

The WorkLife LEADERSHIP Journey: Journal

Summer, 2005; Vol. I , Issue X (Trouble Viewing? [View Online](#)-----[Download Printable Version](#))

Discover Your Inner Leader:

The first of three discussions on leadership

Uncertainty - The Leadership Challenge of the Decade

There are many challenges facing leaders in this world and one of the greatest is uncertainty. The work you do with your team to address this challenge will have a profound effect on the people of your enterprise.

There is Technological uncertainty - we face it every time we turn on a computer and wrestle with new software and the latest version 3.602.444a or when we try to grapple with a hot sync of our blackberry/cellular/palm pilot/worldwide pager device or maybe the latest TCAS system upgrade on our aging fleet of aircraft. It is technological uncertainty that causes our feelings of incompetence to rise as we realize that we will have to finally admit that we don't know how to program the VCR, and never will - because my VCR just became officially obsolete last week, and I fear that I may not be far behind.

We also face Political uncertainty. In the world around us, we see the tremendous impact of 9/11 and the ever-increasing violence and chaos of not only hot spots of the globe but also the shopping center in our own back yard. Inside of our organizations a new sense of accountability has driven leadership change both in style and personality. The radical shifts at Vivendi, AOL/TimeWarner, Worldcom, (the list grows ever longer) and the almost daily shake up of players in leading companies of the past have given us all the signal that we need to carefully weigh our allegiances and decisions in a world where "politics as usual" become "whose got the hot potato?"

How about Financial uncertainty - now there's a good old standby stress producer! Pension plans, stock options, market volatility, dot com bubbles - you name it - leaders face a greater dragon today in the yearly forecast than they did in a decade after World War 2. Accounting practices, ROI and market expectations seem to ask us to "pull a rabbit out of a hat" while also placing scrutiny at an all time premium. Then of course there is the completely obsolete idea of job security. Being ready is the only security. What have you done for your career lately?

To top it all off, we have Strategic uncertainty. A five-year plan has become an impossible dream, yet we yearn for a vision - a sense of direction and destination to give meaning and value to the activities and struggles of the day. Our people look to us for a sense of purpose, a motivation that is greater than just their own well-being, a reason to believe .

An effective leader replaces uncertainty, fear and doubt with purpose, courage and trust. Purpose provides clear direction in the face of uncertainty. It is the energetic "magnet" that pulls people together and points them in a similar direction. Courage provides strength and commitment in the face of fear. Trust in one's self and one's purpose overcomes doubt.

According to Warren Bennis, one of the great writers on the topic, there are some 850 definitions of leadership. They range from the inspirational to the operational. Leadership ranks among the most researched and debated topics in organizational science. Leadership still remains an enigma, or like Bennis says, "it's like art, you can't define what it is, but you know it when you see it."

The problem is that we have taught managers and leaders how to plan, organize, staff, lead, and control organizations based on concepts and skills from the 19 th century and the necessity to organize large numbers of people for wars.

The 21 st century presents us with new demands. Terrorism does not follow the rules of war and organized combat. We are being asked to carry on with our business affairs in order not to be defeated by social and economic collapse. This requires leadership at all levels.

Even in this 21 st century, the framework of organizations is still rooted in division of labor, hierarchy, departmentalism and functionality. Leaders at every level in any



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The Demons of Doubt

This theme of Leadership in Uncertainty is at one and the same time a tremendous challenge as well as a profound learning experience. The hallowed halls are rife with great stories of leaders grappling with the demons of doubt and fear and many ears have been regaled with the success and failure of these exploits. From Homer to Shakespeare to the Harvard Business Review bards of today, the core message remains the same - leadership is an inner journey to external success.

The great command of "**Know Thyself**" dictates the passageway to leadership effectiveness. There are three additional portals waiting on the journey - "Trust", "Meaning" and "Focus". As an Executive Coach, having the opportunity to serve as a guide in this journey is a sacred privilege and is a personal journey of discovery for me as well. This journey demands that the fire at the center of every soul be nourished and protected. In coaching we call this "Safespace". The space that allows introspection, assessment and exploration of strengths and weaknesses, fears and hopes, dreams and failures. Without this space, no real leadership learning can take place. It is the prerequisite to entering the "**Know Thyself**" portal.

organization will need to formulate and implement different strategies, in fact, leaders must become architects of a new framework that is rooted in empowerment, flexibility, agility, and interconnection.

Management is about coping with complexity: it brings order and predictability to a situation. In practice, that's not enough. To succeed, companies have to fundamentally redesign themselves as living systems open to evolution. Leadership, then, *is navigating rapid change and ongoing uncertainty.*

Leading vs Managing

How are Management and Leadership different? You undoubtedly need to play both roles, wear both hats, sometimes simultaneously! Let's take a moment to look at the distinctions:

- Management is planning and budgeting. Leadership is *setting direction.*
- Management is organizing and staffing. Leadership is *aligning people.*
- Management provides control and solves problems. Leadership *stimulates motivation and innovation*
- Management fixes yesterday. Leadership creates tomorrow.

Summer Leadership Exercise

Which Hat?

All leaders wear a management hat sometimes and vice-versa. Being clear on what hat you wear when is a crucial step in defining your leadership style. Do the "HAT" exercise: Decide the type of hat you wear as a manager and what you wear as a leader. Are you a Baseball Cap Leader? A Fedora Manager? Cowboy Stetson? Combat Helmet? Artist Beret? In other words, what is your style? Pick the hat that you wear and then do the following exercise to understand more about your style and the strength and tools that are at your disposal with that hat.

As you "wear" your chosen hat, List on a sheet of paper...

The **H** - what you **Hear**, listen to, tune in to- how that changes depending on the hat;

The **A** - what grabs your **Attention**, what do you look at/for, what absorbs you?

The **T** - what do you spend your **Time** on, how much time in managing vs leading, how efficient is your use of time?

In closing this part 1 of the 3 newsletter installments of the WorkLife leadership challenge, keep in mind this message- As a leader, it's not the hat you wear, but how you wear it. It's not the decisions you make, but how you make them. It's not the change and uncertainty, it's how you use it.

Until next month, be clear what hat you wear, try on different hats to stretch your leadership style and define the core leadership value for you that is unchanging and certain. By embracing this foundation stone, the leader unlocks the secret that great leaders before you have discovered. "Be the change you would like to see." - Gandhi

"Know Thyself" portal.

The key to the "**Trust**" doorway is constancy and reliability. Reliability is a hallmark of great leadership and produces continuity in times of uncertainty and change. Studies have shown that people would rather follow someone they can count on, even though they may disagree with their viewpoint, than someone who shifts with the tide to suit their own ends.

The great doorway of "**Meaning**" opens before the leader and includes purpose, values and hope. This is the arena of opportunity and engagement in the quest for our dreams. All great accomplishments were at one time someone's dream and vision of success.

This brings us to our widest portal - "**Focus**". The granite steps here are choice, responsibility and accountability. Ultimately, the leader's journey culminates in the clarity of focus to apply our own and each other's efforts to attain our goals. As Lao Tzu says in "The Way of Life" -

The poor leader is the one that people fear,

The good leader is the one they revere,

But the Great leader is the one where the people say -"We did it ourselves!"

[When you are ready to take the next step, click on the portal](#)



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Movie	Book	Website
<u>Shackleton</u>	<u>Into Thin Air</u> by Jon Krakauer	<u>Leadership Blindspots</u> Flash needed

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