

(working draft)

Elements of Effective Leadership and A Leader Development Program

One Leader's Perspective

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Premise

- In the academic, medical academic, and medical cultures, individual achievement is the key to advancement. This is understandable; however, a concentration on individual achievement retards the development of leadership skill and ability.
- Often, highly successful individuals are selected to lead people and manage resources in fast-moving, rapidly changing environments in which they are expected to build teams, lead peers, establish a positive organizational climate, routinely make timely and difficult decisions about people and resources, and effectively communicate to diverse stakeholders and audiences across a variety of means.
- This type of leadership requires preparation; better, it calls for a system of development.

Key Elements of any Leader Development Effort

- Understanding of self (introspection); personality type, biases, strengths and weaknesses
- Fundamental understanding of current leadership theory, specifically:
 - understanding the behavior of individuals
 - understanding of the behavior of groups
 - leading a multi-generational workforce
 - fundamentals of organizational design and development
- Specific practical/experiential learning of:
 - Negotiating skills
 - Peer leadership
 - Development of a mission, vision, philosophy and value statement
 - Strategic planning techniques and their implementation
 - Operational planning and execution
 - Communication skills within print, radio, visual and social media

Critical Concepts that can be applied to Leader Development in the UT System

- Imbuing of a professional ethic
 - We are blessed to lead – and therefore also be the stewards of -- two distinct professions in the UT System: the academic profession and the medical profession.
 - Professions are comprised of people with unique expert knowledge who have the trust of those with whom their profession is practiced.
 - Stewards of professions know that if trust is lost, they are no longer professionals.
 - The understanding of the components of an academic professional ethic and a medical professional ethic are absolutely key and critical in leader development.
- Servant Leadership
 - We serve the people of Texas, our students, our patients, and our employees.
 - Organizational culture, the setting of priorities of work and effort, and decision processes all should reflect the selflessness of servant leadership in a profession.
 - The understanding of the components of servant leadership and tips, techniques and guardrails to reflect a culture of servant leadership is also key and critical to any leader development program for a profession.

Some thoughts about the essential
traits of successful leaders.

Essential Traits of Successful Leaders

- Enterprise Vision
- Intellectual Curiosity
- Selflessness
- Courage
- Humility
- Empathy

Enterprise Vision

- The essence of leading and following at the same time...The ability to see beyond the boundaries of your duties, your job, your sub-organization and act in the spirit of, in support of the entire organization.
- Enterprise – it is a noun with two meanings. Here, I mean in both the business sense (the entire organization) and the initiative sense (creative, bold, inventive)
- Vision -- visualization of an image of what it “should be” or “could be”
- How do you know what the vision of your organization is, anyway? Ever talk about it? When you walk into a new organization, you should ask – mission, vision...goals, objectives...sometimes things move so fast and information washes over you like waves, you need to keep these things close. Tip: post nested vision and mission statements in high traffic workspaces.
- Having an enterprise vision drives you to reflexively keep everyone above, below and lateral to you well informed. Too many of us wander down the sidewalk, head down, ear buds in, mobile device up...that is for some combination the immature, the insecure, the fearful and the lazy.
- Also helps herd the good idea fairies...

Intellectual Curiosity

- It is the willingness to learn new things
- Intellectual curiosity is your personal recognition that:
 - You do not know everything (supports Humility)
 - New ideas, technology, processes, approaches might good for your organization (and you)
 - Life is a journey of constant self-improvement
- In a diverse organization, this is welcomed (sought) in senior leaders because it contributes to openness and a climate of tolerance for things that are new and different
- By the way – how do you know what you know? What are your sources of information right now (my periodic rut...a simple news summary and ESPN)...have to force myself to listen to people and thinking I don't like; must set time aside.

Selflessness

- 21st century demands servant leadership...selflessness is the essence of servant leadership; you place yourself last – or at least behind everyone and everything in your outfit. As Soldiers we are taught the best leaders are last in line for any “good deals” – chow, going home, etc.; but here is what some folks miss: the best leaders are also FIRST in line for the bad deals? (last to shower in Bosnia...first to get the questionable vaccine)
- It also means you seek every opportunity to help a peer.
- If you choose any type of public service, this must be in your DNA. Selflessness means you must make decisions based on what is good for the organization...not necessarily what is good for you.

