

## UNIT -1 DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS

### ESSENTIAL QUALITIES →

You cannot leave personality and character out of leadership. There are some qualities that you have to have. Basically you should possess, exemplify and perhaps even personify the qualities expected or required in your working group. I have emphasised that because it is so fundamental. Without it you will lack credibility. (Incidentally, here is one of the first differences between leaders and managers: the latter can be appointed over others in a hierarchy regardless of whether or not they have the required qualities.)

- ✓ Enthusiasm (intense and eager enjoyment, interest, or approval) - Can you think of any leader who lacks enthusiasm? It is very hard to do so, isn't it?
- ✓ Integrity. This is the quality that makes people trust you. And trust is essential in all human relationships – professional or private. 'Integrity' means both personal wholeness and adherence to values outside yourself – especially goodness and truth.
- ✓ Toughness. Leaders are often demanding people, uncomfortable to have around because their standards are high. They are resilient and tenacious. Leaders aim to be respected, but not necessarily popular.
- ✓ Fairness. Effective leaders treat individuals differently but equally. They do not have favourites. They are impartial in giving rewards and penalties for performance.
- ✓ Warmth. Cold fish do not make good leaders. Leadership involves your heart as well as your mind. Loving what you are doing and caring for people are equally essential.
- ✓ Humility. This is an odd quality, but characteristic of the very best leaders. The opposite to humility is arrogance. Who wants to work for an arrogant manager? The signs of a good leader are a willingness to listen and a lack of an overweening ego.
- ✓ Confidence. Confidence is essential. People will sense whether or not you have it. So developing self-confidence is always the preliminary to becoming a leader. But don't let it become overconfidence, the first station on the track leading to arrogance.

what you are is an important strand in your leadership. Remember the Zulu proverb, 'I cannot hear what you are saying to me because you are shouting at me.' This strand in your leadership is also one of the three main paths up the mountain, the three lines of answering those core questions 'What is leadership?' and 'Why does one person rather than another emerge as the leader in a group?'

### GENERIC LEADERSHIP TRAITS →

**1) Initiative** → The leader basically seeks to change something that exists with something better. This desire is at the basis of most leadership activity. While most people are happy with the status quo, a leader will go ahead and challenge it, and try to create something new.

For example, Narayana Murthy could have chosen to remain content in his job, but he chose to start his own company with a meager investment. Things were tough, and no one thought his software development company would succeed. He put in his life's savings and along with some of his friends, went ahead with his venture. And, in the process, he created history. His company not only made him a millionaire, but also created several millionaires with its employee stock scheme.

The desire to chart new paths and make new inroads is inborn in a leader. That is why a leader is seldom satisfied with what is there. He/she wants to create a new scheme of things.

**2) Positive attitude** → Leaders have that faith in their dreams that tell them that they can make it if they try hard enough. This combined with a positive, can-do attitude pushes them ahead.

Abraham Lincoln came from an impoverished family. He had to struggle for an education. He was turned away from several jobs saying he was not suitable. People treated him shabbily at every point of his life. Yet, he was determined to prove himself, and prove he did. Never did he lose his positive outlook towards life, even in the face of disappointment and hopelessness.

Leaders who are effective never lose confidence in themselves, even in the face of adversity. They believe in a better tomorrow, a brighter future, and work steadily towards the goal.

**3) Confidence, the hallmark of all leaders** → What is a leader without a confident attitude? Self confidence, an important leadership traits, marks a good leader, and makes him/her believe in his/her worth.

Self efficacy, self esteem, and self assuredness, the hallmarks of a well balanced personality, are all present in a leader. Whether he/she goes about proclaiming it or not, an effective leader's actions are marked by a quiet confidence. This confidence trickles down to followers, who though initially skeptic, slowly start believing in their leader and in their own abilities.

