

Introduction

In Search of the Real McCoy

“Authenticity is your most precious commodity as a leader.”

- Marcus Buckingham

The word “authentic” has become the buzzword of our day. Everyone is looking for the real deal. The Millennials call it “Keeping it 100.” More and more people are looking for authenticity with those they encounter. The desire for genuineness is evident whether building platonic or professional relationships. It doesn’t matter how rich, famous or talented a person may be, superficiality and insincerity are bound to be uncovered. There is a growing dissatisfaction with the online portrayals of sleek and airbrushed photos, misrepresented personalities, and luxurious lifestyles paraded to the masses with zero truth or substance.

What type of leader do you strive to be? The paradox is that there are two types of leaders that you will likely encounter—authentic or inauthentic. All too often leaders attempt to play both sides of the fence. They start off with good intentions in their

leadership role to build a following and earn a good reputation. Then something happens along the way and they start mimicking someone else and engaging in activities that demonstrate a lack of character and integrity.

Authentic leaders are those that are striving to be open, honest, and straightforward. I use the word “striving” because *none* of us have arrived. It takes daily effort and keen self-awareness. Authentic leaders are not willing to compromise their values and beliefs. Their behavior is consistent whether they are in the gym, on the golf course, in the pulpit, or in the boardroom. They know themselves and are comfortable in their own skin. Although usually charismatic, these leaders are more concerned about their character than charisma. Transparency and ethical decision-making are important to them regardless of internal or external pressures.

Inauthentic leaders, on the other hand, are full of pretense. These leaders are comfortable shading the truth and then distracting you from seeing their fingers crossed behind their backs. They spend the majority of their time pretending to be someone they are not, in an effort to satisfy their own self-interest, usually for greed or notoriety. Inauthentic leaders are like chameleons; willing to change their behavior and character to fall in line with the majority or whatever is trending. They tell people what they want to hear and conform to the expectations of others to gain acceptance and favor, all while knowing that they are not going to follow through on their promises. These types of leaders have no problem lying to make others feel good.

Knowing that this paradox exists amongst too many of our leaders, the question becomes what can be done to stop the deception, dishonesty, and personality duplicity that keeps leaders trapped in a dysfunctional cycle? Especially since there have been numerous church and workplace scandals occurring that have heightened our consciousness to the fact that self-interest unchecked by moral reasoning can result in destructive behaviors. These destructive behaviors not only eventually destroy the lives of those who participate, but ultimately impacts the lives of thousands of innocent individuals as the negative outcomes trickle down and crash through families, communities, and ultimately society.

It is imperative that leaders in the church and the workplace start to explore what is needed to create the best blueprint to improve the health of their organizations. As we are pondering this all too familiar dilemma, I would raise the question, could “authenticity” be an antidote to our current leadership crisis in government, corporations, entertainment, the media, and elsewhere?

If leaders in the church and the workplace make a deliberate effort to becoming authentic to “Raise the Bar” in leading others, leaders must first be willing to look in the mirror. They must take a serious inventory of themselves and ask, Am I living out my life as the “Real Me?” What are my purpose and my passion as a leader? What is my underlying motivation to do what I do? I am persuaded that if leaders are not real and honest with themselves, they can never be real and honest with others.

Since none of us have arrived in completing our authentic disposition, leaders need to be on an intentional developmental journey, striving every day to walk the walk and talk the talk. Paul spoke this to Timothy, his young protégée, and provided hard-edge direction to help Timothy understand that sound doctrine will only get him so far if it isn't lived out. *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in words, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*¹ The bottom line is that a leader's beliefs do not make him a better leader—only his behavior counts.

My goal in writing *Raising the Bar* is not to place blame, call out, or criticize leaders. Instead, my intent is just the opposite. I hope to advance the concept and the construct of authenticity as it relates to the leader's behavior that comes from making ethical and unethical decisions. I desire to revisit the paradigm for leadership development to help leaders overcome some of the challenges that lead to a disconnect between followers. *Raising the Bar* provides new tools for a leaders' toolbox that should propel a path forward to move the leader's relationships to another authentic and engaging level.

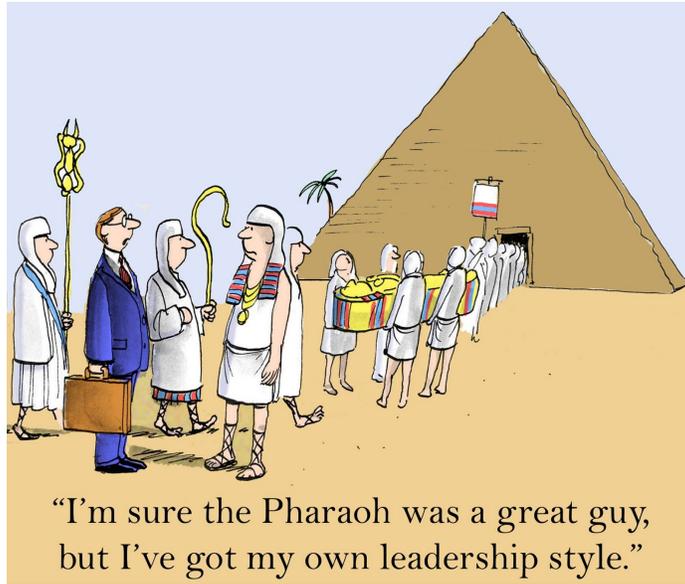
Authentic leaders not only motivate others in their sphere of influence, but they also empower their constituents to become better leaders. My aim is to invite you on a journey with me, asking and answering hard questions that could change the trajectory of inauthentic behavior amongst leaders in the church and the workplace. A key starting point will be framed by asking:

