

Better Under Pressure

How great leaders bring out the best in themselves and others.

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There are no longer calm seas for leaders in any industry.

Leaders today must be at home navigating a ship through forty foot waves- oceans that will never be serene.

**Leaders must be highly effective,
particularly in an environment of
extraordinary, ongoing stress.
*They must be better under pressure***

More than half the companies that were industry leaders in 1955 were still leaders in 1990. Yet, more than 2/3 rds of market leaders in 1990 no longer existed by 2004.

Great leaders seek to fulfill their own potential but equally seek to fulfill the potential of those who work for and with them.

The 3 catalysts for realizing potential

- 1. Realistic optimism**
- 2. Subservience to purpose**
- 3. Finding order in chaos**

Realistic Optimism : These people pursue audacious goals, which others would typically view as impossible pipedreams, while at the same time remaining aware of the magnitude of the challenges confronting them.

Subservience to Purpose: People with this trait see their professional goal as so profound in importance that their lives become measured in value by how much they contribute to furthering that. Their dedication to their work is a direct result of the extraordinary, remarkable importance they place on their goal.

Finding Order in Chaos: Their ability to bring clarity to quandaries that baffle others makes their contributions invaluable.

Good CEOs demonstrate all three capabilities. The good news is that these three capabilities can be learned.

Real leadership is what we call recursive. It starts with the leader and is a continuous process that is echoed in the people.

For leaders to bring out the best in their people, they must recognize that no person has a fixed identity.

It is up to the leader to create an atmosphere where every employee can experience the satisfaction of triumphing a worthy goal.

Pride is the greatest human motivator. People want to get to work with a quest towards greatness.

One of the great fallacies is that people want to balance life with equal proportions of work and leisure. On the contrary, the happiest people tend to spend the majority of their time and energy in effortful activities, not leisure. This is because self esteem can be generated by distinguishing yourself through purposeful work.

The virtuous circle of working so hard that you gain distinction, which gives you the pleasure derived from a sense that you matter, which in turn causes you to rededicate yourself to working hard.

You cannot be a great leader without understanding the importance of teaching the deep gratification that can only be attained through discipline.

Capitalism has no finish line

Greatness come from people who have figured out how to build around themselves a system that allows them to be an almost archetypal parental figure at work, the person who helps others pursue their ultimate abilities.

**‘I want my people to feel the hot
breath of the consumer ‘ AG
Lafley, P&G.**

Success gets harder and harder to repeat. By exposing the employees to competition in palpable ways, you reignite that success rather than relax on past performances.

When an orgn has a leader who facilitates employees to distinguish themselves in accomplishing meaningful tasks, then that orgn has an unbeatable edge.

The person who see the future as malleable, who views the future more as a set of choices than restrictions, will invariably be happier and more energized.(very crucial in a matrix orgn)

Effective leadership requires the individual to take in both positive and negative messages, use the data in his/her own way to yield the best positive outcomes.

To effectively realize potential, the leader must react to setbacks with the appropriate level of disappointment that reflects the seriousness of the problem so that people can take the bad with the good.

Because wealth is often seen as a public signal of accomplishment, effortless attainment of wealth can actually push people away from the kind of challenging work that leads to realizing potential.

Like free money, too much talent can also be costly because it people who are very talented could stop learning.

Overconfidence sets you up for failure since it isolates you from reality. In particular you forget the creative role **DOUBT plays in getting your organization to improve.**

Hi sensitivity refers to a heightened radar, a more acute, broader spectrum of awareness of what is actually happening. When you combine this with a secure individual, then the heightened awareness of feedback from the environment becomes a critical asset.

Great leaders are highly sensitive, they are acutely aware of the reactions in the company and constantly seek to address, clarify it.

**Anyone meeting a good leader
gets a sense of their realness and
authenticity.**

Good leaders must reject the paradigm of the aloof biz executive who makes perfect decisions in the corner office.

You wont be accepted as a leader if you are not willing to engage with the orgn. Honest and open self reflection is something good leaders do now.

**A strong leader always
pursues self
improvement and
models an appropriate
level of humility.**

Jim Kilts laid out clear metrics to his team in leading the turnaround of RJR Nabisco and Gillette.

In Gillette, Kilts found that executives looked only at month end sales and hence he got the sales team to report numbers on a daily basis. Good leaders use measures as a way to heighten organization focus.

Great leaders often use unconventional ways to approach a challenge. This way they don't stick to the limitations of the issue.

The important thing when we experience bad press is to ensure that we are communicating. When media doesn't understand us, it isn't necessarily their fault, we might not be addressing their doubts.

In openness and accountability in matrix orgns, Irene Rosenfeld of Kraft say ' we have given everyone the car keys , but not everybody knows to drive' (so true in getting decisions in a matrix)

It is the ultimate responsibility of the leader to get his people to face reality.

The seemingly mundane nature of getting the daily tasks done is not appreciated by senior people and it rarely makes for a compelling headline in a magazine article. The answer to greatness lies in the deliberate focused discipline that manifests in daily basics.

**Effectively leading a corporation
in a turbulent environment
demands that you *minimize the
ways your mind distorts reality.***

There is a strong tendency in people to put off coming to grips with reality. As a leader, you have to do the opposite-aggressively seek out the performance deficiencies that are getting hidden and bring them to the table for a discussion.

**Increased transparency ,
especially of information
improves management's ability to
address performance problems.**

The work relationships of good leaders is shared on a noble purpose that is beyond likeability, friendship, alumni ship etc. Its based on commitment to the institution and enterprise you work for.

Your first obligation is to the company you work for. When it comes to the toughest personnel choices, leadership can be a lonely job.

**Raymond Milchovich of Foster
wheeler..'when it gets tough, I've never
had trouble with moving up a gear,
finding a new gear. I just refused to lose
and we worked seven days a week. When
the leader does that, it gives energy and
oxygen to the rest of the orgn,because I
wasn't asking anyone to do something I
wasn't doing'**

**Leaders cannot be self oriented,
their primary empathy has to be
with their colleagues.**

Consider the person you most admire in your life, consider the person you least admire. Next time you are surrendering to a weak impulse, whether avoiding conflict, or reacting emotionally or being cynical, ask yourself how would these two people react and whom would you like to emulate. What would your role model do?

Finding order in chaos has two primary elements: Clarity of thought and the drive to solve the puzzle.

Great leaders must be able to think more clearly as the world becomes more confusing.

**Good leaders keep their wits
about them in critical situations.
Their ability to be precise and
lucid and articulate priorities
helps the orgn.**

Thinking about a problem under pressure is far more difficult than when the problem is presented in a calmer light.

Crisis forces leaders to boil things down to the essentials of what really needs to get done in order to succeed.

Panic has no cultural boundaries, it looks the same in German, Spanish or Chinese.

The ability to listen and learn from colleagues, customers, and consumers is critical for a leader to succeed.

Being a leader is as much the ability to elicit sharp answers through smart questions as being able to come with them oneself.

What's the right level of detail to talk about something is a choice the leader has to make in every situation.