When M.K. Gandhi started the non-violence movement in India, with the intention of putting an end to British rule in India, no one believed it would work. The British were seasoned rulers, backed by the strength of an Empire, and had resisted all attempts of removing them from India. Several freedom fighters had perished trying to make them go. So people did not put much faith in the non-cooperation movement started by Gandhiji, which he had specified would have to be kept totally non-violent. But, Gandhiji had full confidence in his ideas, and went ahead with his movement. Slowly, people joined him and the movement grew in strength and magnitude. Eventually, it did shake the foundations of the British empire, and forced them to leave India.

**4) Vision, or the ability to see the big picture** → George Washington Carver said, "Where there is no vision, there is no hope." A leader always sees the big picture, the ultimate goal, the overall reality. When everybody is busy worrying over petty problems, the leader rises above all and shows the way by his/her vision. That is why most CEOs and business leaders embody the vision of their enterprise. This is one of the most important leadership traits.

Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Airlines, is a walking talking version of his company's vision. Branson wrote in his autobiography of the decision to start an airline:

"My interest in life comes from setting myself huge, apparently unachievable challenges and trying to rise above them ... from the perspective of wanting to live life to the full, I felt that I had to attempt it." He himself has taken innumerable risks in business while attempting dare devilry acts in real life and creating world records for flying. His ability to dream big and turn ideas into realities has led to his company becoming one of the largest aviation companies in Europe.

**5) Sense of responsibility** → While a leader takes risks and dreams big, he/she is also rooted in reality. The sense of responsibility towards task completion, towards follower satisfaction, and commitment towards organizational goals remains topmost in his/her mind. Rarely will a good leader ditch his/her people and run away.

On the other hand, an effective leader will assist followers to achieve their goals and develop their potential in the process of completing the task in hand. He/she will provide all kinds of support and encouragement to his/her people.

As Robert Blake and Jane Moulton suggested through the Managerial Grid (later modified to Leadership Grid), the best leader is the one who believes in Team Management (9.9). That leader is a team player, a person who can optimize both people management and task management.

**6) Commitment to goals** → Aun San Suu Kyi had to struggle all her life in her mission to establish democracy in Myanmar. Her life-long efforts and keen commitment have shown fruit finally, now that the first democratically elected party is being sworn in, in the country.

Personal commitment and single-minded devotion to the goal are leadership traits that characterize a leader and distinguish him/her from a whole lot of dreamers who lose hope as soon as they face the first hint of adversity. An effective leader not only dreams big, he/she has the conviction to pursue those dreams and make them real.

**7) Integrity or personal honesty** → A good leader is intrinsically honest to him/herself and his/her followers. People follow a leader who leads by example. A person who makes grand statements and lives the opposite philosophy cannot hope to become a leader. A leader lives his/her vision and values, personifies the ideals he/she preaches.

Azim Premji and Bill Gates are great practitioners of philanthropy and humanity. Both have pledged large amounts of personal wealth to the cause of charity and service of mankind. We look up to them because there is no gap between what they believe in and what they actually do.

The concept of Transformational Leadership endorses the belief that leaders should lead by example and live their ideals. People look up to leaders for inspiration and guidance. An effective leader is always a person of impeccable integrity.

**8) Being Empathetic** → The ancient Indian king Asoka was a great example of empathy and compassion. After a particularly bloody war, he realised the pain of all those injured and dying around him, and swore off war and violence for life. The great Buddha, who was his guru, embodied empathy and compassion himself. He had left his kingdom and palace and followed a path of renunciation, as he was unable to come to terms with the cruelty and suffering around him.

Not all leaders can hope to aspire to that kind of greatness. But all effective leaders have a high level of empathy for people around them. They are open to the problems of their people and make an effort to remove obstacles and roadblocks that hamper their efforts.

“I, me, myself” does not work for a leader, who always thinks in terms of “we” and “us”.

**9) Willingness to take risks** → An effective leader has a propensity to take calculated risks. Without risks nothing spectacular can be achieved. A leader needs to risk taking chances, challenging norms, and backing people even if they err once or twice. Most crucially, a leader must believe in his/her ideas enough to risk going ahead on them. As Tom Peters put it in a nutshell, “Test fast, fail fast, adjust fast”.

Can you imagine what would be the state of personal computing had not Bill Gates forged ahead with his idea of making Microsoft a household name? Or if Ratan Tata would have been content to sit and bask in the past glory of the Tata group, and not forayed into fresh ventures?

Risk averse is not something that leaders can afford to have in today’s uncertain times, where being stagnant signals fading away.

**10) Acceptance of failure** → “Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.”— Robert F. Kennedy

Closely linked with the trait of risk taking is the ability to accept failure. Effective leaders know that when they take risks, not all ventures will succeed. The ability to take failure on their chin, learn from past mistakes, and forge ahead with this knowledge marks effective leaders.

“I failed 3 times in college. I applied 30 times to get a job but I have always been rejected. When KFC came to China for the first time, we were 24 to apply and I was the only one to be dismissed. I wanted to go into the police and 5 postulants, I was the only one not to be accepted. I applied 10 times to return to Harvard University USA and I was rejected.” Jack Ma, Creator of Alibaba.

So if the thought of personal failure gives you sleepless nights, you must learn to face it squarely in the eye, like these leaders have done.

Also, in today’s turbulent times and uncertain realities in business, failing is a reality that all of us have to come to terms with. Things go wrong, plans go kaput, a dream project goes bust. What does a leader do then? Does he/she go about blaming all and sundry for things that didn’t turn out as expected? Does he/she desert team members and make a quick exit? No. The leader sticks around, giving encouragement and support to team members, assuring top management that failure will not recur and planning anew for the future. Leadership traits of perseverance is the hallmark of an effective leader.

Besides these generic leadership traits outlined above, each leader has his/her own unique abilities for succeeding in life. An effective leader is also known to have the following abilities:

➤ Conceptual skills	➤ Adaptability	➤ Personal motivation	➤ Communication skills
➤ Intelligence	➤ Energy and drive	➤ Maturity to handle various situations	➤ Social skills

In short we can say that a good many of leadership skills and leadership traits may be present within us, but we are not aware of those. When life throws us challenges, we have a choice to sink or swim. Leadership traits give us the impetus to swim against all barriers and emerge a winner. We need to look within for reserves of strength that are hidden and unlock

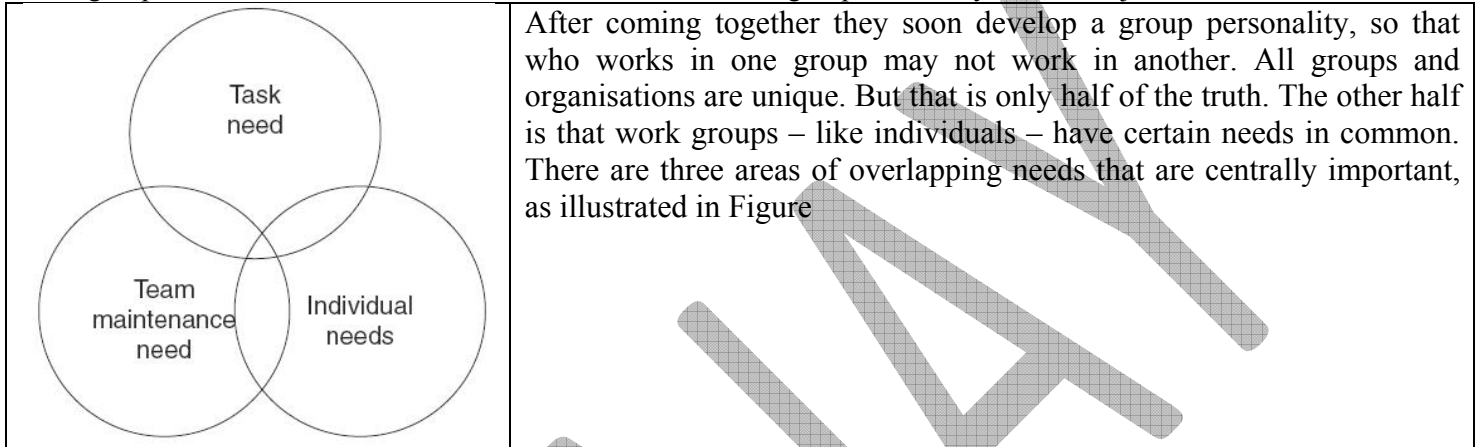
our potential to become truly successful. Effective leaders inspire us to face failure, take charge of our lives and create something good for ourselves and for society.

### TEAM MAINTENANCE NEED →

#### CASE STUDY

A third line of thinking about leadership focuses on the group. This group approach, as it may be called, leads us to see leadership in terms of functions that meet group needs: what has to be done. In fact, if you look closely at matters involving leadership, there are always three elements or variables:

- the leader – qualities of personality and character;
- the situation – partly constant, partly varying;
- the group – the followers: their needs and values. In fact, work groups are always different, just as individuals are.



### TOWARDS THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP →

#### CASE STUDY

What has all this got to do with leadership? Simply this: in order to achieve the common task and to maintain teamwork, certain functions have to be performed. And a function is what you do, as opposed to a quality, which is an aspect of what you are. For example, someone has to define the objectives, make a plan, or hold the team together if it is threatened by disruptive forces.

Now we are on firm ground. For you can learn to provide the functions of leadership that are called for by task, team and individual needs. This is the entrance door to effective leadership. Moreover, you can – by practice, study, experience and reflection – learn to do the functions with skill: they will become your leadership skills. That does not mean that you will be performing all of them all of the time. But they will be like sharp, bright and well-oiled tools in your tool box, ready for instant use when need calls.

### ROLE AS LEADER →

#### CASE STUDY

You can now be crystal clear about your role as a leader. Let me explain the common but often misused word role. A metaphor drawn from the theatre, it points to the part assigned or assumed in the drama. In its wider social use, a role can be roughly defined as the expectations that people have of you. Of course, if different people have different expectations, you may experience role conflict. You may find, for example, that there is considerable tension at certain times in your life between the expectations of your parents, those of your life partner and those of your children. We do not expect people to act outside their roles in the context of work. For instance, if a police officer stopped your car simply to tell you a joke that had been heard on television the previous night, most of us would – like Queen Victoria – not be amused. We do not expect police officers to behave in that way.

This is where the three-circle model comes in: what it does for you is to define the leader's role in a visual way. People expect their leaders to help them to achieve the common task, to build the synergy of teamwork and to respond to individuals and meet their needs. The overlapping circles integrate these three facets of the role.

Following the analogy of light, the leadership functions are like the spectrum of colours of the rainbow when a sunbeam is refracted through a prism.

### TURNING THE CORE LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS INTO SKILLS →



Remember always that – because the three areas of task, team and individual overlap so much – any function will tend to affect all three circles. Take planning, for example. At first sight that appears to be solely a task function. Yet there is nothing like a bad plan to break up a team or frustrate an individual: it hits all three circles. Another general factor to bear in mind is that – as I have mentioned already – leadership exists on different levels:

- team leadership: you are leading a team of about five to 20 people;
- operational leadership: you are leading a significant unit in the business or organisation, composed of a number of teams whose leaders report to you;
- strategic leadership: you are leading a whole business or organisation, with overall accountability for the two levels of leadership below you.

The functional approach to leadership set out here is also sometimes called action-centred leadership. A function is one of a group of related actions contributing to development or maintenance, just as each part of the body has its function in relation to the whole. ‘Function’ comes from a Latin word meaning performance. Sometimes it is used more widely to mean what I have called role – the special kind of activity proper to a professional position. Are you functional as a leader? In other words, are you capable of performing the regular functions expected of a leader?

### Defining the task

‘Task’ is a very general word. It simply means ‘something that needs to be done’, usually something that you are required to do. Generally speaking, people in teams or organisations have some idea of what they are there to do, but that general sense needs to be focused on to an objective that is:

- clear
- concrete;
- time-limited;
- realistic;
- challenging;
- capable of evaluation.

By the last point I mean that there is a simple ‘success criterion’ that will enable you – and the team – to know that the objective has been achieved. If your target or goal is to reach the top of Mount Everest, for example, you will know when you attain it. In many other areas of human endeavour, of course, the success criteria are far less obvious.