☉ *Why are so many leaders experiencing a relationship divide among their team members as they work toward a common vision and goals for their organization?*

- ⦿ *What is the missing ingredient(s) in these organizations divide and conquer encounters as leaders seek to build authentic relationships?*
- ⦿ *Why have leaders developed love/hate relationships with their colleagues as they seek to be true to themselves and the calling on their lives?*

There are no easy answers to these questions, however, I believe small steps can start the process. With seven being the number of completion, *Raising the Bar* is organized into seven parts to highlight the key area's leaders can focus on to gradually build upon their authentic journey. In the early chapters, we will define leadership, leadership styles, and the characteristics of authentic versus inauthentic leaders. We later dive into core values, building strong relationships, and the importance of emotional intelligence. At the end of each chapter there are “Authentic Check-up” questions intended for individual reflection or to facilitate group discussion.

Finally, I want to discharge the notion that this book is a complete representation of the subject matter. The societal impact of authentic and inauthentic behavior amongst leaders has been ongoing for centuries. I have researched leadership a great deal during my doctoral studies and my endeavor is to expand the conversation and offer new perspectives and resources to help leaders develop and grow personally and professionally. At the end of the day, no matter how you slice it, when you know better, you do better. The time has come for all of us to raise the leadership bar.



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PART I

One Size Does Not Fit All

Chapter 1

LEADERSHIP 101

Defining Leadership

“If you call yourself a leader and no one is following you, then you are just talking a walk.”

- Anonymous

Are you a leader? The terms “leader” and “leadership” will continue to be trending buzzwords in our daily lives whether you look inside the church environment or the corporate workplace. Leaders create the organization’s vision, as well as inspire and motivate individuals to achieve greater outcomes. Companies with strong leadership tend to have greater employee satisfaction and high productivity. John Maxwell, one of the most highly regarded leadership experts of our time, once said, “Any endeavor you undertake that involves people will live or die depending on leadership because everything rises and falls on leadership.”

From a historical perspective, leadership has its roots since the beginning of civilization. It was a topic of conversation during the days of Confucius, Plato,

Machiavelli, Aristotle, and other philosophers. More importantly, leadership is described in the beginning of the Hebrew Bible in Genesis. There are volumes of books, newspapers, magazines and scholarly articles available today on various aspects of leadership. Fortunately, in this 21st Century, leadership has evolved from an authoritarian style to methods and behaviors that involve a more relational aspect in the church and the workplace environment. This new approach has been proven to help teams feel empowered, encouraged, and supported in their personal, professional and spiritual growth.

The word “leader,” means to show the way, to guide.² It has its origins in the English word “leden,” which means to travel or also show the way. Bernard M. Bass an American psychologist defines leadership as “an interaction between two or more members of a group that involves a structuring or restructuring of a situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members.”³

Being a leader is not a walk in the park. Leadership often means making sacrifices beyond what your initial thoughts were before taking the position. Accepting the leadership assignment is a summons to do the heavy lifting by agreeing to take responsibility for the outcome of others. It is true that the buck stops with the leader, without exceptions, and without excuses. Leaders must be willing to make hard-hitting decisions in the face of criticism and are willing to engage in conflict even though they may have to stand alone.

As a leader, you can't take people further than you have gone yourself, especially if you are more concerned about what people think or seeking validation from others. If leaders allow people to control them by being a people pleaser, then they are not leading, instead, they are following and being lead. Many are willing to adorn the title and perks of leadership, but few are willing to pay the price to lead.

Leader versus Manager Debate

I've researched scholars like Warren Bennis who believe that too many of our organizations are "over-managed and under-led."⁴ Bennis and many others in the field view this issue as a contributing factor in the debate as to which role is more important—management versus leadership. Some behavioral scientists say that it is the manager who is more important since the role involves developing strategies, organizing and coordinating efforts. Leaders, are there to inspire and motivate after the team has carried out the manager's instruction. Then the leader should eventually move those followers to the next level of success.

An additional understanding prevalent in today's culture is that leaders create change, while managers create stability. Both managers and leaders are needed in our organizational life, as they operate in their giftings and context. So, the question is not who is more important because both are essential. The question should be, how can leaders and managers work together more efficiently to achieve greater outcomes? The truth of the matter is that not all managers are leaders and not all leaders are managers.

Of course, there are overlapping and gray areas to leadership and quiet as it's kept, some leaders can function effectively in both roles.

Believe it or not, the top search engines reveal thousands of definitions for "leadership" even though it is such a familiar and overly-used term. Think of leadership as a common designator with a myriad of meanings, because leadership can be innately difficult and hard to define. The truth is, leadership is multifaceted so be open to various meanings as opposed to clinging to one definition which may become problematic, as there is no one-size-fits-all definition.