Courage

- Not physical (that's a given)...but the tougher kind: moral courage.
- The courage to confront – we desperately need confrontational leaders:
 - **To Confront** a wrong, such as inappropriate behavior by junior, senior or peer (Racist 1SG and the naïve 1LT in Iraq – there is no time in service or age requirement for doing the right thing – it starts now; the peer with a drinking problem; “creepy” behavior by a fairly senior leader)
 - **To Confront** expedient or politicized behavior; to “impose reason over impulse” by an individual or a group; to speak truth to power even in the face of professional risk. (Vice exploding; I was blessed to be raised right on this one; me, Abizaid, Bosnia; time for my story at the Pentagon?)
 - When you get more senior, being a confrontational leader can put you in controversial situations in the public eye...taking a tack or disagreeing with a public official (worked for me 9 time out of 10!) puts you at professional risk, hence the need for courage...disagreement is OK; expected, fine; disobedience, however, is never acceptable...our civilian leaders are always in charge.

Humility

- Helps feed the ability to be Selfless and have the most important element (to me) Empathy...but it is much more than that.
- Humility makes it easy for you to say, “I made a mistake” and “I was wrong on that; you were correct” – in public. Which, in turn creates a climate of openness and candor...these things are killed by toxic and narcissistic leaders who think of themselves first. (Twice I followed horribly toxic men into command; I had to frequently say “I didn’t give you enough guidance” and “that was my fault” to get them to open up).
- Humility makes you a good listener and also makes you approachable – two critical needs for any strategic leader who hopes to lead or be open to change and innovation.
- Humility is the trigger that helps you maturely accept criticism – it allows you to “just take the shot.” (Has to be relearned; my butt-chewing in Bosnia at age 41)
- Humility is an internal guardrail to moments of human weakness...and denies to the world any perception you have a sense of entitlement. Don’t you ever let anyone carry your bags or bring you coffee...leaders are under constant observation and everything you do is a part of your professional reputation...if you always do this, when the mud is slung, folks will defend you. Quick question: how do you treat people who can neither hurt you help you? Waiter, janitor, Uber driver? Do you treat them differently than those whom you believe are powerful, influential or can help you?

Empathy

- Last and in my opinion, the most important one for leading groups in 21st Century.
- This is the ability to put yourself in others' shoes and identify with and understand their situation or condition...and have compassion for them as appropriate.
- If applied naturally and universally to those you lead and all with whom you interact, it furthers a climate of openness, approachability, and accelerates the willingness to form a team.
- This one you have to practice and grow; it will change in you over time. (2LT FT Hood motor pool mutiny; dispensing justice as a CPT and a father; writing orders for the light infantry as a MAJ; Bosnia extension; punishing the naïve 2LT as a CG; fighting for the needs of the disadvantaged in Iraq)
- If empathic, you cannot help but be a better mentor – people will flock to you, want to be a part of your organization...because empathy makes you reflexively “lift as you climb.”

All these things are also the components of an individual's your character.

And they take *practice*.

Talking paper: “The Best I’ve Seen”

- The best senior leaders I’ve ever seen...
 - Saw the bigger picture and could fit their effort and their organization’s in the larger purpose...in thought, word and deed.
 - Knew the systems and processes well – were experts at them – BUT, were not slaves to them; they were always open to a modification or change – even suggested change -- to achieve the higher purpose or intent
 - Were comfortable – in fact, almost enjoyed – chaotic and ambiguous environments
 - Knew their environment so well, that they accepted a change in direction positively and effectively
 - Operated at the top levels of the “knowledge pyramid” – knowledge, understanding and wisdom – and actually enabled my decision making by passing credible, confirmed and peer-shared information in the context of current issues (not just dumping data on me)
 - Never, ever indicated a feeling that they were “owed” something; never a hint of a sense of entitlement; in a crisis, always thought of others and in good times, always deflected praise
 - Sought personal advice about their place in the profession but never indicated rank or position were the focus of desire
 - Had a very strong positive reputation among their peers based on never failing to help one in need

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