



Great Leadership is Egoless

By Tomas Vieira

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Have you noticed the plethora of management and leadership books out there? I find it interesting that most of us know theoretically what good management and leadership is, but apparently, we can't seem to carry it out! Hence the ongoing publications and endless courses in management.

Part of the reason is that we are not actually addressing the block to great leadership. What is the cause of poor management and leadership? Where does it come from? Is it purely technical? Is it a lack of experience, skills and knowledge? Partially, but not totally.

Most of the management and leadership books I've read write about strategies for good management and qualities of good leadership. They spend a lot of time on 'what' to do and 'when' to do it and 'how' to do it. Even the 'Who' in terms of attributes and qualities is written as if it is a simple matter of 'doing' it, whatever the quality is that you need to employ.

Let's face it, if we gathered any small group of managers anywhere and asked them to list the attributes of a great leader or manager, they'd probably come up with 90% of the same answers. This tells us that we 'know' what it means to be a great leader but we simply can't execute it! Why?

It's no good knowing that good management is inclusive if you've a manager who doesn't trust and isn't aware of your blocks to trust. It's no good telling a manager to innovate when he or she is rooted in the fear of doing so from earlier experiences that are still unconscious, un-investigated and therefore projected into the present and extending into the future!

We are a world infatuated with form – how you look, dress? What is your educational background? What have you accomplished? How many interviews have you attended where you were asked about your failures and what you learned from them? How many interviewers ask you to talk about fear and how you handle it? I'm not talking about pressure; I'm talking about decision making. What is the intent behind decisions?

To be a great leader, is to have undone a large portion of the ego – the false self. The part that is obsessed with being right, being first, never making mistakes; all of which are masks for insecurity and lack of real confidence.

A great leader doesn't take things personally, so he or she can listen and is open to fresh ideas. He or she is inclusive. Being inclusive demands trust and you can't trust others when you don't trust yourself.

Good listening is often called an art. Why? Because most times, the listener is already in a defensive position before the meeting and therefore looking at how to gain an advantage or make himself / herself right. Most of us are not even present for most conversations. A person who has undone a portion of the ego is present, open and without defence. This comes from an inner security that knows no matter how the meeting goes, it does not affect him or her in the real sense (it's not life or death and it's not his /her identity)

The other thing in communications that we're not aware of is that all minds are joined. If you're closed minded before a meeting, it usually doesn't go well, because the other party has already picked this up. It's obvious in the non-verbal communication right from the moment you walk into the room.

Where I'm headed with this is to establish that for all the books and courses out there, you cannot become a good leader without commitment to working on yourself. This has been said before but it's been heard as being a 'part' of the overall package of skills, experience and knowledge. The ego hears it as a small part of the package.

What I'm saying is that working on yourself is the *greatest* part of becoming a great leader, over and above skills and knowledge. And working on yourself means undoing the ego. Being committed to looking at all the values, beliefs, experiences you've accumulated and taken on as being part of the "I" you think you are, and daring to have them all re-examined within a context of whether they are helpful or fear based.

In business, there is a tendency to use risk management as a cover for fear. Fear is a limitation that is self imposed. It is the use of past data to project future calamity and limits pure creativity and inspiration.

An evolution in improving personal success in management and leadership has seen the implementation of coaching and mentoring. I lend my support to this to the extent that a coach challenges their client to look at outdated and unhelpful thoughts and beliefs.

You see, it's not about learning how to manifest greater material, monetary and even relationship success because without looking at how the ego has sabotaged you in the past, it will continue to sabotage you into the future. Therefore even coaching won't necessarily help you unless your coach is also working on releasing the ego and cognizant of its insidious effects.

So if you want to become a great leader, worry less about your technical skills, experience and knowledge and increase your focus on eliminating the ego, the voice of fear and scarcity, the one with the false pride and the need to be right all the time.

Great leaders have the internal security to surround themselves with people who have equal or better skills, qualifications and knowledge. They have an optimistic approach that is based on a detachment of who they are and their role at work. In other words, great leaders know their identity is not tied to what they do. Because they know they are not their work, they are more open to change, innovation and the impulses of true creativity and inspiration. They are not hindered by the past or burdened with the future.



Footnote: Tomas Vieira is the co-author of Amazon's bestselling *Take Me to Truth; Undoing the Ego*. He had a 25 year career in management before becoming embarking on a career as an international author and speaker. He has developed a new management program entitled – Managing Without Ego ©

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