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# John W. Gardner On Leadership By

**John W. Gardner**

## **Preface to the Paperback Edition**

There must be—in every segment and at every level—individuals capable of taking leader-like action to make their piece of the system work, individuals prepared to accommodate system-wide policy to ground-level realities, men and women who are not afraid to send word back up the line that newly-announced policies need amendment or reversal.

...the most important thing a leader could do for the people “Give them back their future.”

As the poet wrote, “The light we sought is shining still.” That we have failed and fumbled in some of our attempts to achieve our ideals is obvious. But the great ideas still beckon—freedom, equality, justice, the release of human possibilities. The vision is to live up to the best in our past and to reach the goals we have yet to achieve—with respect to our domestic problems and our responsibilities worldwide.

Don’t pray for the day when we finally solve our problems. Pray that we have the freedom to continue working on the problems the future will never cease to throw at us.

Effective leaders heighten both motivation and confidence, but when these qualities have been gravely diminished, leaders have a hard time leading.

Shared value are the bedrock on which leaders build the edifice of group achievement.

Individuals in all segments and at all levels must be prepared to exercise leader-like initiative and responsibility, using their local knowledge to solve problems at their level.

Vitality at middle and lower levels of leadership can produce greater vitality in the higher levels of leadership.

In addition to all people down the line who may properly be called leaders at their level, there are in any vital organization or society a great many individuals who share leadership tasks unofficially, by behaving responsibly with respect to the purposes of the group.

### **Accountability**

The concept of accountability is as important as the concept of leadership.

### **The Nature of Leadership**

Leaders cannot be thought of apart from the historic context in which they arise...

They are integral parts of the system, subject to the forces that affect the system. They perform (or cause to be performed) certain tasks or functions that are essential if the group is to accomplish its purposes.

...leaders shape and are shaped.

If Julius Caesar had been willing to live more flexibly with the give-and-take he might not have been slain in the Senate House. Machiavelli, the ultimate realist, advised the prince, "You will always need the favor of the inhabitants...It is necessary for a prince to possess the friendship of the people."

### **Distinctions**

We must not confuse leadership with status.

We have all occasionally encountered top persons who couldn't lead a squad of seven-year-olds to the ice cream counter.

Most positions of high status carry with them symbolic values and traditions that enhance the possibility of leadership.

The selection process for positions of high status does not make that a sure outcome.

A military dictator has power. The thug who sticks a gun in your ribs has power. Leadership is something else.

**Corporations and government agencies everywhere have executives who imagine that their place on the organization chart has given them a body of followers. And of course it has not. They have been given subordinates. Whether the subordinates become followers depends on whether the executives act like leaders.**

...leaders are among the many “performance elites.”

### **Leaders and Managers**

Leaders and leader/managers distinguish themselves from the general run of managers in at least six respects:

1. They think longer term—beyond the day’s crises, beyond the quarterly report, beyond the horizon.
2. In thinking about the unit they are heading, they grasp its relationship to larger realities—the larger organization of which they are a part, conditions external to the organization, global trends.
3. They reach and influence constituents beyond their jurisdictions, beyond boundaries. Thomas Jefferson influenced people all over Europe. Gandhi influenced people all over the world. In an organization, leaders extend their reach across bureaucratic boundaries—often a distinct advantage in a world too complex and tumultuous to be handled “through channels.” Leaders’ capacity to rise above jurisdictions may enable them to bind together the fragmented constituencies that must work together to solve a problem
4. They put heavy emphasis on the intangibles of vision, values, and motivation and understand intuitively the non-rational and unconscious elements in leader-constituent interaction.
5. They have the political skill to cope with the conflicting requirements of multiple constituencies.
6. They think in terms of renewal.

Florence Nightingale, after leaving the Crimea, exercised extraordinary leadership in health care for decades with no organization under her command. Gandhi was a leader before he has an organization.

Churchill, the splendidly eloquent old warrior; Ghandi, the visionary and the shrewd mobilizer of his people; Lenin, the coldly purposeful revolutionary. George Marshall was a self-effacing, low-keyed man with superb judgment and a limitless capacity to inspire trust. MacArthur was a brilliant strategist, a farsighted administrator, and flamboyant to his fingertips. (Eisenhower, who had served under MacArthur, once said, “I studied dramatics under a master.” Field Marshal Montgomery was a gifted, temperamental leader of whom Churchill said, “In defeat, indomitable; in victory, insufferable.”

...there are many kinds of leaders.

## **Leaders and History**

Thomas Jefferson was first of all a gifted and many-sided human, an enigmatic man who loved—among other things—abstract ideas, agriculture, architecture and statecraft.

Acts of leadership take place in an unimaginable variety of settings, and the setting does much to determine the kinds of leaders that emerge and how they play their roles.

**We cannot avoid the be-whiskered question, “Does the leader make history or does the historical moment make the leader?”**

The balanced view, of course, is that historical forces create the circumstances in which leaders emerge, but the characteristics of the particular leader in turn have their impact on history.

## **Settings**

The makeup of the group to be led is, of course, a crucial feature of the context. According to research findings, the approach to leadership or style of leadership that will be effective depends, on among other things, the age level of the individuals to be led; their educational background and competence; the size, homogeneity and cohesiveness of the group; its motivation and morale; its rate of turnover; and so on.

Other relevant contextual features are too numerous and diverse to list. Leading a corporation is one thing, leading a street gang is something else. Thomas Cronin has pointed out that it may take one kind of leadership to start a new enterprise and quite another kind to keep it going through its various phases.

...leaders suffer from the mistakes of predecessors and leave some of their own misjudgments as time bombs for successors.

Many of the changes sought by leaders take time: lots of years, long public debate, slow shifts in attitude. In their lifetimes, leaders may see little result from heroic efforts yet may be setting the stage for victories that will come after them.

Each leader has his or her own unique pattern of attributes, sometimes conflicting in curious ways. Ronald Reagan was notably passive with respect to many important issues, but vigorously tenacious on other issues.

## **Devolving Initiative and Responsibility**

The leaders of the Soviet Union did not launch the reforms of 1987 because they had developed a sudden taste for grass-roots democracy. They launched them because their system was grinding to a halt.

...we must demand high performance at every level of society.

### **Institutionalizing Leadership**

To exercise leadership today, leaders must institutionalize their leadership.

**We design an institutional system—a government agency, a corporation—to solve the problems, and then we select a leader who has the capacity to preside over and strengthen the system. Some leaders may be quite gifted in solving problems personally, but if they fail to institutionalize the process, their departure leaves the system crippled. They must create or strengthen systems that will survive them**

**The institutional arrangement generally includes a leading team.**

**The team must be chosen for excellence in performance.**

### **The Tasks of leadership**

The two tasks at the heart of the popular notion of leadership are goal setting and motivating.

