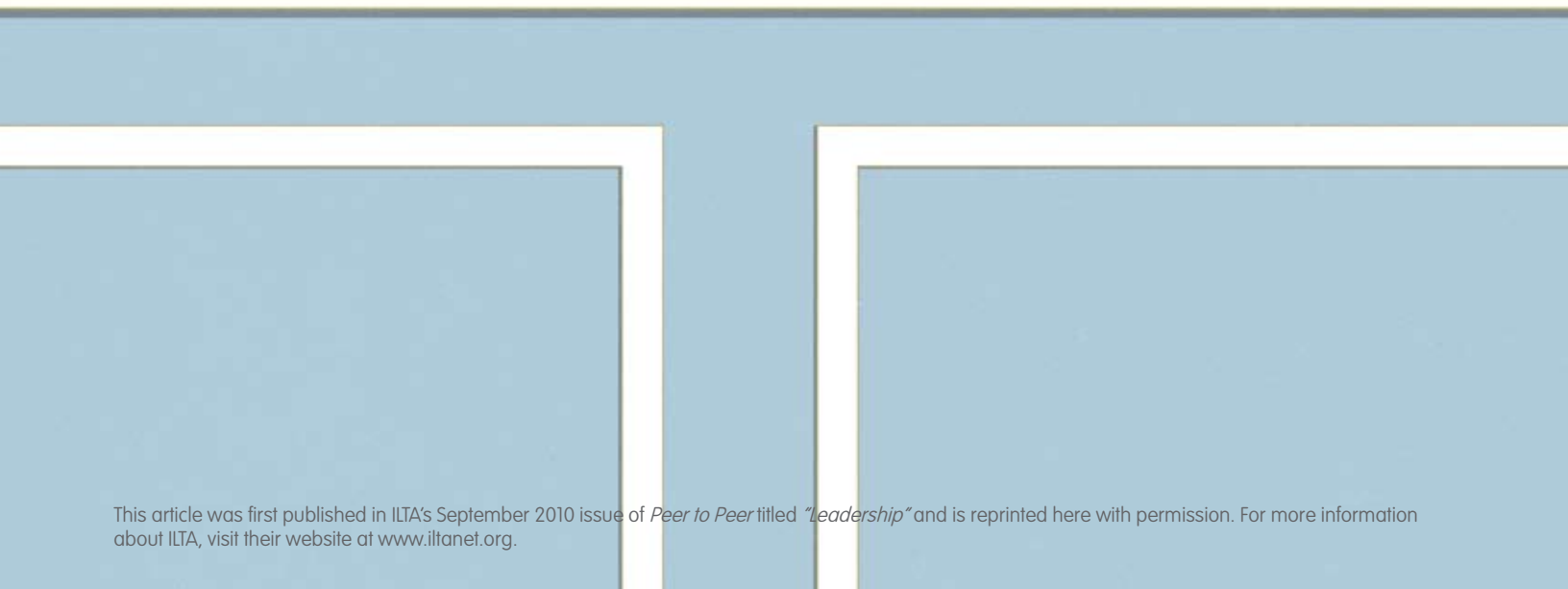



**THE WIZARDRY
OF LEADING
OTHERS AND
YOURSELF
WITH
COURAGE, HEART
AND BRAINS**





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In his book, “On Becoming a Leader,” Warren Bennis points out that leadership remains the most studied, yet least understood, topic in all the social sciences. In spite of a multitude of recent studies on leadership, it is still, like beauty or love, something we know when we see, but that we cannot easily define or produce on demand.

IN ORDER TO LEAD OTHERS, WE MUST FIRST KNOW OURSELVES

In order to truly know ourselves, we must be willing to look in the mirror and accept who we are — our strengths and weaknesses, our successes and failures, our goals and shortcomings. We have to be self-aware. Self-awareness is defined as “conscious knowledge of one’s own character, feelings, motives, and desires.” We cannot pretend to be someone we are not. Self-awareness requires honesty and courage. It is not easy to get in touch with what we are thinking or feeling and to face the truth about who we are. Here are a few questions that can help you explore who you are.

- **What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Would your spouse, friends and family agree?**
- **What motivates you? Why?**
- **Think about three situations where you are most at ease. What specific elements are present when you feel that way?**
- **What do you fear most in your life? Why?**
- **When you disagree with someone’s perspective, what do you do?**
- **How do your friends describe you? Do you agree or disagree? Why?**
- **What are your dreams for the future? What are you doing to achieve them?**

There are multiple assessments to help you learn more about yourself, your strengths and your preferred communication style. Learning more about yourself can free you to develop and nurture the natural talents you have, rather than forcing you to exert a lot of energy trying to be something you are not. Focus on your strengths rather than your weaknesses.