Here are a few leadership definitions to consider:

- Leadership is having a clear sense of mission and purpose.
- Leadership is serving.
- Leadership is helping individuals or groups to achieve goals.
- Leadership is leading with moral integrity.
- Leadership is transformational.
- Leadership is center on principles.
- Leadership is relational.

As you can see, the list and your personal list could go on and on. However, there is one thing for sure; leadership is not a solo act. There must be at least one or more persons involved before it can be accurately called leadership. As the superhero Batman can attest, with all of his incredible gadgets, he still needed Robin to help stop the bad guys. These two were the original Dynamic Duo in the comics. I've heard it said many times, "if no one is following you, then you are just talking a walk." It all boils down to

the first step of being effective in leadership is that you must convince others that you have the capability to lead them on a fruitful journey. Therefore, I will use my working definition of leadership.

A leader is one who has the capacity to influence followers who believe that the stated mission is important and attainable. This person creates persuasive outcomes using his or her skill sets and foresight to influence, inspire and raise the performance of the followers to get positive results.

Leadership Characteristics

“It’s no coincidence that the words influence and influenza come from the same root word. Real leaders are contagious. People “catch” what they have.”

*- **Michael Hyatt***

The ability to influence is a vital skill set that every leader needs to acquire for positive outcomes. Small, if any, sustainable results will be achieved if the leader is not able to influence his follower’s thoughts and actions to bring the leader’s desired outcomes to fruition. Another way to sum up a great leadership characteristic is about being a change agent through influencing. Leadership is the tool that motivates and inspires individuals to see things in themselves that they would not otherwise see.

At the rudimentary stage, leadership capacity and influence is about getting followers to come to a place of agreement and submission to recognize key tasks, targets and goals. The keywords here are “capacity” and “influence” for defining leadership.

Other renowned leaders have described critical leadership characteristics as:

- *“Leadership: The capacity and will to rally people to a common purpose together with the character that inspires confidence and trust.”*

- *Bernard Montgomery*

- *“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”*

- *Warren Bennis*

- *Leadership: “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”⁵*

- *P. G. North*

“Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration, motivation by passion generated by vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose.”

- *Myles Munroe*

When a person serves under a great leader, they never leave the same way they came; they are a better version of themselves. The Apostle Paul in the Bible was a great leader. “He called the disciples together and encouraged them by lifting their spirits... charging them with fresh hope.⁶ Hope becomes a tool throughout the Bible that leaders

use to inspire their followers. From a historical observation, Napoleon Bonaparte presented interesting dynamics to his leadership abilities including, hope.

“A leader is a dealer in hope.”

- Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon: A Dealer of Hope

By Mark Billings⁷

Napoleon is arguably the first modern leader in that he spoke directly to his people. Using the press and the media with great mastery, he initiated a revolution in the techniques of communication, manipulation, and power. Napoleon understood quite well the art and science of psychology and how to get others to do what he wanted them to do. In short, he was a genius at self-promotion, a quite effective propagandist. No great (or infamous) leader since Napoleon has neglected these techniques at human manipulation. As with many of his military tactics and strategies, Napoleon was not necessarily the inventor of these techniques; rather, he was the first one to apply them in a systematic fashion.

From early on in his career, Napoleon set in place a deliberate and sophisticated communications apparatus aimed to boost the morale of the French army and general populace and, as a corollary, his own reputation. Napoleon employed effectively a variety of media, from inspirational speeches to the troops to the famous Bulletins of the Grande Armée posted in cities across France. The underlying theme of Napoleon's communications campaign was a message of hope and optimism for the French people and the army. Napoleon was the one who would preserve the gains of the Revolution. His personal leadership was portrayed as central to the success of the French Republic and Empire.

He was also a commander who knew how to speak to his men. On the eve of the First Italian Campaign, Napoleon launched the following challenge to his troops:

“Soldiers! You are naked and ill-fed. No glory shines upon you. The government owes you a great deal, but it can give you nothing. Your patience and courage do you honor and give you neither worldly goods nor glory. I shall lead you into the most fertile plains on Earth. There, you shall find great cities and rich provinces. There, you shall find honor, glory, riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy! Could courage and constancy possibly fail you?”

Napoleon and his rag-tag army quickly won four successive battles!

Every leader needs to be clear that influencing others has nothing to do with manipulating, bribing or bargaining, at least not in authentic leadership relationships. If a leader does not have the capacity to influence her followers without manipulation, she will ultimately lose her followers when her true intent and purpose are revealed. Genuine character and integrity will rear its head when leaders are faced with adversity, so leaders rise or fall are bound to be in the spotlight.

At the end of the day, the leader needs the cooperation and commitment from her followers to bring the vision and aspirations into reality. No leader is an island, so buy-in from followers is paramount. I also want to make this point clear, just because you may not have the title of leader in your church or organization, you are a leader. Everyone is a leader and responsible for their actions in their own environment. Leadership is about influence and we all have influence over our own lives and some

END OF EXCERPTS