Leaders perform the function of goal setting in diverse ways. Some assert a vision of what the group (organization, community, nation) can be at its best. Others point us toward solutions to our problems. Still others, presiding over internally divided groups, are able to define overarching goals that unify constituencies and focus energies.

...the setting of goals may have to be preceded by extensive research and problem solving.

The relative roles of leaders and followers in determining goals varies from group to group.

In the case of many leaders, goals are handed to them by higher authority. The factory manager and the combat commander may be superb leaders, but many of their goals are set at higher levels.

### **Affirming Values**

Every society is, as Philip Rieff puts it, “a system of moralizing demands.”

Every healthy society celebrates its values. They are expressed in art, in song, in ritual. They are stated explicitly in historical documents, in ceremonial speeches, in textbooks.

They are reflected in stories told around the campfire, in the legends kept alive by old folks, in the fables told to children.

### **The Regeneration of Values**

There must be perpetual rebuilding. Each generation must rediscover the living elements in its own tradition and adapt them to present realities. To assist in that rediscovery in one of the tasks of leadership.

The leaders whom we admire the most help to revitalize our shared beliefs and values. They have always spent a portion of their time teaching the value framework.

### **Motivating**

**Effective leaders tap those that serve the purposes of collective action in pursuit of shared goals. They accomplish the alignment of individual and group goals. They call for the kind of effort and restraint, drive and discipline that make for great performance. They create a climate in which there is pride in making significant contributions to shared goals.**

**Young potential leaders who have been schooled to believe that all elements of a problem are rational and technical, reducible to words and numbers, are ill-equipped to move into an area where intuition and empathy are powerful aids to problems solving.**

### **Managing**

**Most managers exhibit some leadership skills, and most leaders on occasion find themselves managing. Leadership and management are not the same thing, but they overlap. It makes sense to include managing in the list of tasks leaders perform.**

1. **Planning and Priority Setting.** Assuming that broad goals have been set, someone has to plan, fix priorities, chose means, and formulate policy. These are functions often performed by leaders.
2. **Organizing and Institution Building.** Someone has to design the structures and processes through which substantial endeavors get accomplished over time. Ideally, leaders should not regard themselves as indispensable but should enable the group to carry on. Institutions are a means to that end. Jean Monnet said, "Nothing is possible without individuals; nothing is lasting without institutions."
3. **Keeping the System Functioning.** Most leaders find themselves occasionally performing one or another of the essential chores: mobilizing and allocating resources; staffing and ensuring the continuing vitality of the team; creating and maintaining appropriate procedures; directing, delegating and coordinating; providing a system of incentives; reporting, evaluating and holding accountable.
4. **Agenda Setting and Decision Making.** The organization well set up and smoothly operating, but there remain agenda-setting and decision-making functions that must be dealt with.

One of the purest examples of the leader as agenda setter was Florence Nightingale. Her public image was and is that of a lady of mercy, but under her gentle manner, she was rugged spirit, a fighter, a tough-minded system changer. She never made public appearances or speeches, and except for her two years in the Crimea, held no public position. Her strength was that she was a formidable authority on the evils to be remedied, she knew what to do about them, and she used public opinion to goad top officials to adopt her agenda.

5. Exercising Political Judgment. One of the tasks of the leader/manager is to make the political judgments necessary to prevent secondary conflicts of purpose from blocking progress toward primary goals.

### **Achieving Workable Unity**

But most leaders most of the time are striving to diminish conflict rather than increase it.

Sometimes the problem is not outright conflict but an unwillingness to cooperate. One of the gravest problems George Washington faced as a general was that the former colonies, though they had no doubt they were all on the same side, were not always sure they wanted to cooperate.

...all our leaders must spend part of their time dealing with polarization and building community.

...the leader willing to combat polarization is the braver person, and is generally under fire from both sides.

### **Trust**

Much depends on the general level of trust in the organization or society. The infinitely varied and complex doings of the society—any society—would come to a halt if people did not trust other people most of the time—trust them to observe custom, follow the rules, and behave with some predictability. Countless circumstances operate to diminish that trust, but one may be sure that if the society is functioning at all, some degree of trust survives.

Leaders can do much to preserve the necessary level of trust. And the first requirement is that they have the capacity to inspire trust in themselves.

...leaders must work to raise the level of trust.

### **Explaining**

Explaining sounds too pedestrian to be on a list of leadership tasks, but every leader recognizes it. People want to know what the problem is, why they are being asked to do certain things, why they face so many frustrations.

The task of explaining is so important that some who do it exceptionally well play a leadership role even though they are not leaders in the conventional sense.

Leaders teach. Lincoln, in his second inaugural address, provided an extraordinary example of the leader as teacher. Teaching and leading are distinguishable occupations, but every great leader is clearly teaching—and every great teacher is leading.

### **Serving as a Symbol**

Leaders are inevitably symbols. Workers singled out to be supervisors discover they are all set apart from their old comrades in subtle ways.

They are now symbols of management.

In a group threatened with internal strife, the leader may be a crucial symbol of unity.

The top leader of a community or nation symbolizes the group's collective identity and continuity.

Some individuals newly risen to leadership have a hard time adjusting to the reality that they are symbols. I recall a visit with a young college president who had just come into the job fresh from a professorship, with no prior administrative experience. He confided that he was deeply irked by an incident the preceding day. In his first speech before faculty, students, trustees and alumni he had simply been himself—a man of independent mind full of lively personal opinions—and many of his listeners were nonplussed and irritated. They were not interested in a display of idiosyncratic views. They had expected him to speak as their new leader, their symbol of institutional continuity, their ceremonial collective voice. I told him gently that they had expected him to be their spokesman and symbol, and this simply angered him further. "I'll resign," he said, "if I can't be myself!" Over time, he learned that leaders can rarely afford the luxury of speaking for themselves alone.

Gandhi, in the issues he chose to do battle on, in the way he conducted his campaigns, in the jail terms and the fasting, in his manner of dress, he symbolized his people, their desperate need, and their struggle against oppression.

The attributes that enable leaders to teach and lead their own constituencies may be wholly ineffective in external dealings. Military leaders who are revered by their troops may be clumsy with civilians. The business leader who is effective within the business culture may be lost in dealing with politicians. A distinctive characteristic of the ablest leaders is that they do not shrink from external representation. They see the long-term needs and goals of their constituency in the broadest context, and they act accordingly.

Able business leaders are alert to the political climate and to world economic trends.



## **Renewing**

The individual with a gift for building a leadership team may successfully delegate one or another of those tasks to other members of the team. One function that cannot be delegated is that of serving as symbol. That the leader is a symbol is a fact, not a matter of choice. The task is to take appropriate account of that reality and to use it well in the service of the group's goals.