IN ORDER TO LEAD OTHERS, WE MUST FIRST FACE OUR DARK SIDE

One of the most difficult things for many leaders to admit and ultimately face is their dark side. The dark side develops slowly over our lifetimes and is often revealed in times of frustration or anger. It consists of our inner urges, compulsions, motivations and dysfunctions, and can be an agent for both good and bad in our lives. The raw materials of the dark side are pride, selfishness, self-deception and improper motives. Though we might not be aware of our dark side, it is often manifested in a drive to succeed, a strong desire to be liked or accepted, irrational fear, a need to control and perfectionism. People who ignore or refuse to acknowledge their dark side frequently have major failures in their leadership and then blame their failures on others or their circumstances, rather than taking personal responsibility.

The dark side, left unchecked, will result in compulsive leaders, narcissistic leaders, paranoid leaders, codependent leaders or passive-aggressive leaders. In reality, we are the sum of the experiences in our lives. The most successful and effective leaders recognize this and are able to separate fact from fiction in their childhood memories, while also understanding the role these memories have played in their personal development.

The purpose of this reflection is not to assign blame, but rather to gain self-understanding. If you want to understand yourself and your tendencies, you must reflect on areas of pain, sorrow and even rage. As you recall those events in your life, think about the feelings they generate. It is very often these feelings that are driving your behavior as a leader today. These feelings have likely created some unmet needs in your life, which you could be attempting to meet as an adult through your leadership. In some cases, freeing ourselves involves forgiveness and grace for ourselves and for others. Through self-awareness and by maintaining realistic expectations, we can keep our dark side in check.

According to the authors of “Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction,” the dark side develops slowly over our lifetimes and is often revealed in times of frustration or anger.

IN ORDER TO LEAD OTHERS, WE MUST FIRST LEAD OURSELVES

Many of today’s leaders lead from a personal deficit in self-leadership. They might lead others with vision and innovation, while in their personal lives, they suffer from a poor family life, poor health or financial collapse. Self-leadership requires a commitment to daily disciplines and learning, setting personal

and professional goals, taking initiative and caring for ourselves. We have to lead ourselves in order to effectively lead others.

A huge part of my personal self-leadership is accountability, which is defined as “an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions.” Accountability is a way to safeguard against poor judgment, unconscious motivations and self-deception. I openly share my goals, plans and intentions with a trusted group of other leaders and solicit their feedback. Others invested in my success will not accept excuses and ultimately will not allow me to fail. They speak the truth even if it is not what I want to hear. Being authentic and owning our shortcomings and failures builds trust and open communication. Authentic leaders openly share their intentions.

Indeed, sharing with a trusted group can help us keep the tendencies of the dark side in check. Every leader needs people who are invested enough in their success to speak the truth and to motivate them to strive for personal and professional growth. Self-accountability can also come from a commitment to self-awareness as achieved through disciplines such as solo retreats, journaling and daily quiet time set aside for planning and reflection. Consistent meetings with a mentor is another effective accountability strategy. It’s important to note that successful leaders not only have a mentor, but they also mentor others. Growth is found not only in exhibiting the disciplines and accountability required to grow, but also in giving of ourselves to others.

MANY LEADERS FALSELY BELIEVE THEIR AUTHORITY WILL COMPEL OTHERS TO FOLLOW

The reality is we ultimately follow those that we respect and those we trust. Respect and trust are the result of a variety of appeals leaders make that tap into our belief systems. The first appeal deals with issues of trust and transparency.

• Ethical Appeal — “Can I trust you?” (This is courage.)

People want to know, “Can I trust you? What are you really like? Is what I see what I get?”

For some of us, when we hear words like character and integrity, we actually think they mean something else, like “perfection,” or someone with no faults. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. People of high integrity make mistakes, too, but they are simply honest about their mistakes. In order to earn trust, we have to own our mistakes. Nothing ruins credibility faster than dishonesty and not taking responsibility

for our actions. The leadership crisis in America is not a crisis of competence, but a crisis of character.

Trusted leaders are examples of selfless character. They do not make bad decisions willfully, and they take responsibility for mistakes. Unlike narcissists, who believe everything orbits around their leadership, trusted leaders identify with their followers by demonstrating humility and a servant’s heart.

Credibility and trust are not optional if you want to be a successful leader. A common leadership myth is that if you want to get ahead, you have to be willing to put aside your values from time to time. Effective leaders know this is just not true. Warren Buffet said about leadership: “You need integrity, intelligence and energy to succeed. Integrity is totally a matter of choice — and it is habit-forming.” If your people understand you, you will get their attention. If they trust you, you will get their action. It takes courage to earn trust and to trust others.

Someone said it like this: “We want leaders who are a part of us, not apart from us.” People need and respond to leaders they can trust.

The second appeal leaders will utilize and people will look for involves the emotions.

• Emotional Appeal — “Do you care?” (This is heart.)

One of the most profound and most frequently quoted principles about influence is, “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” If you want to be esteemed as a leader, people need to know that you really do care about them. Trusted leaders invest in the lives of their followers.

One way to ensure people know you care is to be friendly. By friendly, I mean it in the sense of definitions like “expressing a liking for another person” or “communicating welcome” or “expressing a generally positive vibe.” Friendly messages convey “I enjoy your company” or “I am happy to see you” or simply “I’m open to your being here.” When you are friendly, others want to be with you and they want you to succeed.

Another way to ensure people know you care is to connect with them in a relevant way. Relevant connection is your capacity to connect with others’ interests, wants and needs. If you can accomplish this type of connection, people will feel more valued and validated.

Showing and exercising empathy with your followers demonstrates you care. Empathy is your ability to recognize, acknowledge and experience other people’s feelings. When you show someone empathy you assure them not only that you care but that you also understand them. You can be an empathetic leader by walking in someone’s shoes for a day and truly exploring their concerns or complaints from their perspective.

A critical component to empathy is truly listening — giving your full attention and your best effort at understanding what someone else has to say. You are absorbing and processing, not just hearing. We hear background music. When we really want to listen, we are working to connect with and value someone else.

Being authentic is another way to ensure your followers that you care. If you are honest with your followers about your own shortcomings, it is much easier to continue your journey of self-awareness and provide grace when others make mistakes. Be true to yourself and true to others — the grace and trust will follow.

The final essential appeal in gaining leadership traction concerns the intellect.

• **Rational Appeal — “Do you know what you’re talking about?” (This is brains.)**

Intelligence and logic, though contributing factors, are not the main ingredients in the rational appeal. The main ingredient is right thinking. By right thinking I mean you lead, you coach, you explain to people what they need to do, and you do it in such a way that people buy into it.

They know you know what you’re talking about, because you describe life like you’ve been living in their shoes. You take the time to relate versus just dictating what you think you want to happen. I have discovered that the more I live in reality about me, the more influential I can be. Living in reality about me means sharing my strengths and weaknesses, my successes and failures. It means owning my mistakes and not trying to hide them. It means leading by example and walking the walk.

It also means finishing well. Finishing well allows you to set goals, make commitments and gain credibility without losing trust throughout the process. If you are willing to consistently keep your word and finish well, you will be respected and will bring out the best in your followers.

Exceptional leaders surround themselves with people who are smarter and stronger, people who complement their weaknesses. They are not intimidated by people that think differently and are not afraid to speak their opinions and beliefs. Look at the strengths of the people surrounding you, and you will see the strength of your team and your future.

For people to really buy into you and your leadership, you must successfully make all three appeals: ethical, emotional and rational. If any of the three is absent, you cannot become an effective leader. In other words, on the yellow brick road of leadership, you need courage, heart and brains.

I’ll leave you with some words of wisdom from the Wizard of Oz to ponder . . . enjoy!

Scarecrow: I haven’t got a brain... only straw.

Dorothy: How can you talk if you haven’t got a brain?

Scarecrow: I don’t know... But some people without brains do an awful lot of talking... don’t they?

Dorothy: Yes, I guess you’re right.

Wizard of Oz: A heart is not judged by how much you love; but by how much you are loved by others.

Wizard of Oz: You, my friend, are a victim of disorganized thinking. You are under the unfortunate impression that just because you run away you have no courage; you’re confusing courage with wisdom.

Cowardly Lion: I’d be brave as a blizzard . . .

Tin Woodsman: I’d be gentle as a lizard . . .

Scarecrow: I’d be clever as a gizzard . . .

Dorothy: If the Wizard is a wizard who will serve.

Scarecrow: Then I’m sure to get a brain . . .

Tin Woodsman: A heart . . .

Dorothy: A home . . . [ILTA](#)



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