Synthesis Paper

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Introduction

In many similar ways that education is an art, leading others is also. Whereas educating others is a specific craft that is often associated to a handful of professions, leading others crosses nearly all professions. Leaders exist in any number of forms from transactional or transformational to charismatic or systematic (Bass, 1990); however, the most effective leaders integrate many necessary attributes to form holistic leadership. Leadership is a broad topic of discussion and is no narrower when it comes to describing the actions of a holistic leader. In an attempt to do so, the following demonstrable actions were identified as necessary for effective leaders: (a) leading teams, (b) coaching others, (c) following a strategic vision, (d) setting goals, (e) managing others, and (f) time management (Clawson, J., 2006; Kouzes, J. & Posner, B., 2002). Each of these actions is an art in and of itself with multitudes of research done on each.

Although every effective leader should be skilled at the six previously mentioned actions, the way in which each leader demonstrates holistic leadership is, according to Clawson (2006), based on the person's "values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs)" (p. 100). These VABEs are the basis for the leader's style, or technique. This, in turn, determines the leader's effectiveness. Should the leader's VABEs not be aligned with those he or she is leading or with a widely adopted strategy, mission, or vision, then the opportunity exists that the leader may not see progress or positive results. This becomes ever so more significant when an organization identifies it is suffering from miasma or at times when disconfirming data is presented.

Of all the topics related to leadership, leading followers through change is the competency that aligns best with my VABEs. Clawson (2006) begins his discussion about leading change with the statement that "leadership is nothing if not about change" (p. 270). This really does make sense because society, particularly during the information age, is changing

constantly. Because of this changing society, it is fairly safe to predict that each person and every organization will encounter something that disrupts the status quo. How each person or organization reacts depends on the VABEs that define the person or organization. An effective leader can lead the specific change, but can also prepare for future change through influencing the VABEs of all by setting the stage that change is constant, forming a flexible organization.

Holistic Leadership

What makes a person an effective leader? Is it a title? Is it tenure? Is it because there are a group of subordinates? Clawson (2006) argues that days in which title, tenure, and subordinates define a leader are gone. Instead, he identifies point of view as the core aspect that defines a leader. How a person views a situation and the opportunities that person identifies from the situation frames up one's leadership style. For every leadership style there is a unique type of leader. Leaders may be transactional or transformational; stern or charismatic; impersonal or social; and the list goes on (Bass, 1990). At the core of each of these styles is a clear point of view and this point of view is apparent as the person exhibits the six demonstrable actions of a holistic leader: (a) leading teams, (b) coaching others, (c) following a strategic vision, (d) setting goals, (e) managing others, and (f) time management.

Leading Teams

In looking at definitions of leaders, a common counterpart is followers. When related to leaders, the followers are often part of a team of some kind, such as supervisor and direct reports or a group of employees from various departments working on an initiative. In all cases, the leader is there to form the context in which everyday or project work may be completed. This role can be viewed as a type of boundary referee who guides focused exploration (Clawson, 2006). The effective leader creates the playing field, so-to-speak, through navigation, shared

sensemaking, and connectivity (Palus, C. & Horth, D., 2004). This is best explained through an example. A project team has been assembled to address a needed organizational change. Each team member has valuable ideas and worthy experience to use and share. The challenge for the leader is how to have each member play on the field. The solution comes from the concepts of Palus & Horth. Through analysis and synthesis the team navigates data and feedback; through communication and networks the team connects; and through stories and visualizations the team creates a shared sense of the project. The leader has effectively led a team.

Coaching Others

Leaders in all forms come upon situations when they either passively or actively coach another employee. Passive coaching is embodied in Kouzes & Posner's (2002) concept of setting an example. Their discussion focuses on what it means to be a role model—how one must first set the example before expecting others to follow. Leaders who are role models find it easier to actively coach others. Active coaching is more commonly recognized and which Ting & Hart (2004) discuss in great detail. Formal coaching, as they describe it, is a fluid process with three distinct phases: pre-program, in-program, and post-program. The activities which occur during each phase build on each other, ending with a reflection and evaluation of the experience. Perhaps one of the essentials of this formal coaching process is the role the leader plays. Rather than playing the part of a teacher, an effective leader is a facilitator who helps the coachee achieve his or her goals. Ting & Hart put significant emphasis on the coachee's accountability for success in the program, which relates to the role the leader plays.

Following a Strategic Vision

Clawson (2006) begins his discussion about strategy with some profound statements: "Leadership without strategy is nothing," and "Great leaders have great strategic dreams, visions

of what could be and what they think should be" (p. 173). Perhaps one of the most common visuals of strategy in action is a game of chess. Each move is decisive with the ultimate goal of preventing the opposing player's King from moving. Leadership is similar. To gain the competitive edge, a leader must employ a strategy which is linked to a clear vision. Strategy is also much about forward-thinking—what course of actions can a leader anticipate as options after each phase of progress completes. The struggle, according to Eicher (2006), is that strategy is often a challenge to make happen. He offers guidance for leaders in this situation. By eliminating the gap between knowing about the strategy and acting on the strategy from all employees, leaders can make strategy happen.

