or why are we tolerating this or that? You might ask others who know you well what they see you are most interested in or animated about, to help you land in an area that is important for you. Whatever you find, start to think: if my wildest dreams were realized, what might be the new reality? Take time for defining or crafting a bold, declarative statement of the possibility to which you are willing to dedicate your life’s energy and intellect to realize, something that otherwise would not predictably happen, something you and others around you do not know how to do. Without such a commitment you will not be a leader.

In a certain sense all leaders are heroes, ordinary people whose being and acting are bigger than their historical selves because they derive a sense of self from what they are committed to. Whatever the commitment is, it is beyond their personal concerns, and in most cases has little or no direct personal payoff. As these commitments are acted on, such big, impossible promises often create something to which others can also be committed, which leaves them with a sense that their lives are also about something bigger than themselves. This is the entrée into being a leader and exercising leadership effectively.

Not everyone will choose such a path and become a leader. To do so is a personal choice, a step that must be authentically taken. Once you step out, there is no turning back, and stepping out is not always easy, especially when what action to take is clouded by many unknown elements, risks, and ambiguities. Arrows can fly. Second-guessing can abound. Hearing from those who have gone before you as a leader may shed some light on what can result from being committed to something bigger than oneself:

*It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause. Who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, at least fails while daring greatly . . .*

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT,  
SPEECH AT THE SORBONNE, 1910

#### What Happens Next?

Once you have invented a possibility that is bigger than yourself and committed to make that possibility a reality, you will need new skills, many of which are discussed in detail in the following chapters. One of the most important skills involves listening effectively. As Steven Covey said, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood”

(reference 4, p. 235). By enhancing your listening skills, you will begin to hear not only what is being said, but more importantly what is not being clearly said or stated. You may notice that you are able to hear when people are making commitments that you cannot count on. When you hear inauthentic responses or promises, stop the action. Take time and discuss the deliverables and deadlines and give others a second chance to consider whether or not they can successfully deliver. Do not let weak commitments slide by; too much is at stake.

Another leadership skill is to find a way of speaking about the future that makes it seem real and palpable to others so they can become as inspired about that future as you are and join you in taking the requisite actions to make that future happen. You will discover that you need to stay open to input, whether it is supportive or challenging, as you never know where the next piece of critical data you will need might come from. Make sure to have intermediate and long-term measures, pay attention to these measures and results, listen keenly to all feedback, and evaluate and make any necessary midcourse corrections to continue taking ground and making progress. Communicate, communicate, and then communicate some more. Celebrate the victories, help people make sense of the dead ends, and stay open to learning along the way because you are on a journey no one else has taken. In the times of inevitable despair, when your thoughts are filled with doubt or self-concern, find someone you trust—maybe an advisor or a coach—with whom you can discharge and discuss what you are thinking. Then recreate the future possibility you committed yourself to, and renew your resolve to realize it.

As every superhero you ever watched knew, in their quest to make their world a better place, things will not always work the way you think they should. When superheroes find themselves in disarray on the ground, they know . . .

*There is only enough time to iron your cap . . . and back to the skies for you!*

JASON HARLEY, DARPA TRANSPORTATION  
TEAM MEMBER (SEE APPENDIX 8.2)

## Summary

To be a leader requires that you establish a strong foundation on which you can build a context for exercising leadership effectively in any leadership situation. In this chapter, we presented you with an understanding of how to establish this foundation for yourself. We would like to leave you speculating about what you would undertake if you knew you could not fail. When you find your answers, the foundational elements will be there when you step out into the realm of leading. In the following chapters, you will see how the use of different leadership skills can influence people and alter their performance.