Another function that cannot be delegated entirely is the envisioning of goals. Unless the leader has a sense of where the whole enterprise is going and must go, it is not possible to delegate (or carry out personally) the other functions. To have "a sense of where the whole enterprise is going and must go" is, I am inclined to say, the very core and essence of the best leadership.

...the purpose of leaders is not to dominate nor diminish followers but to strengthen and help them to develop.

But enabling and empowering are not separable tasks. They require a variety of actions on the parts of leaders. For example:

- Sharing information and making it possible for followers to obtain appropriate kinds of education
- Sharing power by devolving initiative and responsibility
- Building the confidence of followers so that they can achieve their own goals through their own efforts
- Removing barriers to the release of individual energy and talent
- Seeking, finding, and husbanding the various kinds of resources that followers need
- Resolving the conflicts that paralyze group action
- Providing organizational arrangements appropriate to group effort

The effective leader is always doing several tasks simultaneously.

## **The Role of Followers**

**Weber's great contemporary, Georg Simmel (1858-1918), was even more explicit, suggesting that followers have about as much influence on their leaders as their leaders have on them. Leaders cannot maintain authority, he wrote, unless followers are prepared to believe in that authority. In a sense, leadership is conferred by followers.**

Corporate executives learn comparable lessons today. They learn to operate within the framework of the culture, which is to say within the limits people in the system can accept in terms of their norms, beliefs and expectations. Leaders can go against the grain of the culture, but not without cost.

### **Good constituents tend to produce good leaders**

**The assumption by line executives, that, given their rank and authority, they can lead without being leaders is one reason bureaucracies stagnate. As I pointed out earlier, executives are given subordinates; they have to earn followers.**

### **Structure and Control**

Does the group function most effectively when leaders make the decisions without consultation and impose their wills, or when they invite varying degrees of participation in the decision? A story (probably apocryphal) told of Woodrow Wilson when he was president of Princeton University. "How can I democratize this university,?" he demanded, "if the faculty won't do what I ask?"

Should there be a high degree of structure in the relationship—a sharp differentiation between the roles of leaders and followers, a clear hierarchy of authority with emphasis on detailed assignments and task specifications? Or should the relationship be more informal, less structured, with leaders making the goals clear and then letting constituents help determine the way of proceeding?

Should there be an atmosphere of discipline, constraints, controls—in Navy parlance, a tight ship—or should there be autonomy, individual responsibility and freedom for growth, with the leader in the role of nurturer, supporter, listener and helper?

Should the leader focus on the job to be done—task-oriented as the researchers put it—or should the leader be concerned primarily with the people performing the task, with their needs, their morale, their growth?

**Followers do like being treated with consideration, do like to have their say, do like a chance to exercise their own initiative—and participation does increase acceptance of decisions. But there are times when followers welcome rather than reject authority, want prompt and clear decisions from the leader, and want to close ranks around the leader. The ablest and most effective leaders do not hold to a single style; they may be highly supportive in personal relations when that is needed, yet capable of a quick, authoritative decision when the situation requires it.**

Some work environments are so rigidly structured that they destroy workers' initiative, while others are so unstructured that the job never gets done. In the latter situation the

workers themselves crave a clearer definition of goals, more orderly scheduling, better coordination, more precise assignments, and so on.

### **Two Way Communication**

**One generalization that is supported both by research and experience is that effective two-way communication is essential to proper functioning of the leader-follower relationship. A point that corporations have emphasized increasingly in recent years. There must be not only easy communication from leaders to constituents but also ample return communication, including dissent.** Leaders, to be effective, must pick up the signals coming to them from constituents. And the rule is: If the messages from below say you are doing a flawless job, send back for a more candid assessment.

**Nothing can substitute for a live leader. Listening attentively and responding informally. There is more to face-to-face communication than the verbal component. The leader's style, timing and symbolic acts all carry messages—and demonstrate that messages are being received. Wise leaders are continuously finding ways to say to their constituents, "I hear you."**

In 1934, I encountered a friend, a construction worker, hurrying home after a hard day's work, and I asked "What's the rush?" He said, "President Roosevelt's fireside chat! I figure if he's willing to take the time to talk to me, the least I can do is be there." The simple earnestness of the reply expressed the hold that FDR had on his followers.

### **The Multilevel Dialogue**

**Any social group, if it is more than a crowd of unrelated strangers, has shared needs, beliefs, aspirations, values, hopes and fears. The group creates norms that tend to control the behavior of its members, and these norms constitute the social order. It is in this context that leaders arise; and it is this context that determines what kinds of leaders emerge and what is expected of them.**

**Effective leaders deal not only with the explicit decisions of the day—to approve a budget, announce a policy, discipline a subordinate—but also with that partly conscious, partly buried world of needs and hopes, ideals and symbols. They serve as models; they symbolize the group's unity and identity; they retell the stories that carry shared meanings.**

**Edmund Wilson wrote:**

**The poetry of Lincoln has not all been put into his writings. It was acted out in his life...He created himself as a poetic figure, and he thus imposed himself on the nation.**

**For the molding by Lincoln of American opinion was a matter of style and imagination as well as of moral authority, of cogent argument and obstinate will...When we put ourselves back into the period, we realize that it was not at all inevitable to think of it as Lincoln thought.**

Woodrow Wilson said, “The ear of the leader must ring with the voice of the people.”

To analyze complex problems, leaders must have a capacity for rational problem solving; but they must also have a penetrating intuitive grasp of the needs and moods of followers. The ablest leaders understand, rationally and intuitively, the expectations of people with respect to their leadership. And they are adept at meeting those expectations not only with rational verbal pronouncements but also with symbolic acts, ritual observances, and the like.

### **Shaper and Shaped**

A relationship between leaders and constituents in which each is in some measure the shaper, and in some measure the shaped. Obviously the interaction does not always work in balance. Sometimes the leader rides roughshod over the expectations of the people. Sometimes leaders are trapped by their constituents.

### **Pluralistic Pressures**

One familiar and cynical view of leadership is that leaders do not lead the parade, but find out where it is going and get out ahead of it. For most leaders today, however, the single parade moving on an identifiable path is an anachronism.

### **Trust**

There is much to be gained for any leader in winning the trust of constituents. A leader capable of inspiring trust is especially valuable in bringing about collaboration among mutually suspicious elements in the constituency. The trust the contending groups have for such a leader can hold them together until they begin to trust one another.

One of the most important prerequisites for trust in a leader is steadiness. The need for reliability is not only ethically desirable, it is generally a practical necessity.

For leaders seeking to win trust, another requirement is fairness—fairness when the issues are being openly adjudicated, and, equally important, fairness in the backroom.

## **Strengthening Followers**

Who will write the essay on individual and collective failures among followers? When it is written the essay will have to cover two matters at some length.

**First, there are qualities such as apathy, passivity, cynicism, and habits of spectator-like noninvolvement that invite the abuse of power by leaders. Bertrand de Jouvenel said, “A society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves.”**

**Second, there is the inclination of followers in some circumstances to collaborate in their own deception. Given the familiar fact that what people want and need often determines what they see and hear, the collaboration comes easily. But a citizenry that wants to be lied to will have liars as leaders. Have we not tested that generalization at every level of government?**

Rather than dwell on the failings, we would do well to focus on how to ensure better performance.

The purposes of the group are best served when the leader helps followers to develop their own initiative, strengthens them in the use of their own judgment, enables them to grow, and to become better contributors.

To the extent that leaders enable followers to develop their own initiative, they are creating something that can survive their own departure. Some individuals who have dazzling powers of personal leadership create dependency in those below them and leave behind a weakened organization staffed by weakened people. Leaders who strengthen their people may create a legacy that will last for a very long time.

The interaction between leaders and constituents or followers does not take place in a vacuum.

## **Contexts**

What qualities do leaders have that others do not?

...the attributes which make for effective leadership depend on the situation in which the leader is functioning.

There are no traits that guarantee successful leadership in all situations. The leader of a university faculty may have quite different attributes from the commander of a military attack team.

## **Contexts and Settings**

Settings differ in the degree of support they provide for the leader. The infantry lieutenant leading a platoon in combat is supported in innumerable ways. In contrast, the peasant farmer in a developing country who protests a government action may be totally without institutional support, acting without precedent, lacking any assurance of allies.

Leaders are likely to look best when the context is supportive. But there are stunning examples of leadership in settings that are distinctly unsupportive. When Florence Nightingale arrived in the Crimea on the assignment that made her famous, she faced conditions that would have daunted a lesser figure. Yet she prevailed.

### **The Founding of a Nation**

“These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live” wrote that remarkable woman, Abigail Adams. “Great necessities call forth great leaders.”

Thanks to the intellectual climate in which they were nurtured, the leaders of the day were afflicted with no trace of fatalism. They believed that the locus of responsibility was in them and saw themselves as shapers of the future. And they shared a set of values and philosophical views—the ideas and spirit of what Henry Steele Commager has called “The American Enlightenment.”

What had been added to Washington’s natural leadership qualities as he matured were wisdom and steadiness, a patience and evenhandedness that enabled him to stand above the intense rivalries among other leaders of the new nation. These qualities made him, in James Flexner’s phrase, “the indispensable man.”

### **The Surprise of Harry Truman**

It is an old story that unexpected demands sometimes reveal unsuspected strengths; but rarely has the story played itself out more dramatically than in the case of Harry S. Truman.

Jean Monnet put his finger on one of Truman’s key attributes, “the ability to decide...He never hesitated in the face of great decisions.” Those decisions included the use of the atomic bomb on Japan; initiation of a massive airlift to counter the Soviet blockade of West Berlin; the United States’ swift intervention following the Communist invasion of South Korea; and the firing of General Douglas MacArthur. Of course, what was involved was not only decisiveness but also good judgment. If all his moves had turned out badly, we would not be praising his decisiveness.

### **Attributes**

The probability is greater than chance that leaders in one situation will be leaders in another situation.

The importance of the attribute to effective leadership varies with the situation.

I have drawn upon the writings of Ralph Stogdill, Bernard Bass, Edwin P. Hollander, and others who have reviewed the extensive body of research in the field.

1. Physical Vitality and Stamina.

Top leaders have stamina and great reserves of vitality. Even the leader of a neighborhood organization is apt to stand far above the average in sheer energy

2. Intelligence and Judgment-in-Action. There are bright people who lack judgment altogether. There is nothing worse than a stupid person with a brilliant mind”.

General Carl Spaatz had in mind when he said of one of his fellow officers in World War II, “He thinks things through very carefully before he goes off half-cocked.” Such people are unlikely to attain leadership.

“He’s a superb crisis manager, which is fortunate because his lack of judgment leads to a lot of crises.”

Judgment-inaction includes effective problem solving, the design of strategies, the setting of priorities and intuitive as well as rational judgments.

3. Willingness (Eagerness) to Accept Responsibilities.

4. Task competence.

Top level leaders cannot hope to have competence in more than a few of the matters under their jurisdiction, but they must have knowledge of the whole system over which they preside, its mission, and the environment in which it functions.

5. Understanding of Followers/Constituents and Their Needs.

**Bear Bryant of the University of Alabama, said, “I know my players better than they know themselves. How else could I get the best out of them?”**

6. Skill in Dealing with People

At the heart of skill in dealing with people is social perceptiveness—the ability to appraise accurately the readiness or resistance of followers to move in a given direction, to know when dissension or confusion is undermining the group’s will to act, to make the most of the motives that are there, and to understand the sensitivities.

7. Need to Achieve. No one who has know leaders or read extensively in the lives of leaders can have missed the evidence of driving presser to achieve.

8. Capacity to Motivate. More than any other attribute, this is at the heart of the popular notion of leadership—the capacity to move people to action, to

- communicate persuasively, to strengthen confidence. Churchill was one of the most spectacular examples of the leader-as-motivator. Communication is, of course, the prime instrument of the leader/motivator, and all leaders take their communicating seriously. One of his closest friends said that Churchill spent a good part of his life rehearsing impromptu speeches
9. **Courage. Resolution, Steadiness.** Clearly, a leader needs courage—not just bravery of the moment but courage over time, not just willingness to risk, but to risk again and again, to function well under prolonged stress, to survive defeat and keep going.

As one observer said of leaders, “They never give up.” It is not possible to overstate the value of steadiness of leadership. Individuals and groups who wish to align themselves with a leader find it hard to do so if the leader shifts position erratically, whether from emotional instability, duplicity or flagging determination. Leaders symbolize many things, among them the capacity of the whole group to stay the course.

10. **Capacity to Win and Hold Trust.** Some leaders have an extraordinary capacity to win trust.
11. **Capacity to Manager, Decide, Set Priorities.** Eric Ashby has pointed out, “Indecisiveness is contagious.” Leaders must decide. And they must perform from time to time one or another of the traditional tasks of management—formulating goals, setting priorities, framing a course of action, selection aides, and delegating.
12. **Confidence.** As Edwin P. Hollander puts it, they have a sense of assurance in exercising positive influence, a confidence that others will react affirmatively. It requires confidence to take the risks that leaders take, and confidence to handle the hostility that leaders must absorb. Acclaim and derision are the rewards of leadership. In his last letter to Jefferson, George Washington said, “I had no conception...that every act of my administration would be tortured...in such exaggerated form and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter or even a common pickpocket.”
13. **Ascendance, Dominance, Assertiveness.** The individuals successful in leadership roles are apt to have a fairly strong impulse to take charge.

Whatever their outward styles, their impulse is to leave their thumbprints on events. Theodore Roosevelt was possibly the most vividly assertive leader in our history. One contemporary observer said, “Theodore Roosevelt was second only to Niagara Falls as an American phenomenon.”

14. **Adaptability, Flexibility of Approach.** One could extend the list of leadership attributes. Available research suggests other important qualities. But the preceding items surely rank among the most important. The attributes required of a leader depend on the kind of leadership being exercised, the context, the nature of followers, and so on.



## **Power**

Leadership and power are not the same thing. But they interweave at many points. Power is the capacity to ensure the outcomes one wishes and to prevent those one does not wish.

Power as we are now speaking of it—power in the social dimension—is simply the capacity to bring about certain intended consequences in the behavior of others. Parents have power. So do teachers, police officers, supervisors, middle-level executives.

To say that someone “has power” is an incomplete description. Power to do what? Even the most powerful person has power only to accomplish certain specific things.

## **Leadership and Power**

It is necessary to distinguish between leaders and power holders. By definition, leaders always have a measure of power. But many power holders have no trace of leadership.

Although leadership and the exercise of power are distinguishable activities, they overlap and interweave in important ways. Consider a corporate chief executive officer who has the gift for inspiring and motivating people, who has vision, who lifts the spirits of employees with a resulting rise in productivity and quality of product, and a drop in turnover and absenteeism. That is leadership.

But evidence emerges that the company is falling behind in the technology race. One day with the stroke of a pen the CEO increases the funds available to the research division. That is the exercise of power. The stroke of a pen could have been made by an executive with none of the qualities one associates with leadership.

Leaders differ markedly among themselves in how they use their power. Some employ it to create a climate of coercion and intimidations; others employ it simply as a useful supplement to their persuasive gifts, and foster a climate of cooperation and willing effort.

## **The Necessary Exercise of Power**

In our democratic society, we make grants of power to people for specified purposes. If you have elected to chair a meeting, and the meeting goes badly because you do not exercise your power as chair, you are a nuisance.

To say a leader is preoccupied with power is like saying that a tennis player is preoccupied with making shots an opponent cannot return. Of course, leaders are preoccupied with power! The significant questions are: What means do they use to gain it? How do they exercise it? To what ends do they exercise it?

For some power holders, there is no end other than power itself. The sheer pleasure of dominating is the object of the exercise. We have learned neither to admire nor trust such people.

### **Costs and Benefits**

It is possible to think of the exercise of power as a kind of exchange. You want something from me and you have the power to produce in return certain outcomes that I want—or want to avoid.

### **Sources of Power**

The sources of power are infinitely varied. Property, position, personal attractiveness, expertness, reason, persuasive gifts, the capacity to motivate—all these and innumerable other sources of power come into play in any normal day of community living.

Proximity to power is a source of power.

### **Strength**

Probably the oldest source of power is the capacity to accomplish physical coercion. It is a source available to the military and to the huskiest kid in the third grade. Mao Tse-Tung expressed his appreciation of this source when he said in his little red book, “Every Communist must grasp the truth: political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” The application of force has been an element in the creation of most modern nations.

### **Beliefs**

Humans are believing animals. They have religious beliefs. They hold to one or another political doctrine. They have beliefs that supply meaning in their lives, beliefs that tell them how to conduct themselves, beliefs that console. The leader who understands those beliefs and acts in terms of that understanding has tapped a source of power. If the system of ideas is deeply embedded in the culture, it can play a significant role in legitimizing leaders and in validating their acts.

### **Public Opinion**

If leaders have the support of public opinion, their freedom of action is enhanced and obstacles become surmountable. When the support of public opinion is sharply withdrawn, public figures topple, laws become unenforceable and bastions of economic power tremble.

More commonly, people in power today set out to manipulate the flow of information and to shape public opinion in countless cunning ways.

### **Information**

Closely related to but not identical with the power of public opinion is the power derived from knowledge, from information.

Lyndon Johnson once said to me, "When the press talks about my successes as Senate majority leader they always emphasize my capacity to persuade, to wheel and deal. Hardly anyone ever mentions that I usually had more and better information than my colleagues." As so he did.

### **The Exercise of Power**

Perhaps the most familiar aphorism concerning power is Lord Acton's assertion that "power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Power is ethically neutral. It can be used for good purposes or bad. So it is necessary to address ourselves to the moral framework that permits us to judge some purposes as good and others as bad.

### **The Moral Dimension**

We say that we want effective leadership; but Hitler was effective. Criteria beyond effectiveness are needed.

Ultimately we judge our leaders in a framework of values. The framework differs from one culture to the next and from one era to the next.

### **The Transgressors**

...the ruler who inflicts cruelty on his own subjects... Idi Amin.

...leaders who may treat their own followers well but encourage them to do evil things to others. Ku Klux Klan...

...leaders who may or may not engage in acts of cruelty but who reach for, and use as a source of motivation, our bigotry, our capacity to hate, our desire for revenge, our fear and paranoia, our superstitions.

Ayatollah Khomeini comes to mind.

...leaders who diminish their followers, rendering them dependent and childlike, exploiting their unconscious need for the godlike magic helper of their infancy. James Jones of Jonestown.

Finally, there are leaders who destroy the processes that civilized peoples have created over the centuries to preserve freedom, justice and human dignity. ...Mussolini

If a leader holds sway by exploiting our greed or our hatreds, the evil is in us too. If a bad leader rules because of our lethargy, we are collaborators. The fault is not in our stars.

### **Relations Between Leaders and Constituents**

What should be the relationship between leaders and followers?

...individuals should be treated as ends in themselves, not as a means to the leader's end, not as objects to be manipulated.

We cannot approve a leader who betrays the common good in the interest of personal aggrandizement or profit.

We expect our leaders to be sensitive to and to serve the basic needs of their constituents. We expect them to have faith in their constituents and a caring concern for them

One way of characterizing morally acceptable leaders is to specify what their objectives are with respect to the group and the individuals who make it up.

Woodrow Wilson said, "I believe in democracy because it releases the energy of every human being."

**The greatest asset of any society is the talent and energy of its people. Yet no society has ever fully recognized or honored that asset; indeed, most societies have effectively stifled both talent and energy. The release of human possibilities is one of the most basic of social objectives and leadership goals.**

We pride ourselves on fostering individual development. There are great untapped reservoirs of human energy and capacity awaiting leaders who can tap them, and societies that deserve them.

### **2. Individual and Group**

Individuals become fully human and find support and identity in the cultural framework supplied by family and community.