Closely related to strategy are mission and vision and statements. A mission statement is what defines an organization's reason for being (Clawson, 2006). This statement answers the question for employees "Why do I come to work everyday." Effective leaders hold close to the mission as a means for providing purpose. Akin to a mission statement is the vision statement. In a sense, a vision statement provides a snapshot of what the organization could be like if all employees adhered to the mission. Effective leaders can use a vision statement to help set goals which are aligned to the mission.

Setting Goals, Managing Others, and Time Management

The remaining three demonstrable actions of a leader seem to be related well to each other; therefore, are discussed as a single group. For those leaders who have direct reports, these actions may be more relevant than for leaders who do not. For every leader, goals are essential (Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A., 2006). Without a goal, where does one's path lead? Or, how is a path even defined? Effective leaders will define a clear goal so that they can then define the path. In coaching situations, effective leaders will help the coachee define the goal, but refrain from

setting the goal for the coachee. In terms of managing others, effective leaders use tactics to maintain a team atmosphere while harmoniously allowing each member to be an individual. This act is similar to a maestro and orchestra. To the ear, the orchestra sounds as one, but visually, an observer may witness the maestro encouraging a sole performer, such as the first violin, to be pronounced. Leaders may sometimes use recognition as a way to create a positive team atmosphere. It is important for every employee to feel valued and a leader has the opportunity to do so through the correct form of recognition. It is important that the correct form is chosen because certain types of recognition may result in the undesired behaviors (Bossé-Smith, 2005; Garvey, 2004). Time management is the last of the six demonstrable actions. As the research on leadership presents, effective leaders have multitudes of behaviors and tasks to juggle. Managing one's time is an important part of being a leader. In some ways, time management is related to setting an example. Those leaders who are able to prioritize and schedule events in an efficient manner have a good probability of leading effectively (Reese, S., 2006).

<p style="text-align:center">Values, Assumptions, Beliefs, and Expectations (VABEs)</p>

The uniqueness of leaders comes from deep within each as a person. As humans, we hold certain ideals more important than others which in turn define our moral beliefs. In the realm of leadership this is more focused. Leaders are unique through their values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs) according to Clawson (2006). This collection of aspects influences the decisions a leader may make and affects the interpersonal relationships the leader forms.

Effective leaders will spend time pondering these four aspects to identify who they are. Clawson discusses that leaders who can not vocalize or express any or all of these aspects may encounter challenges in their actions. Take for example a leader who is faced with a coaching opportunity. The coachee, although accountable for success, can not be expected to succeed

without the guidance of the leader (coach). If the leader is uncertain of his or her VABEs, then the coachee may suffer to the extent of failure because of missing guidance. While interpreting this position take caution and pause because the leader may not recognize the guidance is missing. This presents a prime opportunity to mention that effective leaders realize they of themselves need someone to follow (a mentor). The mentors of aspiring leaders play a critical role as nurturers. It is inferred from Clawson's discussion that mentors of aspiring leaders should encourage reflection on VABEs.

<div align="center">Organizational Change</div>

The discussion about leaders and leadership up to this point intended to focus on everyday leaders and leadership. However, there are other not so regular events that require leaders to be at their best. These events typically revolve around some sort of organizational change. From senior executive departures or reassignments to departmental reorganizations, change at the organization level has the potential to be disruptive to productivity. Effective leaders employ all of the actions previously discussed, and, aligned with their VABEs, are able to lead the organization successfully through change.

Various models for organizational change are presented by Clawson (2006), beginning with Lewin's unfreeze-transform-freeze model. The models have progressed as change has become more prevalent. A proposed newer model is unfreeze-transform-transform again-and so forth where a freeze state does not occur again. A benefit to this latter model is an organizational preparedness to transform as necessary. When an organization comes upon a need to unfreeze, it is suggested by Clawson that a change team is assembled. Using a team to help the organization navigate through the change stages may facilitate widespread acceptance and adoption of the transformation.

Effective leaders, on the organizational level, will proactively seek out change initiatives instead of waiting for an external influence to send the message. So, instead of a leader being a problem solver, the leader is a problem creator (Clawson, 2006). The problem creator action can be a strategy to get the competitive advantage. By being ahead of society, an organization places itself in a more secure position, and ultimately, should be better prepared for what may come. This concept, preparing for never-ending change, leads one to believe that all leaders should embody transformational ideals, rather than only transactional ideals. Further investigation on the need for transactional leaders could offer interesting insight about the evolving nature of leaders in the information age.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Being a leader and demonstrating leadership is by far not a menial responsibility; in fact, research seems to show the opposite. It takes a skilled individual to holistically demonstrate leadership. Clawson, through his discussion of Level Three Leadership, offers a comprehensive vision of effective leadership. The concepts identified by Clawson align well with those presented by other specialists in the field of leadership (Bass, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; McCauley, C. & Van Velsor, E., 2004) and are easy to comprehend. With demonstrable actions, and reflection, every person has the ability to be an effective leader.

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