

Leadership Reality Check: How You See Things May Not Be Enough

As a newly appointed or promoted leader, you can surmise from the foregoing discussions that your outlook on life as a leader, the people you serve and the Lord who ordained you may all need to change. The requirements, expectations and profitability associated with why you were appointed to lead all demand it.

Regardless of how you saw life before your appointment or how you feel a leader should lead, or how people should be led, your internal views may not bear up under your entity's microscope. This is because many newcomers look at leadership through rose-colored glasses where everything is seen as warm, rosy and friendly. They envision an easily managed position where they are in charge and no one can or will contest them.

That is not how it works in real life.

A number of aspiring leaders' styles came from what I call the "O and A" method of leadership assessment. It is where those who aspire to lead, observing those they admire, develop their style from a pet model. It does not matter if the admirer discerns why or how their favorite leaders did what they did or how accurate what they observed is.

All that matters is that what they saw struck their fancy and so impressed them that they adopted that particular tactic or attitude as their own. If you acquired your leadership philosophies and style this way, you are in for a rude awakening because before you can personalize your own leadership style, you should first learn its basics.

There are rules for everything, and leadership is no

different. If you do not master the rules, you will find yourself disillusioned again and again because the ease you expected simply does not exist.

‘Easy’ Is a Disappointing Goal

Despite your best efforts, “easy” will be a far-reaching, wily goal to pursue or maintain. There will be long spates between its aims and accomplishments, especially if you pursue easy based on an idealistic, problem-free leadership standard.

What you must understand is that leadership exists to face opposition. It is designed to prevent, or circumvent, crises and solve problems. Leaders are engaged and empowered to interface with their organization’s adversity and turn them into opportunities.

As a leader in your particular sphere, your institution needs you to turn (or secure) its fortunes. It will look for you to exploit its advantages and minimize its failures. In the end, it will measure you by how many of its victories your position captured. Your leadership purpose is not to chase the prestige of a leader, but to win the trust and respect of those you serve because you are capable and competent.

Organic leadership makes you the “go-to weight bearer” that all concerned can rely on, come what may. Sometimes your leadership post will make you the sacrificial lamb on your organization’s behalf. At other times, it could make you the golden egg. The prestige piece is there, but the ups and downs of becoming good at what you do can make it a long-range outcome.

Thus, the notion that leadership is all about fame and fortune, as quiet as it is kept, is not the whole truth.

How you enter your first or advanced leadership post sets the stage for the leadership experiences you will have and the energies you will exert. On top of all of this, the state of

your organization when you become a leader dictates the type of orientation period you will face.

If, for example, you have the luxury of entering your new leadership post on a placid foundation with a full cooperative staff, you will only need to maintain that peace and assure continued cooperation. If on the other hand, you enter your leadership post under turbulent conditions with resistant workers, your orientation is likely to be a trial by fire. You will have to work hard and wrestle incessantly to restore peace and inspire the trust that yields cooperation.

Either way you face it, you should accept that your leadership appointment is not in heaven, but on earth, where easy does not come easily, and success takes work and takes its time.
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