### **3. Law, Custom and Belief**

Among the fundamental values professed in our own society are justice, liberty, equality of opportunity, the dignity of the individual and the sanctity of private religious beliefs.

The power of ideas in guiding human conduct is basic, and those who lead by that power often triumph against forces that are materially more powerful.

#### **4. Individual Initiative and Responsibility**

Given our ideals of individual responsibility, our leaders have an obligation to encourage the active involvement of constituents or followers in pursuit of group goals. In political matters, a passive constituency invites the abuse of power. In corporations or bureaucracies, workers passively awaiting orders ensure inertness and sluggishness in the organization's functioning. The devolution of initiative and responsibility is a requirement of vitality, both for organizations and for the society as a whole.

**Most people in most organizations most of the time are more stale than they know, more bored than they care to admit. All too often it is because they have not been encouraged to use their own initiative and powers of decision. And if they are not expected to use their decision-making powers, they are off the hook of responsibility. That is the damaging element.**

**Unrelenting autocracy down the chain of command undermines initiative. It says by implication that your responsibility is not to identify problems beyond those implicit in your orders, not to think about solutions. Wait for the next order! If something goes wrong that is not strictly within the scope of your orders, you need not worry about it. Followers who are passively awaiting orders have lost much of their capacity to be of help.**

**It is a loss we cannot afford. It is in the very nature of large-scale organization that its only hope of vitality is the willingness of a great many people scattered throughout the organization to take the initiative in performing leaderlike acts, in identifying problems at their levels and solving them.**

We need leaders who can bring alive in individuals all down the line that kind of capacity to share the leadership task.

#### **Large-Scale Organized Systems**

The first thing that strikes one as characteristic of contemporary leadership is the necessity for the leader to work with and through extremely complete organizations and institutions.

Leaders must understand not only the intricate organizational patterns of their own segment but also the workings of neighboring segments. Business leaders must

understand how our political system works. Political leaders must understand our economic system.

Steven Muller, president of Johns Hopkins University...”We...are builders. Our task is to help to remodel our institutions for tomorrow.”

### **Problems of Large Organizations**

In large organizations the chain of command becomes excessively long. Decisions are slowed and adventurous moves blocked by too many screening points and multiple sign-offs.

Recognizing that the impersonality (some say dehumanization) of Large-scale organization leaves many people feeling anonymous, powerless, and without a sense of their relationship to the whole, effective leaders create a climate that encourages two-way communications, participation, and a sense of belonging. They pay attention to people. They eliminate conditions that suppress individuality.

### **The turf Syndrome**

Referring to conflicts among his chief lieutenants, Henry Ford II once told me, “I try to remind them that the enemy is not the guy across the hall. It’s the guys out there selling Chevy’s and Hondas.”

Effective leaders tear down rigid internal walls and bureaucratic enclaves, counter segmental loyalties through the creation of working groups that cut across boundaries, and foster informal exchange throughout the organization.

### **Communication**

Communication is at the very heart of the leader-follower or leader-constituent relationship. The greater the size and complexity of the systems, the harder it is to ensure the kinds of two-way communication necessary to effective functioning.

### **Communication Downward**

A high-ranking air force general once said to me, “the intentions of the chief of staff get reinterpreted as they pass down through each level. The colonels who really run this place [the Pentagon] make the final interpretation, and it may bear little resemblance to the original.”

But there is probably no substitute for creating a culture—a set of attitudes, customs and habits throughout the organization—that favors easy two-way communication, in and out of channels, among all layers of the organization. Two key messages should

be implicit in such a culture: 91) “you will know what’s going on,” and (2) “Your voice will be heard.”

### **Motivation and Initiative**

**As I suggested in the preceding chapter, to maintain a high level of motivation it is essential that the largest possible number of individuals within the system feel that they share ownership of the problem (to use the currently popular phrase), and that they themselves are part of the solution.**

**Daniel Yankelovich reports that fewer than 25 percent of workers today say that they work at full potential, and about 60 percent believe they do not work as hard as they once did. Roughly, 75 percent say they could be significantly more effective than they are now.**

The large-scale organization must ask a great deal of its lower-level people. It needs their local knowledge, their initiative, their problem solving skills, their intimate grasp of realities on the firing line.

### **The Common Good**

It is built into the nature of human systems that what is good for (or thought to be good for) one or another of the diverse segments or individuals within the group is not necessarily good for the group (community, tribe, nation) as a whole. Garrett Hardin, in his famous essay “The Tragedy of the Commons,” pointed out that sometimes when each member of a community acts to maximize his or her short-term self-interest, the long-term consequence may be the destruction of values or purposes that the group held in common and did not, in fact, wish to destroy.

### **Government and the Private Sector**

In what Harlan Cleveland describes as a “nobody in charge” system, everyone had better be partly responsible for the good of the whole.

### **Leadership Skills**

Without proposing a definitive list, the following five skills seem to me to be critically important:

- **Agreement Building. Leaders must have skills in conflict resolution, in mediation, in compromise, in coalition building. The capacity to build trust is essential to these activities, as are judgment and the political skills to deal with multiple constituencies.**
- **Networking. In a swiftly changing environment established linkages among institutions may no longer serve or may have been disrupted. Leaders must be skilled in creating or recreating the linkages necessary to get things done.**

- **Exercising Non-jurisdictional Power.** In an earlier day, corporate leaders or government agency heads settled most matters through internal decisions; and they had the power to do so—power inherent in their institutional positions. The new leaders, dealing endlessly and on many fronts with groups over whom they have no jurisdiction, find that often the power of their institutional position simply is not decisive. They must know how to exercise the other legitimate forms of power—the power of the media and of public opinion, the power of ideas, the power that accrues to those who understand how various systems work, and so on.
- **Institution Building.** With problems so much more complex than they used to be, the leader's untutored good judgment no longer suffices. Even highly educated judgment no longer suffices. So, as I pointed out earlier, we construct systems, build problem-solving capability into them, and then choose leaders who can preside over the systems. Institutionalizing the leaders' tasks enhances continuity and predicatability. As a general rule, we no longer want leaders to spend time coping with specific problems. Micromanagement is not the function of leaders. The task of leaders is to have a sense of where the whole system should be going and to institutionalize the problem solving that will get it there. The pace of change is such that leaders find themselves constantly rebuilding to meet altered circumstances.
- **Flexibility.** A year or so ago, I met with a group of Silicon Valley Capitalists to hear their views on the kind of leader/manager it takes to run the start-up companies in which they invest. At the end of the meeting I offered them a comparison. A few years earlier the officers of one of the biggest corporations in the world asked me to spend two days with their board, and I had the impression of immensely able officers piloting a huge ocean liner—a liner that set a steady course and held to it through the roughest seas. Now, as I listened to my Silicon Valley friends describe what it takes to lead one of their fast-moving companies, the image that sprang to mind was of someone steering a kayak through the perilous white water of the Salmon River.

### **Renewing**

Leaders discover that the great systems over which they preside require continuous renewal. Organizations and societies age.

The problems of today go unsolved while people mumble the slogans of yesterday. Group loyalties block self-examination. One sees organizations whose structure and processes were designed to solve problems that no longer exist. If regenerative forces are not at work, the end is predictable.

The pace of change is swift. Institutions that have lost their capacity to adapt pay a heavy price.



Continuous renewal is necessary. Leaders must understand how and why human systems age, and must know how the processes of renewal may be set in motion. The purposes are always the same:

- To renew and reinterpret values that have been encrusted with hypocrisy, corroded by cynicism or simply abandoned; and to generate new value when needed.
- To liberate energies that have been imprisoned by outmoded procedures and habits of thought.
- To re-energize forgotten goals or to generate new goals appropriate to new circumstances.
- To achieve, through science and other modes of exploration, new understandings leading to new solutions
- To foster the release of human possibilities, through education and lifelong growth.

Much of this is implied in the valuable distinction made by James MacGregor Burns between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership accepts and works within the structure as it is. Transformational leadership renews.

### **Organization—Young and Old**

The effective contemporary leader lives with the idea of renewal.

The earliest stage in the life of an organization is very likely to be all motion and commotion.

A mature organization is generally quite orderly. It knows where it is going. It has its budgeting well in hand, its procedures clearly defined. But it is burdened with rules; it has a pecking order; it exhibits the turf syndrome. Instead of bold path finding, there is patient advance along established routes.

After I visited one new organization recently, I told a friend it reminded me of eight small boys chasing a chipmunk: lots of noise and confusion, scrambling in every direction, a lot of wasted energy—but great flexibility and unlimited motivation!

At the other extreme, there are mature organizations that remind one of a powerful locomotive steaming down the line: everything functioning predictably, energy being efficiently transformed into forward motion, but no learning, no innovation, no possibility of going anywhere except where the tracks lead.

### **The Process of Maturing**

People become prisoners of their procedures. The means and methods were originally designed to achieve some specific end, but when circumstances change and new means are called for, it turns out that the old ones have become sacrosanct: the means have become ends in themselves—no longer effective perhaps, but enshrined. People forget what they set out to do. It happens all the time. So the mature organization ends up with a web of customs, procedures, written and unwritten rules that is extremely hard to cut through.

Organizations are created by their founders to serve vibrant, living purposes. But all too often the founding purposes fade and what finally get served are the purposes of institutional self-enhancement.

### **Continuity and Change**

**Leaders must understand the interweaving of continuity and change. Particularly important to a society's continuity are its long-term purposes and values. Those purposes and values also evolve in the long run; but by being relatively durable, they enable a society to absorb change without losing its distinctive character and style. Purposes and values do much to determine the direction of change. They ensure that a society is not buffeted in all directions by every wind that blows.**

The solutions of today will be out of date tomorrow; the system in equilibrium today will be thrown out of balance tomorrow.

Leaders should understand the point made by Francis Bacon 350 years ago. "he who will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for time is the greatest innovator."

### **The Trance of Non-renewal**

The problems of the aging organization are system. It is not a question of healthy systems whose leaders happen to lack creativity.

Organizational arrangements designed to deal with old realities must be redesigned. Individuals who are functioning far below their potential must awakened.

### **The Release of Talent and Energy**

Leaders must give thought to how human talent and energy are handled in the systems over which they preside.

Nothing is more vital to the renewal of an organization than the arrangements by which able people are nurtured and moved into positions where they can make their greatest contribution.

An organization rewards managers for producing, for marketing, for staying within budget, for running a tight ship, but rarely rewards them for developing people.

If a leader has the will to develop people, there is no great mystery in how to do it. Bring them in on decisions. Delegate. Fed them responsibility. Stretch them. And change their assignments periodically.

### **Motivation**

**The leader who is concerned with renewal, there is hardly any subject more important than motivation. In an aging organization or society people have generally lost sight of the goals they once had, and are deeply preoccupied with the procedures and routines of the present. Only if they regain a concern for goals toward which they are prepared to strive with energy can they break out of the prison they have build for themselves. It requires effort to break the bonds of habit and entrenched procedures.**

**Any organization planning for a major renewal must bring into key positions individuals who have a gift for motivating and are themselves highly motivated.**

### **Pluralism, Alternatives, Dissent**

Leaders conscious of the need for renewal create a climate favorable to problem solving, risk taking and experimentation. They create the seedbeds for new solutions. The ever-renewing organization (or society) is not one which is convinced that it enjoys eternal youth. It knows that it is forever growing old and must do something about it. It knows that it is always producing deadwood, and must for that reason attend to its seedbeds.

### **Internal and External Communication**

**If an organization is to remain vital, it must have easy, open, fluid communication among all its parts. Aging organizations create rigid internal walls that block free communications.**

The aging organization also tends to reduce communication with the outside world. It hears less, and the increasingly dogmatic convictions it entertains serve to filter what it does hear. This is unfortunate because messages from outside can be a stimulus to renewal.

The leader's task is to open the doors and windows.

### **The Visible Future**

For leaders, timing is immensely important. Wise leaders sharpen their sense of things to come.

It works only if they let their minds be open and keep a sense of the movement of things. I am not suggesting that they sway with every breeze that blows; but they had better know which way the wind is blowing and whether it is a zephyr or a gale.

There is such a thing as “the visible future.”

Most significant changes are preceded by a long train of premonitory events. Sometimes the events are readily observable.

...the future announces itself from afar. But most people are not listening. The noisy clatter of the present drowns out the tentative sounds of things to come.

### **Reorganization**

Leaders turn to reorganization to remedy many of the ailments of corporate or governmental bureaucracies.

Sometimes the only way to cut through is to break the pattern of relationships; and that, in fact, is the hidden agenda of many reorganizations.

### **The Leader's Need for Renewal**

H.G. Wells said, “Leaders should lead as far as they can and then vanish. Their ashes should not choke the fire they have lit.”

### **Stress**

Stress may seriously affect leaders and inhibit their capacity to provide renewing leadership. One source of stress is hostile criticism, and all leaders are targets.

### **Talent and Energy**

The consideration leaders must never forget is that the key to renewal is the release of human energy and talent.

Every corporation should have a philosophy of individual growth and renewal built into its personnel and career development practices.

## **Constituents**

How can we define the role of leaders in the way that most effectively releases the creative energies of followers in the pursuit of shared purposes? The concept of sharing leadership tasks responds to that question.

## **Citizens' Organizations**

Leaders should have a nurturing relationship to their constituency, should empower their followers, should enable group members to achieve goals of the members' own choosing.

To speak out is one thing, to be listened to is quite another.

## **Sharing Leadership Tasks**

Edgar H. Schein, in his valuable book, *Organizational Psychology*, wrote:

Leadership is best thought of as a function within the organization...It can be distributed among the members of a group...and is not automatically vested in...whoever has formal authority. Good leadership and good membership, therefore, blend into each other...in an effective organization. It is just as much the task of a member to help the group reach its goals as it the task of the formal leader.

## **The Leadership Team**

One manifestation of sharing is the leadership team, the few individuals who work closely with the leader.

Team leadership enhances the possibility that different styles of leadership—and different skills—can be brought to bear simultaneously. If the leader is a visionary with little talent for practical steps, a team member who is a naturally gifted agenda setter can provide priceless support. The important thing is not that the leader cover all bases but that the team collectively do so.

The best leader is one who ensures that the appropriate talent and skill are built into the team.

One cannot expect much from a leader mired in chores that should have been left to well-chosen teammates. But recruiting team members of high caliber is not necessarily the first impulse of individuals who hold power. All too often they recruit individuals who have as their prime qualities an unswerving loyalty to the boss and no power base of their own that would make insubordination feasible. When those criteria prevail, what might have been a leadership team becomes, all too often, a ruling clique or circle of sycophants.

Such a clique tends to increase the leader's isolation, and to withhold the loyal but candid criticism so necessary to individuals in positions of power.

A curious but familiar phenomenon is the leader who does not form a team; that is, one who may hire able subordinates but never creates the trust and sense of mutual dependence that characterize a team.

The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits. Leaders at every level can have access to sound and honest counselors if they want them.

### **How Sharing Occurs**

The sharing of leadership tasks extends far beyond the leadership team. Indeed, it can extend down through all levels and out to the farthest limits of the system.

### **Advantages of Sharing Leadership Tasks**

The taking of responsibility is at the heart of leadership. To the extent that leadership tasks are shared, responsibility is shared.

The wider sharing of leadership tasks could sharply lower the barriers to leadership. For every person now leading, there are many more who could share leadership tasks, testing their skills, enjoying the lift of spirit that comes with assuming responsibility, and putting their feet on the lower rungs of a ladder that rises to higher leadership responsibilities.

### **Accountability**

Hold power accountable.

Those who are granted power must be held accountable.

### **Systems That Ensure Accountability**

It comes down to the task of designing the system in such a way as to ensure accountability. The most effective strategy ever devised is, of course, the rule of law. The emergence of the principle so well expressed by Pliny in the first century, "non est princeps super leges, sed leges super principem" [The prince is not above the laws but the laws above the prince], was a historic breakthrough in the domestication of power. The rule of law requires that power be exercised within a set of explicit and universally applicable constraints.

Thomas Jefferson said, "In questions of power...let us hear no more of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

Less celebrated as a social strategy, but equally effective is the dispersion of power: break it up, spread it around, never allow it to become too highly concentrated in one person, one institution or one group.

The Founding Fathers started with the structure of government itself. The separation of powers, the reservation of power to the states, and similar measures did about as much as could be done to insure that no one element within the governmental structure would gain excessive power.

Our eighteenth-century leaders like the admonition, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,” but it turns out that free citizens are not eternally vigilant. They keep dozing off, and on one or another from their liberties are infringed on.

Power must be held accountable—accountable to someone, somehow. The corporate chief executive officer should be accountable to the board of directors and to the shareholders, which is often not the case. Stanley Hiller, Jr., chief executive officer of York International, says that the most serious weakness in American business is “the flaw in corporate governance” that permits the CEO to escape strict accountability and to cling to power despite gross failures of leadership.

**Most human talent remains undeveloped.**

### **Obstacles to Leadership**

#### **Creeping Crises**

Effective leadership demands understanding of the complex systems and processes by which our communities and our nation function.

#### **The rigors of Public Life**

A character in Machiavelli’s *La Mandragola* says, “Non e il mele senza le mosche” [You can’t have the honey with the flies].

### **Steps That Can Be Taken**

**Leaders must help bring younger leaders along. They can create the conditions and a climate of challenge, expectation and opportunity. They can remove the obstacles, unearth the buried gifts and release the world-renewing energies.**

### **Communication**

If one had to name a single, all-purpose instrument of leadership, it would be communication.

Most of the communication necessary for leadership can be taught.

### **Outside the Classroom**

“What is the most important thing to have in mind if I think I have it in me to lead?” I said “The most important thing to have in mind is that leaders need followers.”

**The program called Leadership America, sponsored by the International Leadership Center, provides college students between their junior and senior years with a rewarding and demanding ten-week program combining class work and field experience.**

### **The Leader as Motivator**

Among other things, a leader must recognize the needs of followers or constituents, help them see how those needs can be met, and give them confidence that they can accomplish that result through their own efforts.

Leaders can accomplish a great deal if they understand the needs of their constituents.

If the leader can help people to see how both personal and group needs can be met by appropriate shared action, pressure is no longer necessary.

Passive allegiance is not enough today. Individuals must see themselves as having a positive duty to nurture and continuously reconstruct the community of which they are a part. They must be committed to a continuous reweaving of the social fabric, and leaders have an important role in bringing that about.

### **The Role of Leaders**

In any functioning society everything—leadership and everything else—takes place within a set of shared beliefs concerning the standards of acceptable behavior that must govern individual members. One of the tasks of leadership—at all levels—is to revitalize those shared beliefs and values, and to draw on them as sources of motivation for the exertions required of the group. Leaders can help to keep the value fresh.

They can help us understand our history and our present dilemmas.



Leaders must conceive and articulate goals in ways that lift people out of their petty preoccupations and unite them toward higher ends.

Leaders must not only have their own commitments, they must move the rest of us toward commitment.

They do not ask more than the community can give, but often ask more than it intended to give or thought it possible to give.

### **Attitudes Toward the Future**

At the heart of sustained morale and motivation lie two ingredients that appear somewhat contradictory: on the one hand, positive attitudes toward the future and toward what one can accomplish through one's own intentional acts, and on the other hand, recognition that life is not easy and that nothing is ever finally safe.

**Leaders must help people believe that they can be effective, that their goals are possible of accomplishment, that there is a better future that they can move toward through their own efforts.**

John Deere company said of Bill Hewitt, then the chief executive officer, "He made us realize how good we were."

Of course, leaders must not only help their followers take a positive view of the future, they must seek to correct the objective circumstances that are producing negative attitudes.

### **The Will To Act**

In the conventional mode people want to know whether the followers believe in the leader; a more searching question is whether the leader believes in the followers.

If our leaders at all levels are to be capable of lifting us and moving us, they are going to have to believe in the people of this nation...



