



Executive Briefing: Part Two

LEADERSHIP: PRESENT MILLENNIUM FINDINGS

Newer leadership models consider the holistic person, rather than simply traits or behaviors. They emphasize maturity, self-knowledge, and the conscious role of the intellect and cognition in the leadership process. They focus on the leader's core identity and values as much as the leader's actions. Good leaders are good people who do good things for good reasons, and move units and organizations to fulfill the institution's mission and goals.

Leadership is not an accidental process; it involves a conscious effort of self-development by leaders. Good leaders extend those self-development activities to those for whom they are responsible.

Destructive Leadership

Just as success is a holistic endeavor, so is failure: individual interactions are where many of these effects play out. Leaders can build those around them up, or tear them down. Destructive internal unit leadership can take many forms: public ridicule, yelling, abusing power, taking credit for others' work, etc. "Bad" conduct of this sort tends to be repeated, and to have enduring effects. It can be intentional and conscious, unconscious, or even accidental, from lapses of attention and focus. It can have verbal, non-verbal, and even physical components. It can vary in severity from a mild hindrance to outright hostility. Destructive leaders can drive out good employees, with costs for the unit.

Costly conduct—for individuals working with the leader, the leader, and the work unit—can affect individuals, sub-groups, and whole departments. It can induce stress, reduce productivity, and harm the personal relationships so essential to effective academic leadership especially, which is so reliant upon persuasion and influence for getting things done.

Research shows that such leaders suffer from common patterns of behavior that harm the work unit. They tend to be ineffectual at negotiation and persuasion, to lack job-relevant skills, to be shortsighted in planning and execution, and to be poor at developing and motivating unit members. They tend to struggle with managing

interpersonal conflict, exhibit favoritism, and display inconsistent erratic behavior. Such negative conduct is insidious in part because leaders are rarely all "bad." In some areas, their actions will be adequate or even positive for the unit, while damaging or in need of improvement in others.

“THE TAKEAWAY FROM DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP THEORY IS THAT LEADERS ARE NOT ABOVE REPROACH AND WE ALL HAVE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. REFLECT SERIOUSLY ON THE BEHAVIORS THAT COULD DETRACT FROM THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR LEADERSHIP AND TAKE STEPS TO ELIMINATE THEM.”

Authentic Leadership

Becoming an effective and respected leader is a lifelong process of conscious development and continual preparation. Good leaders develop a strong moral instinct, confidence in their abilities, and resilience in the face of adversity. Good leaders project confidence in their group's ability to succeed and are optimistic about the





present and future. Critical life events, both positive and negative, shape us and through conscious effort, these events can develop four key aspects of authentic leadership: self-awareness, an internal moral compass, perspective taking, and authenticity in relationships. Essentially, authentic leadership is about consistency, honesty, fairness, and a commitment to pursuing continual improvement while looking for the good in others.

The takeaway from authentic leadership is that “good” people make good leaders, and being “good” is a conscious, lifelong process of self-understanding and growth.

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Ethical Leadership

People look to the leaders in their environments and are guided by them in understanding the expected behavior. Ethical philosophers suggest that of all the decisions we make in life, the most fundamental is, “do I live for we or me?”

Leaders model these choices on behalf of their units. Leaders who use their power and influence for personal benefit often do so at the expense of their colleagues, those who report to them, their organizations, and society. Unit members are likely to learn from and model this behavior, yielding an egocentric work culture. Leaders who act unethically to promote the unit are likely to set the tone for others to do the same. This yields a culture not conducive to academic integrity. Over time, people with strong ethical core values tend to leave work situations modeling ethical standards they find unacceptable.

The fundamental social dilemma is an individual decision balancing acceptance of authority with the value of belonging to a group. Unethical leaders make group membership a liability, not an asset. The takeaway from this theory is that most people seek and appreciate an ethical leader. However, people in an environment are likely to model a leader’s (un)ethical behavior or leave if they are uncomfortable doing so. This means the ethics of a work unit tend to model the ethics of the unit leader.

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Team Leadership

There are some themes that overlap among different leadership approaches. For example, task and relational leader behaviors recur across approaches. One framework for drawing some common themes together is the *Hill Model of Team Leadership*.

This framework emphasizes that good leaders must use a wide range of behaviors directed at multiple levels and constituencies within the organization. Like other leadership models, this model reminds leaders to monitor and act taking into account tasks and relationships alike.

Beyond the interpersonal dynamics emphasized by other models, team leadership emphasizes that leaders must monitor and act to influence external events. Leaders should filter external information for unit members, sharing what is relevant and shielding them from extra-group politics and “noise” that can distract them from their core work. Leaders are most effective in this model when they network with external constituencies (in and outside the organization), advocating and negotiating support for the unit (e.g., larger research budgets, protect retiring





lines, etc.). Leaders of academic units are liaisons between their unit members and the larger university community, and these activities affect unit performance.

► *Research suggests that the best teams share eight characteristics:*

1. *clear and elevating goals;*
2. *result-driven structures;*
3. *competent team members;*
4. *unified commitment;*
5. *collaborative climate;*
6. *standards of excellence;*
7. *external support and recognition;*
8. *principled leadership.*

While some of these characteristics are intrinsic to the research community, others require nurturing. Collaborative climates and external support often need the support of strong unit leadership.

The takeaway from the team leadership model is that leaders must monitor and act to shape internal work unit dynamics for both tasks and interpersonal relationships, and also external realities that affect the unit and its productivity.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership emphasizes modeling actions and attitudes that develop those around the leader. Servant leadership, though social learning and modeling, creates a climate of service. Servant leaders put the needs of the unit and its members before their own, which develops a climate of trust. These leaders empower those around them, challenging them, helping them to grow and succeed, and to develop professionally and personally.

Trust is a key component for the application of servant behaviors. Servant leaders have strong conceptual skills and awareness. Servant leaders are ethical people. Through modeling, this develops into a strong ethical and trusting climate. They are not all about task and

business; they are also aware of the emotional states of those with whom they work, and seek ways to bolster them, especially during difficult times. Servant leaders focus on the good of those around them, not simply on the good of the unit or organization. They are aware of how their unit can benefit the entire institution.

Finally, servant leaders are aware of and concerned for the good of society and stakeholders beyond the organization. Servant leaders, over time, tend to stimulate others around them to adopt characteristics of servant leadership, and the healthy work climate reinforces itself. Being a servant leader, especially when new to a toxic work environment, can be emotionally taxing on the leader, particularly in the trust-formation phase. With patience, the behaviors often catch on and soon it becomes “what we do here.”

“THE TAKEAWAY FROM SERVANT LEADERSHIP THEORY IS THAT CARING FOR YOUR FOLLOWERS AND PUTTING THEIR NEEDS AND WELL-BEING AHEAD OF YOUR OWN IS GOOD FOR THE UNIT.”

Adaptive Leadership

Change and the unknown are ubiquitous in the life of an academic, and good academic leaders help their unit members confront them effectively. Academic unit leaders have a unique kind of relationship with their unit members, compared with leaders in other sectors. Members are not subordinates or employees in the traditional sense. They are not necessarily submissive to the leader. Rather, the leader’s role is to create an environment where the followers can challenge themselves to face changes and obstacles in creative ways that enhance their creativity and productivity.





Adaptive leaders are good at patient perspective taking, seeing issues from several viewpoints and appreciating the potential complexities of the work and interpersonal dynamics. Adaptive leaders can distinguish between two kinds of issues at work. Technical challenges are easier to handle, have defined problems, and often solutions already exist. Such challenges are often logistical in nature (e.g., not enough space or a lack of equipment; too few faculty for the number of students). Adaptive challenges, however, are often ill-defined. Solutions are uncertain, and often involve needs for strong emotional import. It is human nature to avoid what is uncomfortable, and facing adaptive challenges can often be distressing.

Stated personal, professional, or organizational values not backed by actual behaviors present adaptive challenges (e.g, a unit that says it values teaching, yet has a social culture and reward system that only rewards research.) Competing priority commitments or mandates can also be sources of adaptive challenge, as can be surfacing taboo subjects that are otherwise avoided. Adaptive leaders help those around them face these challenges. They do not allow hiding from the difficult issues that are impeding the work of the unit. Adaptive work requires buy-in and participation by unit members; it cannot be done solely by the leader.

Adaptive leaders help their unit members focus on overcoming difficult issues. Yet, adaptive leaders are not control-mongers. They value their unit members' work and do not foster dependency. They bring to light the opinions of the marginalized, which can be particularly valuable in academic units.

Creativity research shows that new and fresh ideas often come from junior or marginalized team members, not always the mainstream veterans. An adaptive leadership style can be particularly important in developing and maintaining an inclusive climate that welcomes diversity.

Adaptive academic leaders provide guidance to new and junior members, orienting them to the unit so that they acclimate quickly and with minimal stress. Adaptive leaders provide mentoring assistance and share experiences to help others accomplish adaptive work. Fast-paced change can be overwhelming, and an adaptive leader can help minimize that effect by metering the pace of change. Adaptive leaders uphold clear norms of behavior that enhance productivity.

The takeaway from adaptive leadership theory: Many research-related challenges are adaptive in nature. Adaptive work is difficult by nature. Adaptive work exists in individual research programs and at the department level.

► *Adaptive leaders help those around them face these challenges. Solve as many department level technical issues as you can for your unit members so that you can help them focus on the adaptive work that only they can do.*

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is about building trust and fostering collaboration—a critical goal for academic leaders. Transformational leadership couples motivation with goals that include a vision of greatness. This pair provides common ground around which members of the unit can rally. The resulting common identity raises awareness, sets expectations, and reduces acts of selfishness that can damage work unit cohesion.

Being a good role model is essential for transformational leadership. Members of your unit must take you seriously and believe in you in order to believe in the vision and mission you are projecting.





Transformational leaders emphasize intellectual stimulation and the challenging of existing beliefs. This is very suited to the academic mission of knowledge creation. It is also critical for struggling or toxic units. Followers must learn to believe things can and will be different. The leader is a critical component of this process. Finally, transformational leaders express concern for each member of their unit together and individually. They create supportive climates in which unit members can thrive.

The takeaway from transformational leadership theory is that the leader, through setting a vision, modeling, and challenging and supporting followers, can effect radical change in the climate of a work unit. Transformational leadership is relevant whether you lead a well-functioning or dysfunctional unit.

Psychodynamic Approach

► *Healthy relationships require attention to maintain. Leaders have an enormous responsibility to model and maintain healthy relationships in their units because of their positions and their amplifying power.*

People have different preferences and tendencies for how they work, relate, and relax. The problem is that often we are not consciously aware of these processes. The psychodynamic approach to leadership has roots in Freudian and Jungian psychology and encourages self-awareness and awareness of followers' holistic selves because relationships are essential to leading. Healthy relationships require attention to maintain. Leaders, because of their positions and their amplifying power, have an enormous responsibility to model and maintain healthy relationships in their units.

Transactional analysis suggests that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors have three

archetypal modes, called ego states: parent, child, and adult.

Social learning theory suggests that we learn from what we see, especially from those in positions of power or authority. Our first social teachers are our parents and guardians, when we are in the child ego state. We learn what the parent ego state is then, and experience the interaction with power. Later, as we mature and encounter others, we learn the adult mode. The problem is that not everyone matures to the same degree; not everyone can manifest a healthy adult ego state. Psychological trauma is often the cause of these maturity difficulties, though it may not be the only cause. This translates to difficulty relating to a supervisor (and coworkers) in an adult, healthy way. Then, interactions can devolve into a pattern not unlike a punishing parent and an angry child. Destructive patterns experienced in the past can continue to play out in relationships moving forward. Destructive leaders can be stuck in a child or parent ego state, replaying learned interactions that have become instinctual and habitual.

The challenge for leaders is to be self-aware and meet people where they are without falling into unhealthy patterns. The child state is likely to emerge when individuals are angry, frustrated, or fearful, or when their needs are not met. Watch for these in yourself and your unit members. Prepare for difficult conversations and address complex situations with a conscious, balanced approach. This way you are not caught unprepared and will not accidentally slip into an unhealthy ego state, which can then reinforce unhealthy social interactions within your unit. At the extreme, this can devolve into a work unit where people interact as irate and egotistical children.

Beyond ego states, people tend to have stable personality traits that are a default setting for patterns of thoughts and behaviors; they need not rule us. Each of us can learn to adapt our





natural expressions to situations. Called social monitoring, this is an important skill for leaders to develop. For example, through conscious effort and training, an introvert can become more outgoing in certain settings when needed. An extrovert can learn to hold back, allow time for, and encourage introverts.

As a leader, it will benefit you to be aware of your own personality types and those of your colleagues and those who report to you. In business, many teams find value in using personality assessments, whether a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or another, to learn more about each other's styles and tendencies and to find more effective ways to work together.

“ THE TAKEAWAY FOR THE PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY IS THAT SELF-KNOWLEDGE & CONSCIOUS PROCESSING OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IS ESSENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY UNIT. WITHOUT THIS, YOU (AND YOUR UNIT) ARE VICTIMS AND PRISONERS OF YOUR PASTS.

Theory Lays the Foundation for Your Leadership Style

Leadership scholars have moved beyond the task vs. relationship models that dominated most leadership research in the 1900s. While these two meta-categories of behavior are important for conceptual understanding of good leadership, they are too broad to be the 'last word' on leadership. Further, ethics were essentially absent from prior studies of leadership. We now appreciate the importance of leaders who consciously attend to growing self-knowledge, improvement, and are concerned for these in their unit members as well.

Good leaders are good people who do good things for good reasons. Good leaders develop other good people who become good leaders. These actions move units and organizations in directions that benefit everyone.