## KEY POINTS

- The following are 30 often forgotten and important tips for good leadership. We thank Major General Perry M. Smith, USAF (Ret.), for his permission to include these as key points of this chapter. These are from part 1 of 60 tips that were first published in the *Marine Corps Gazette* (16). They reinforce the material presented.
  - *Know yourself.* All leaders should realize they are, in fact, four or more people. They are who they are, and who they think they are (and these are never the same); they are who their bosses think they are; and who their subordinates think they are. Leaders who work hard to get feedback from many sources are more likely to understand and control their various selves, and hence be better leaders.
  - *Develop mental toughness.* Leaders must be brutally honest with themselves or they will slip into the terrible habit of self-deception. Even the best leaders make mistakes. By smoking out these mistakes and correcting them quickly, a good leader can become a superb one.
  - *Be magnanimous.* Leaders who share their power and their time can accomplish extraordinary things. The best leaders understand that leadership is the liberation of talent; hence they gain power not only by constantly giving it away, but also by not grabbing it back.
  - *Squint with your ears.* The most important skill for leaders is listening. Introverts have a great edge, since they tend to listen quietly and usually don't suffer from being an "interruptaholic." Leaders should "squint with their ears." Too many bosses are thinking about what they will say next, rather than hearing what is being said now. They are guilty of "fake listening."
  - *Trust your instinct and your impulse.* If something smells bad, sounds funny, or causes you to lose sleep at night, take another look. Your instincts combined with your experience can prevent you and your organization from walking off a cliff.
  - *Learn by failure.* In my professional career, I have learned much more from my failures than from my successes. As a result, I have become tolerant of the honest failure of others. When a major setback comes along, try to treat it as a marvelous learning experience, for most certainly it will be just that. To quote General George Patton, "Success is how high you bounce after you have hit bottom."
  - *Protect innovators.* A Medal of Honor recipient from Vietnam, Army Col. Jack Jacobs, worked for me for three years. He is by far the most innovative person I have ever known. Well over 50% of his ideas were

awful, but buried among these bad ideas was an occasional pearl of great wisdom. I learned that I had to protect Jack and my organization from his bad ideas while encouraging him to present all his ideas, so we could use his great ones.

- *Beware of certainty.* Leaders should be a bit skeptical of anyone who is totally certain about his or her position. All leaders should have a decent doubt, especially when dealing with “true believers” who are always sure they are right.
- *Be decisive.* Top leaders usually must make prudent decisions when they only have about 60% of the information they need. Leaders who demand nearly all the information are usually months or years late making decisions.
- *Don't become indispensable.* Organizations need indispensable institutions, not indispensable people. Leaders should not allow themselves to become indispensable, nor should they let any of their subordinates do so.
- *Avoid the cowardice of silence.* During meetings, so-called leaders often sit on their hands when it is time to raise a hand and speak up. Leadership requires courage—courage to make waves, courage to take on our bosses when they are wrong, and the courage of conviction. Every Robert E. Lee needs a James Longstreet to tell him exactly the way it is.
- *Fight against paranoia.* Welcome criticism; help people understand that it is OK to have “love quarrels” with the organization. Loyalty and criticism are mutually supporting while slavish loyalty is deadly. Avoid the defensive crouch. Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity.
- *Be goal oriented.* Leaders, even at a lower level, must try to set some long-term goals for their associates and for their organization. People want to know where they are going and in what order of priority.
- *Follow the platinum rule.* The golden rule is marvelous. But in leadership situations, the platinum rule may be even better: “Treat others the way they would like to be treated.”
- *Don't waste people's time.* The best question a leader can ask a subordinate during a counseling session is “How am I wasting your time?” Not everyone will tell you, but cherish the ones that do, for they will help you grow and prosper as a leader.
- *Thank the invisible people.* There are lots of fine people doing great work who seldom get thanks because they are “invisible.” They work so quietly and so competently that they often are not noticed by the leader. Handwritten thank-you notes are especially appreciated.
- *Don't send out “I don't trust you” messages.* People who say “I never want to be surprised” or “Check with me before you start anything” or “I'm off on a trip; I will call in every morning for an update” are sending out very strong “I don't trust you” messages to their subordinates. People who know they are not trusted will never contribute at their full potential.
- *Serve, don't humor the boss.* Too many leaders see their big tasks as keeping their bosses happy, getting to the bottom of the in-box, or staying out of trouble. That is not what leadership is all about. Leadership is serving the mission, serving your people, and being frank in your dealings with your boss.
- *Criticize up, praise down.* Leaders must deflect at least some of the bad guidance they get from above. Your subordinates expect you to criticize the boss on occasion. Don't disappoint them.
- *Be physically fit.* Everyone has a “health age.” If you exercise regularly and watch your diet, you can make yourself four or five years younger than your chronological age. If you are too busy to exercise, you will, over time, damage yourself and those you serve.
- *Develop solid leadership skills.* The best leaders are superb at listening and time management and are competent in speed reading, dictation, and the use of manual and electronic brainstorming techniques.
- *Help your people understand you.* When you take over a new organization, get your key people together and tell them what your top priorities and your pet peeves are. It is especially important for them to learn very early what really bugs you. They will appreciate your candor.
- *Smoke out those of low integrity.* Leaders must sniff the air constantly to ensure high standards of ethics are maintained. In almost all large organizations, someone is walking out the back door with something. Expense accounts, personnel records, training reports, and contracts need regular scrutiny.
- *Concentrate on performance, not just results.* How you get results is important. Leaders who don't concern themselves about the process and the performance that lead to the results are making a big mistake. Always ask yourself what it took to gain those great results.
- *Maintain a sense of outrage.* There are many super-cool managers who worry too much about keeping their bosses happy and staying out of trouble. As a result, they never allow themselves to be outraged when the system is doing serious damage to those who work for them. The best leaders get mad

