

Leadership: Courageous Determination in Initiating Fellowship

Dr. Gregory R. Howes, MBA, DM, PMP
The BlameBuster™

Abstract

The attributes of management and leadership are examined and contrasted and a definition of leadership is posited. To accomplish this, an example of leadership is provided, and this example is used to develop attributes of leadership. These attributes are compared to scholars' definitions of leadership and management, and the essence of leadership is revealed. Leadership is then defined as *the courageous determination by an individual in initiating and constructing fellowship toward a common goal.*

Table of Contents

Abstract1

Introduction4

Discussion.....5

Leadership: An Example5

Leadership Definitions6

Definitions Analyzed7

Leadership Examined.....8

Conclusion10

References11

Leadership: Courageous Determination in Initiating Fellowship

What is leadership? To answer this question, a real-life account that demonstrates the essence of leadership is presented. Although most will find this story very disturbing, it undeniably portrays the essence of leadership. Several different twentieth century definitions of leadership are then presented and analyzed. These analyses are used to explore and present the similarity between leadership and management as defined in most modern definitions. The real-life account of leadership presented is used to find and extract the demonstrated leadership activities. Through these efforts, the definition of leadership is developed.

Discussion

The contemporary concept of leadership is based on the foundation that one individual (the leader) is providing or imparting control, directions, vision, or methods, and that another person (the follower) is receiving or accepting this transfer and acting upon it. Leadership has been presented as focusing group processes, as inducing compliance, as influence, as persuasion, as power, as a instrument for achieving goals, as initiating structure, and more (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). However, this is not the essence of leadership of today. Although leaders and followers have different roles to play, they both participate in leadership activities. “In the new paradigm of leadership, followers and leaders do leadership” (Wren, 1995, p. 154). Thus, the notion of leaders and followers must be disbanded. This ideology is based on years of cultural themes of kings and servants, superiors and subordinates, and managers and workers. Because of these biases, it is natural to want to define leadership in the terms of leaders and followers. However, this model is not accurate for defining the leadership of today; therefore, a new premise must be adopted.

This new perspective must recognize that leadership is not directives, but is instead a mutual activity. This new model must not identify leadership as a superior directing a subordinate; instead, it must represent leadership as a social interaction between equals. In modern societies of the West, no one has the right to impose his or her will upon another (O’Toole, 1996). In modern Western societies, individuals are considered equal. Thus, this new paradigm of leadership must leave behind the superior versus subordinate model, and instead, construct the leadership as fellowship reality.

Leadership: An Example

In the book, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations*

(Cooper & Sawaf, 1997, p. xix), Robert Cooper recounts the real-life event of a Tibetan citizen. In Cooper's account, the Chinese soldiers punished a man for clasping his hands together close to his chest, in a manner that usually symbolizes the act of prayer, to greet a passing fellow Tibetan. Prayer had been ruled a crime by the Chinese, and this citizen briefly forgot and inadvertently gestured a sign that resembles the act of prayer. Even though this sign is also used by Tibetans to show honor to a fellow human being, the Chinese soldiers ruled it a crime. For this "crime", the soldiers dug a trench, lined this man's entire family along the ditch with their hands tied behind their backs. While the Tibetan begged the soldiers to punish him and not his family for his "crime", they stuffed gasoline permeated rags into their throats, lit them on fire, shoved them into the ditch, and buried them alive while he was forced to watch.

Cooper continues by explaining that the soldiers then destroyed the bridge that provided access to the village's water source just to punish him and his fellow villagers more. The soldiers then said, rebuild it if you can. What did this man do?

He immediately started carrying large rocks into the frigid waters of the river to build the foundation of a new bridge. His fellow villagers pleaded with him to stop, and warned of the hazards of the rapid waters and the potential exposure to the cold, but he would not stop. He continued carrying rocks into the water. At first, no one helped, but as he continued, individuals started to participate.

He continued this for the remaining afternoon, and when he became too weak to proceed, his fellow villagers wrapped him in blankets. In the following months, these villagers rebuilt the bridge despite theirs and the Chinese soldier's belief that it could not be done.

Leadership Definitions

Leadership has been defined in many ways, and no definition of leadership could be

considered complete and absolute. A single complete definition of leadership does not exist (Wren, 1995). Nevertheless, they all do have common themes to include goals, methods, and direction and control. Some of the definitions (as cited in Wren, 1995) of leadership that scholars have presented that contain these common themes are a) the creative and directive force of morale (Munson, 1921), b) the process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner (Bennis, 1959), c) directing and coordinating the work of group members (Fiedler, 1957), d) transforming followers, creating visions of the goals that may be attained, and articulating for followers the ways to attain those goals (Bass, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986), and e) the process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals (Roach & Behling, 1984).

However, all of these look at leadership as a cause-and-effect relationship. That is, the leader does something (the cause) that influences a follower to react (effect). Most leadership models have in common the attribute of a all-knowing leader that is wiser than the collective followers (O'Toole, 1996). However, these approaches of defining leadership do not properly or adequately characterize it. These definitions ignore that leadership can and does exist in the activities of equals mutually influencing each other toward a common goal. "In democracies, there is no such thing as a leader, instead there are leaders of leaders (O'Toole, 1996). Although hierarchical relationships in leadership are possible and prevalent, this arrangement is not required. In contrast, leadership today is fellowship between individuals with different organizational roles.

Definitions Analyzed

All of the previously stated definitions of leadership focus on what others have already defined as management. That is, "management is the attainment of organizational goals through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources" (Daft, 1988, p.5). If one reviews the

aforementioned definitions of leadership, everyone one of them can be divided into the activities of goal setting, method devising (planning), and directing (organizing) and controlling. These are identical to the activities described in management definitions. Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling that accomplishes some end (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993). Thus, these previously stated leadership definitions are defining management activities.

However, management and leadership are not the same; therefore, these definitions cannot be of leadership. If they are not definitions of leadership, how should leadership be defined? What are leadership activities? Some might be tempted to suggest that leadership are those actions and behaviors combined with the management processes; however, this would be inaccurate because leadership must be activities separate from management. Two different roles exist in an organization: management and leadership (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard, 1996). Leadership and management are different activities. If management and leadership are not the same, in contrast to what the current definitions suggest, then what are the activities of leadership?

Leadership Examined

When the example of the leadership demonstrated by the Tibetan is analyzed, the following behaviors of a) a goal of rebuilding the bridge was determined, b) a method of accomplishing this rebuild was devised, c) an activity in accomplishing the goal was initiated, 4) the behaviors of courage and determination were demonstrated, and 5) fellowship was constructed. This tortured Tibetan realized that the bridge must be rebuilt if the village was not to suffer for an extended period of time, but the other villagers knew this also. This man realized that rocks must be hand carried into the cold waters, but the others must of also known this. However, this man

initiated the effort to rebuild the bridge, and it is this behavior that separated him from his contemporaries. Nevertheless, leadership had not yet happened. Fellow villagers had not supported this man's efforts, and without others, leadership cannot exist. "The role of a leader is to create followers" (O'Toole, 1996, p. xi).

If this man was not courageous, he would have never initiated the effort, and without determination, he would have never attracted others. "Courage is the quality of every principle at its highest testing point" (Hesselbein et al., 1996, p. 157), and stamina is a characteristic of leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). However, determining a goal, initiating actions, and showing courage and determination is not enough to claim that leadership occurred. A dictator could accomplish these with the use of force. The only course for leaders is to build a vision that followers can adopt as their own (O'Toole, 1996).

The management activities of directing, controlling, and planning are not necessarily leadership characteristics. As is evident in the story of the Tibetan, they were not even used. One can perform these management activities without being a leader, and an individual is not required to perform them to construct leadership. The activities of goal setting, initiation, and courage and determination are characteristics of leadership as demonstrated in the Tibetan example; however, they could also be attributes of dictatorship. Therefore, what is the missing element that provides the keystone for leadership? It is fellowship!

Leadership happens the instant that fellowship is created. In the Tibetan example, the instant that others entered the cold water on their own volition, leadership happened. At the instant that the "followers", of their own free will, initiated activities in support of the "leader's" goal, leadership happened. The instant that fellowship was constructed was the moment of leadership.

Conclusion

What separates leadership from management or dictatorship is fellowship, and fellowship is catalyzed when an individual courageously initiates and demonstrates determination in accomplishing a goal. Fellowship happens when others accept the initiator's goal as their own and initiate reciprocal leadership activities using their free will. It is when this fellowship has been established that leadership occurs. Thus, *leadership is the courageous determination by an individual in initiating and constructing fellowship toward a common goal.*

References

- Bass, B. M., & Stogdill, R. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership : theory, research, and managerial applications* (3rd ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Cooper, R. K., & Sawaf, A. (1997). *Executive EQ: Emotional intelligence in leadership and organizations*. New York: Grosset/Putnam.
- Daft, R. L. (1988). *Management*. Chicago: Dryden Press.
- Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M., & Beckhard, R. (1996). *The leader of the future : new visions, strategies, and practices for the next era*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ivancevich, J. M., & Matteson, M. T. (1993). *Organizational behavior and management* (3rd ed.). Homewood, IL: Irwin.
- O'Toole, J. (1996). *Leading change : the argument for values-based leadership* (1st Ballentine Books ed.). New York: Ballentine Books.
- Wren, J. T. (1995). *The leader's companion : insights on leadership through the ages*. New York: Free Press.