

Leadership Solutions Newsletter

Congratulations! Because of our past relationship you are receiving our monthly newsletter...*at no cost to you!* If this is your first issue, then welcome! We appreciate the opportunity to share best practices in leadership, management, personal and professional growth, recruiting, retention, and other areas critical to your success.



In this issue, we offer one article:

- Extreme Leadership Makeover...An Allegory of Leadership Development

If you have ideas for future issues, share them with us! Again, thanks for your readership.

Enjoy your newsletter!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark". The signature is fluid and cursive.

EXTREME LEADERSHIP MAKEOVER...An Allegory of Leadership Development

This is the story of Harry Hammer, a story of leadership transformation. Harry is a mid-level manager in an organization of 250 people. Harry was an outstanding worker who promoted to a supervisory position in two years. He did well, but felt out of his comfort zone. Two years later he promoted to a management position. Harry had reservations about the promotion and now, six months later, he feels he should not have accepted the promotion. Things aren't going well. His direct reports have complained to his boss, Sharon McMillan, about his insensitivity, demanding "my way or the highway" attitude, and air of superiority.

Sharon asked to meet with Harry. During the meeting, Harry admitted to Sharon he was struggling. Sharon asked Harry to share his perspective about leadership. Here is what he said:

I see my role as the boss. It's my responsibility to make decisions. My people should trust me to make the right decision. They get paid for what they do and their role is to follow my direction. I don't understand why they balk at this.

Sharon nodded her head and commented, "Harry, your approach is a transactional style of leadership, which is traditional. Would you like to consider an approach that is more effective? If so, I would like to suggest a mentor who can help you."

Harry commented with relief, "Yes, I would like help. I want to be a good leader, but this is all I know."

Sharon smiled, "I was hoping you would say that. I want you to call Ted Smith. Ted has a reputation as an outstanding manager and has been recognized by the company numerous times over the past 10 years for his ability to work with people and obtain excellent results."

The following week Harry was able to meet with Ted. Ted was warm and friendly. The office had a warm feeling with lots of pictures on the walls that depicted Ted with groups of people. The caption under one of the pictures said, "To Ted...Thanks for Being a Great Boss!" Harry noticed that Ted sat in the chair next to him, rather than behind the big desk. Ted started off, "Harry it is a privilege to meet you. I remember reading a report you wrote about five years ago. It thought you did an excellent job." Harry was surprised and felt awkward. He managed to say, "Thank you." Ted continued, "Sharon gave me a call to let me know she was referring you to me. How can I help?"

Harry took a deep breath and ventured, "I told Sharon I was having some trouble in my position. It seems my employees do not like my leadership style. When I described it to Sharon, she referred to it as transactional. I'm not sure what that means, but I know I am not getting the results I want. I want to be a better leader, but I don't know what to do at this point. Can you help?"

Ted nodded, "I'm impressed with your honesty. I would like to be a mentor for you. What do you know about mentoring?"

Harry, feeling more confident, responded, “Mentors are people who help others learn.¹ The mentor builds a relationship with the mentee and the two of them meet over time. The goal is to help the mentee solve problems and improve performance.²

“Wow,” exclaimed Ted, “that’s better than I expected. I see mentoring as a partnership where we both have expectations about the relationship.³ This will take some time, are you willing to meet with me on a regular basis?” “You bet,” responded Harry feeling hopeful.

Ted continued, “Whether or not your leadership style improves is really up to you. I can only provide you with information, be a sounding board and challenge you to try new things. Are you willing to ask people you work with to provide you feedback to establish a benchmark, so we can see if their perception improves over time? It’s called a leadership assessment or 360° assessment.” “Yes, that sounds like a good idea,” said Henry.

“Great,” responded Ted. “You give me the names of subordinates, some peers and we will include Sharon too. I will coach you as to how to prepare your staff to provide meaningful feedback on the assessment, so you have some information to start this journey. Let’s meet again next week to talk about leadership.” “Ok, I would like that,” said Harry.

At the next meeting, Ted asked Harry to describe his leadership style. Harry responded in much the same way as with Sharon. Ted responded, “I want to help you build a leadership foundation upon which to reconsider how you lead. Here’s a Leadership Information Sheet (Attachment One – Leadership Information Sheet) I made up. Let’s review it together.”

When Ted and Harry met the next week, Ted asked, “So what did you think about the leadership information I provided you?” “Wow, what an eye-opener!” replied Harry. “I had no idea that it was so important to engage people in dialogue, empower them to make decisions or love them by caring about who they are.”

Ted smiled, “You aren’t alone. I recently read a book entitled, *Seven Hidden Reasons Employees Leave*. The author builds a compelling case that many of the reasons employees leave are a direct result of the action or inaction of their immediate supervisor or manager. Some of the reasons the author identifies are: too little coaching and feedback, too few growth and advancement opportunities, and feeling devalued or unrecognized.⁴”

¹ Chip R. Bell, *Managers as Mentors*, (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002), 3.

² Ibid. XXII.

³ Ibid. 8.

⁴ Leigh Branham, *Seven Hidden Reasons Employees Leave*, (New York: American Management Association, 2005), 29.

“Yea,” commented Harry, and he sheepishly added, “That could explain why some of my best workers have left. I thought they were just mal-contented, but I’m beginning to think I was the problem.”

“You could be right, Harry. But, the important thing is that you recognized that you needed to improve your leadership style and have been willing to invest time and energy to change,” responded Ted. “Awareness is the first step to change. Based on the information you read, what are some steps you could take immediately that would help you get better results?”

“Hmm,” murmured Harry, “I could start by having staff meetings and sharing more information with my staff.” “That’s a good idea,” Ted said enthusiastically and he added, “Can you think of anything else?”

“I could also invite them to suggest ideas on a new project we will be starting next week,” replied Harry. “Ya know that could take some of the stress off me if they could provide some good ideas.”

“Harry, its possible your staff may be somewhat resistance to sharing ideas, because this will be a different experience for them,” warned Ted.

“I know,” Harry said wincingly. “I did share with my supervisors that I was getting some mentoring on how I could be more effective as a leader,” he added with more confidence.

“That was a bold step. How did they respond?” asked Ted.

Harry smiled, “They looked amused to say the least. However, one of them, Bob, came up later and confided that another supervisor who had been talking of leaving was thinking of waiting to see what happened.”

“That’s a good sign,” agreed Ted, but continued, “As you make changes, I encourage you to be consistent, but make adjustments as necessary based on the feedback you get. Over time, people will trust you more.” “I know...and I want that,” acknowledged Harry.

“One more thing,” added Harry, “I approved a training course for one of my people just earlier today. It was discretionary training, but I thought it would benefit both the individual and our work area. She seemed surprised, but was obviously pleased!”

“Investing in people is important,” reinforced Ted. “If you don’t see a connection with the job, ask the person how the training could benefit them and your team. They may have a logical reason that makes good sense.”

Six months passed and Harry was faithful in meeting with Ted. As Harry got positive reinforcement from his team, he continued to try new things at the encouragement of Ted. The results from second leadership assessment had just arrived.

“So Harry, what do you think about the written comments at the end of the assessment?” asked Ted. Harry paused for a minute before responding...taking in a deep breath he responded, “I am overjoyed to say the least! I had no idea people were watching me so close.”

“Would you be willing to share a few comments with me?” asked Ted.

Harry took a deep breath, “Well, my favorite is this one: ‘Harry isn’t the same manager. In the time since the first leadership assessment, he has become much more employee-oriented, he listens willingly, he is empathic to concerns voiced by staff, he asks for input regularly and has taken action on ideas that have merit. You could say that Harry has had an extreme makeover! Thanks Harry!’” Harry stared at the report, afraid that if he looked away the words on the page might slip away.

“Well,” replied Ted, “What outstanding feedback, Harry. Thank you for sharing that with me. How do you feel about it your progress?”

With a sparkle in his eye, Harry replied, “It feels great, Ted. I really appreciate the help! I don’t know how I can thank you for your support and encouragement over the past six months.”

Their conversation was interrupted by a knock on the door. As the door opened, Jim Tallman, the company president stepped in. Ted acknowledged Jim, “Jim, thanks for coming down for a few minutes. I think you know Harry Hammer.” Jim vigorously shook Harry’s hand and commented, “It’s good to see you, Harry. Ted tells me you’re doing an outstanding job. I just wanted to stop by and say ‘Thank you’ for taking steps to be more effective as a leader.”

Harry, almost speechless, managed to say, “Thank you, sir.” Jim apologized for the interruption and dismissed himself to continue on to another meeting.

After the meeting was over, and Harry was headed home, he thought to himself, “I’m so glad I was honest...I like being a more effective leader.”

Leadership is learned behavior. Each of us has room to grow as leaders. Have you started the journey? Have you gotten side tracked...it's not too late to move forward! Switzer Associates...Leadership Solutions can help you improve your effectiveness as a leader through excellent training, quality leadership assessments and/or providing a list of recommended leadership readings.

About the Author

Dr. Merlin Switzer works exclusively in the field of leadership. He holds a Doctor of Strategic Leadership with an emphasis in Leadership Coaching. He has worked with numerous organizations across the U.S. and has spoken at nearly thirty state, national, or international conferences. More recently, he has worked with leaders in Ecuador and Cambodia.

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Attachment One

Leadership Information Sheet

Information	Source
<p>Transformational Leadership is a leadership approach that “raises the awareness of their constituencies about what are important, increase concerns for achievement, self-actualization and ideas (Bass, 21).”</p> <p>Four factors associated with this theory are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idealized influence – Sets high standards for emulation and may include a spiritual dimension. The underlying values are morally uplifting. They feel a responsibility to the team, group or organization and are committed to ethical conduct. • Inspirational motivation – Tend to focus on the best in people...harmony, charity and doing good works. • Intellectual stimulation – Uses an open architecture toward involving others in evaluating situations, developing vision and strategies for implementation. Has a willingness to challenge cultures and/or practices that ignore ethical considerations. They have the ability to persuade others on the issues based on merit. • Individual consideration – Values coaching, mentoring and grow opportunities for followers. They are concerned about developing followers into leaders (Bass, 181). 	<p>Bernard M. Bass, The Future of Leadership in Learning Organizations, <u>The Journal of Leadership Studies</u>, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2000, 21.</p> <p>Bernard Bass and P. Steidlmeier, Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior, <u>Leadership Quarterly</u>, Vol. 10, No. 2, 181 (Retrieved May 11, 2007, from the Business Source database.)</p>
<p>Servant leadership can be defined as: A practical philosophy which supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead as a way of expanding service to individuals and institutions... Servant-leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.</p>	<p>Larry Spears, Indiana State University Website, Alliance for Servant Leadership, <u>What is Servant Leadership</u>, http://www.indstate.edu/asl/8.html, (Last viewed, July 16, 2007).</p>
<p>Leaders have a special “love” for their people that manifests itself by caring about the human and spiritual aspects of their employees/followers. The word for love referenced here is agapao, which is a moral love. Such love puts the focus more on the employees, than the organization. The intelligence and insights of employees are valued. Leaders trust employees and treat them respectfully.</p>	<p>Bruce Winston, Be A Leader for God’s Sake, (Virginia Beach: School of Leadership Studies, Regent University, 2002), 8-17.</p>
<p>A survey of more than 20,000 people on various continents found that regardless of culture, people wanted these characteristics in leaders: honest,</p>	<p>Barry Z. Posner, <u>Meeting the Challenges of Leadership: The Five Key Practices of Exemplary Leaders</u>, Handout for Training</p>

<p>competent, inspiring and forward-looking.</p>	<p>Session - Sacramento County Managers, (17 January 2002, Sacramento California), 3.</p>
<p>After reviewing case studies on more than 400 successful leaders, the following five leadership practices were consistently found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge the process – Leaders look for ways to do things differently challenging the status quo to find new and better ways of doing things. • Inspire a shared vision – Leaders must understand the needs of those they lead and be able to speak the same language in order to engage people in meaningful dialogue, inspiring them to enlist in crafting and pursuing a vision with passion. • Enable others to act – Leaders seek a team spirit and strive to engage those who must make a project or effort work. People who have more information, training, input and authority are more likely to use their energies to produce outstanding results. • Model the way – Leaders lead by example, modeling behaviors consistent with the vision. Qualities include being tenacious, competent and paying attention to detail. • Encourage the heart – Change is hard. Leaders encourage others along the way, helping them know they can win and reinforcing behaviors aligned with values. 	<p>James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, <i>The Leadership Challenge</i>, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), 8-14.</p>
<p>A review of numerous studies, related literature and observation found the following seven dimensions characterize common to producing profits through people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment security • Selective hiring of new personnel • Self-managed teams and decentralization of decision making as the basic principles of organizational design • Comparatively high compensation contingent on organizational performance • Extensive training • Reduced status distinctions and barriers, including dress, language, office arrangements and wage differences across levels 	<p>Jeffrey Pfeffer, <i>The Human Equation</i>, (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1998),64-65.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive sharing of financial and performance information organization wide 	
<p>Level Five Leaders “build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of humility and professional will.” They are individuals who are modest and humble, yet willful and fearless. These individuals preferred to stay out of the limelight, were not boastful, put their energy into the company, groomed future successors, modeled behavior consistent with the vision and gave credit for success to others.</p>	<p>Jim Collins, <u>Good To Great</u>, (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 20, 22, 36.</p>
<p>Effective leaders communicate the vision with a compelling message in a way others can understand it.</p>	<p>Bruce Winston and Kathleen Patterson, <u>International Journal of Leadership Studies</u>, An integrative Definition of Leadership, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2006, 15-16.</p>
<p>Leaders talk about the vision one-on-one, small groups and make it public. They repeat the message so as to avoid “vision leakage.”</p>	<p>Bill Hybels, <u>Courageous Leadership</u>, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 40-41, 44.</p>