occasionally, and using controlled outrage can often make right wrongs that are levied upon their people.

- *Beware of intimidation.* Be very careful here. Some bosses allow themselves to be intimidated by outsiders, by their bosses, and even by their subordinates. An intimidated boss can never be a great leader. You have to have an independent mind to make the right choices.
- *Avoid the activity trap.* Don't confuse being busy with being productive. Without discipline, managers can become slaves to their meetings, travel schedules, in-boxes, computers, and telephones. Don't get so wrapped up in the minutiae that you become paper pushers and "in-box managers" rather than visionary leaders.
- *Build a robust brain trust.* One of the great secrets of leadership success is to have a brain trust of experts on various issues. A brain trust of around 300 really smart, well-connected, and quick-thinking friends can be very helpful whenever you need help. Be sure to have their office and home phone numbers and their e-mail addresses handy, so you can get hold of them quickly. The brain trust is reciprocal: they help you and you help them. Within your large brain trust have a smaller "ethics brain trust." When you face a tough ethical issue, this group can be very helpful. My ethics brain trust really helped me as I made the decision to resign from CNN in June 1998.
- *Beware of the Paul principle.* Too many leaders allow themselves to slowly slide downhill in competence. When they lose touch with the issues, the new technologies, and the people, they have fallen victim to the "Paul principle." Many who were highly effective leaders during their first few years have lost it by year 10.
- *Get ready for the future.* The future is coming fast. Leaders need to think about the future and prepare their people for it. To keep a close eye on the future, join the World Future Society and read two magazines regularly—*Business Week* and *The Futurist*. All leaders must work hard to build the future, for that is where they and their associates will spend the rest of their lives.

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Q11

Q12

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## Q13

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## APPENDIX 8.1 Resources

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## APPENDIX 8.2 Further Information

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## Author Queries

Q1: This item is a bit unclear: what “it” do people disregard? Whose power? It sounds like you might mean the misconceptions. Would this work better as two items?

Q1a: Changing this reference citation from 1 to 18, which cites the book as a whole and is not cited anywhere else, OK? Ref 1 was cited above and appeared to be more specific.

Q2: For a direct quote, please cite the page number, e.g., (reference 12, p. 4).

Q3: These two heads were combined because we can't have two main heads one on top of the other. If you want “The Foundational Factors for Being a Leader” to be a main head separate from the “First,” “Second,” and “Third Foundational Factor” heads, you need some text under it. Just a sentence or two to introduce the factors would be sufficient. NOTE: Please be sure to cite refs 7, 5, and 14 in the text, because they are being deleted from within the heads.

Q4: Moving these quotes to the beginning of their sections; each main H1 head will now be followed by a quote.

Q5: Deleting the quotation marks since this doesn't seem to be a direct quote from a source, OK?

Q5a: Reworded to avoid saying that the deadline passed because you didn't know this. OK?

Q5b: Does the sentence beginning “Working to keep your word” express your intended meaning? It sounds contradictory; elsewhere it's stated that honoring (rather than keeping) your word enhances performance. Clarify?

Q6: Please move citation of reference 5 into the text if necessary.

Q7: Are these the correct sources?

Q8: Is this the correct dictionary to be cited?

Q9: Should this be *True North*, the book cited in Appendix 8.1? (Please confirm the correct title.) If so, should the citation be moved to the regular reference list? If this is done, all five books in the appendix will be also cited in the reference list; is this necessary?

Q9a: “MODEM” man, or “MODERN” man?

Q10: This quote is from this book, correct?

Q11: The link in reference 8 is not working. Please provide a correct one.

Q12: In ref 9, please provide the full page range.

Q13: OK to simplify ref 13 this way? This is how it appears in several citations online: