

Leadership

Office Lighthouse Discussion Materials

Leadership

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“It is the year 2003, as we look back on leadership and its results from the past decade, we see:

- The meteoric rise and catastrophic fall of Enron
- Sexual abuse and subsequent cover-ups of that abuse by Catholic priests
- The swell in church attendance immediately after the September 11, attack on America and the return to pre-attack levels within six weeks.
- The deadly shootings of teenagers by teenagers at Columbine and other schools. The secret pardoning of dozens of political friends by a former president during his last week in office.

All of these outcomes were the result of decisions – bad decisions – by trusted leaders: business executives, clergy, parents, and a political official, respectively. The choices that leaders make have consequences. Bad choices have bad consequences.” (A Fish Out of Water, by George Barna)

Discussion Questions:

Most parents teach their children that “actions have consequences”. What is your experience with this concept and how it’s taught in our culture? Is it an absolute truth or a relative truth?

- 1) “If actions have consequences, how much more do the actions of leaders, (whose defined purpose is to initiate and guide the actions of groups of people) have consequences”? (George Barna) What is your reaction to this statement?
- 2) “The greatness of an organization will be directly proportional to the greatness of its leader.” (Henry Blackaby) What is wrong with this idea? Is there a better way?
- 3) “My notions about leadership are based on the notion that God has divinely appointed some individuals to help shape people’s lives by understanding what God wants of us and help lead them there”. (George Barna) What is the real issue here?
- 4) “The successful leader must know when to fight and when to retreat, when to be rigid and when to compromise, when to speak and when to be silent. He must take the long view – and he must have a clear strategy as well as a goal and a vision. He must take the complete view – he must see the relation of one decision to another.” (Richard Nixon) What’s wrong with this idea? Where did Nixon go wrong?
- 5) “America is approaching an era of moral and spiritual anarchy, defined as a time when people would essentially be impervious to external influences (laws, roles, peer pressure, family values, church teaching) but in which people would do what they want, when they want, for whatever reason they want, regardless of the prevailing mores.” (Fish Out of Water) If this is true, what are we going to do now?

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Chapter 2 – Strategies

An unknown person made the following well known statement: “Lead, follow, or get out of the way.” This strategy might work well in the war for a general like Tommy Franks in Iraq or in athletics for a coach like Bobby Knight.

But Richard Furman, MD, suggests that “these strategies may not work in today’s business and family culture. He states that a successful leader must take self out of the picture in order to be objective in his decisions. To become an effective leader one must master the following leadership roles:”

- 1) Consideration Leadership – I stay tuned to people I lead. I observe and listen with love, and then I make a decision based on what I know about them.
- 2) Involvement Leadership – I get those I lead involved in the decision-making process. I ask their opinion, we discuss it, and then I make a decision.
- 3) Full Responsibility Leadership – There comes a time in my life as a leader when I must take full responsibility for the outcome. I must make a decision [one that those I lead oppose] and stand-alone. These are decisions I must make on matters that are non-negotiable.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) “Consideration Leadership” suggests decisions be based on the needs of those I lead. What are some areas where this can and can not be used?
- 2) “Involvement Leadership” suggests a democratic type of leadership. What’s wrong and what is right with this idea?
- 3) Furman suggests that you can’t effectively accomplish “Full Responsibility Leadership” until you effectively accomplish the first two types with those you lead. What are some non-negotiable matters? What is your experience with taking a stand as a leader?
- 4) Leadership is said to be authoritative freedom or authoritative responsibility. What is the real issue here? How do these ideas about leadership differ?
- 5) Jesus said, “a leader is a servant. The first shall be last.” Is this an attitude you have observed in leaders? Were they effective? Why or why not?
- 6) Today’s culture seems to be saying that we can lead by popular opinion [public opinion polls]. What’s wrong with this idea? Why?

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Chapter 3 - Defined

Martin has been the CEO of a business for nearly five years. His predecessor had been a disaster for the organization. Martin has put some important operational systems in place, solved a few vexing personnel problems, clarified the job responsibilities, built positive relationships with board members and established benchmarks to measure performance. He is well liked and his co-workers give him superior status.

Martin is troubled by a nagging belief that something important is missing. Company profits are stagnant and few employees seem to care much about the company's standing. After a few intense discussions the problem (leadership mistakes) became clear. The handful of genuine company leaders really don't understand what leaders do. They are serving as managers and administrators rather than leaders. (Fish Out of Water by George Barna)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Can you relate to Martin? How so?
- 2) Is influence leadership or is it a product of great leadership? Why?
- 3) Is getting important things done efficiently leadership or is it management? Why?
- 4) Leadership all about controlling the decision-making apparatus through the consolidation of power and position or is leadership about the distribution of power? Why?
- 5) Do leaders gain opportunity to lead by becoming the most popular person among peers, or is leadership not a popularity contest? Why?
- 6) "Leadership is the process of motivating, mobilizing, providing resources, and directing people to passionately and strategically pursue a vision from God that a group jointly embraces." (George Barna) Is leadership bringing vision to life? Why?

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Chapter 4 - Character

Leaders always have the time to get what is necessary done, losers are always too busy. Leaders make commitments, losers make promises.

“To lead you must possess the type of character that moves people to trust you to take them places - spiritual, emotional, relational, and intellectual – that they otherwise might not go to; such character demands intense and lifelong commitment. Such character is magnetic; leaders who lack it become actors whose performances only generate an illusion of trustworthiness. Are you fooling people into following you, or does your character compel people to take you seriously?” (Fish Out of Water, George Barna)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Our values and morals stem from our character. Leadership is about developing good character. What is most important - values or morals?
- 2) “We need men who are willing to eat what they earned and wear what they have paid for.” (Frank Carlson) What is right or wrong here?
- 3) Will the leader please stand up? Not the person who promotes himself, but the promoter of others, not the administrator, but the initiator, not the taker, but the giver. (C. William Pollard) What is the real issue here?
- 4) Selection is important in leadership. A leader can spot and recruit achievers. We need good men, not nice guys. Nice guys tend to be hangers on and good men tend to ignore hanger on types. (Unknown) In your experience, is this a valid idea? Why or why not?
- 5) Philip C. Brewer offers some parodies of a man. Strong enough to be weak; successful enough to fail; busy enough to take time; wise enough to say “I don’t know”; “Right enough to say I’m wrong”; free enough to endure captivity----. Do you know men like this: Where/how do they develop this kind of character?
- 6) If you examine your own life, what values seem to be driving your character? Where do they come from?

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Chapter 5 - Competencies

In leadership character is not enough; “You must also exhibit mastery of competencies that enable you to move people toward meaningful outcomes. These skills and techniques make the art of leadership tangible and real.”

The dominate competencies are well known: vision casting, effective communication, motivating participation, mobilizing people into efficient work units, thinking and planning strategically, accumulating the resources required, creating a healthy internal culture, evaluating results and fine-tuning the process, handling conflict, reproducing and training leaders, and delegating tasks to skilled colleagues.

It is a daunting list, but, unlike a calling, these practices can be learned, honed, and perfected. You do not need to be an expert in each of these areas—no leader is—but you must understand your strengths and weaknesses and how to work through and around them.” (Fish Out of Water, George Barna)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Everyone is a leader at some level. Micro-level (most people), Mezzo-level (influencing a modest number of people), Macro-level (leader among leaders). (Barna) In your life, what are examples of these levels of leadership? How are you doing?
- 2) Leaders have dominant aptitudes in leadership. For example; “Directing leaders” develops, energizes and are charismatic. What are the strengths and weakness of these leaders? Where is he most effective?
- 3) “Strategic Leaders” gather information and evaluate options. What are their strengths, weaknesses and were can they lead best?
- 4) “Team Building Leaders”, mobilize people, are popular and spontaneous. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the team approach?
- 5) “Operational Leaders”, these structural architects are management in nature, low profile and can manage the operations. What are their strengths, weaknesses and where do they best lead?
- 6) Do you know what leadership competencies you possess that enable you to make the right things happen? If you don’t how can you find out what they are?

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Chapter 6 - Developing Leaders

It has been said that a woman can raise a boy, but it takes a man to raise a man. Along the same line it might be said, it takes a leader to raise a leader. Leadership is best caught from someone who knows how to lead.

Today we have experienced a crisis in leadership values. Greedy corporate executives, politicians with huge war chests they retire with, religious leaders that lack basic morals, 50% of marriages end in divorce, leaving children without full time male leaders.

With these role models as examples for future leaders, the culture may be in trouble.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) “Leadership knowledge is gained by associated as the principles of leadership are heard and observed.” (Robert Coleman) Is there a better way? What is most important?
- 2) Developing leaders requires constant personal attention; training classes will not get the job done? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 3) If left alone an immature leader will encounter innumerable practical problems that require solution, anyone of which could mean disaster. What are ways we might overcome this or can we?
- 4) Military academies are known for providing leaders. Why do you think this is true or is it?
- 5) Where can you find a sub-culture that will help you develop your leadership skills?
- 6) If we need a coach or a mentor to develop our leadership skills, where are we to find men who, know how, have moral values and will give us the time?