Leadership is also about answering the question why as well as what. A boss may tell you what to do in a specific way, but a leader will explain or convey to you why as a first and important step on the road to your free and willing cooperation – the hallmark of all true leadership. There is an overlap here with motivation, or giving others a sufficient reason or grounds for action, which we shall discuss shortly. Here I want to stay within the task circle and suggest that all leaders should be able to relate an objective to the wider aims and purpose of the organisation. In other words, they need to be able to think – and often to speak – in terms of a set of directions. When they do so they will be moving from the particular to the more general, from the concrete to the more abstract. If you were in Mike Wilson’s shoes you could explain why the week’s objective is important in terms of the company’s aims. Equally, those aims have been identified and are being tackled in order to achieve the corporate purpose.

Coming the other way down Jacob’s Ladder, you will be answering the question how. How are we in Gaia going to stay at the leading edge of profitably making and selling drilling equipment? Answer: by moving forward along the open-ended but directional paths indicated by our aims – improving quality, increasing market share and creating new products. You will notice that Gaia are taking change by the hand before it takes them by the throat. Change is perhaps the most important factor that calls for leadership as opposed to mere management. Modern English lead is related to Old English words meaning ‘a way, journey’ and ‘to travel’. It is a journey word. If you are not on a journey, don’t bother with leadership – just settle for management.

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Hence leaders at all levels should stimulate and focus a sense of direction. ‘Vision’ literally means to see where you are going. Allied with some creative thinking, it can provide a new direction for a group or an organisation. Change always brings the necessity to think very hard about your purpose, as well as your aims and objectives, in the context of the rapid changes in markets, technology, and economic and social life. That kind of thinking is the prime responsibility of strategic

leaders, but if they are wise they will involve their operational and team leaders in this process as well. You need to understand the why behind the objectives you are being asked to achieve (see ‘Checklist: defining the task’).

➤ Planning	➤ Briefing	➤ Controlling	➤ Evaluating	➤ Systems
➤ Motivating	➤ Organising	➤ Time management	➤ Administration	

### DEVELOPING LEADER IN YOU →

Use class notes & Case Study

### LEAD AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL →

Case Study

‘Strategic leadership’, a phrase that I coined in the 1970s for the work of the leader of an organisation, is an expansion of strategy. In ancient Greek, strategy is composed of two words: stratos, a large body of people such as an army in camp, and eggy, leader (the English word hegemony, leadership among nations, derives from it). So strategy in our modern sense – as contrasted with tactics – is only one small segment of what the Greeks meant by the word. For them it encompassed the whole art of being a commander-in-chief, including principally what we call leadership.

You need to prepare yourself for strategic leadership as thoroughly as you can – this chapter may give you some clues as to the path you should take. Never let it be said of you what the Roman historian Tacitus once wrote of Emperor Galba: ‘No one would have doubted his ability to reign had he never been emperor.’

What fits a person to fulfil this role? It is clearly a demanding and challenging one, even though there are professional staff at hand – sometimes in cohorts – to help the strategic leader where the responsibilities are great.

You will need awareness, understanding and skill in the threecircle model. A thorough knowledge of your business is essential. Personal qualities mentioned already, such as enthusiasm, integrity, fairness, toughness, calmness, humanity, resilience and a measure of humility, are also important. You also need to be able to think clearly and reason cogently.

### THE FUNCTIONS OF A STRATEGIC LEADER → Use examples discussed in the class room

<u>Function</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
Providing direction for the organisation as a whole	Purpose, vision
Getting strategy and policy right	Strategic thinking and planning
Making it happen (overall executive responsibility)	Operational/administration
Organising or reorganising (balance of whole and parts)	Organisation fitness to situational requirement
Releasing the corporate spirit	Energy, morale, confidence, esprit de corps
Relating the organisation to other organisations and society as a whole	Allies, partners, stakeholders, political, society
Choosing today’s leaders and developing tomorrow’s leaders	Teaching and leading by example – a learning culture

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM →

Case Study

‘It is easy to find a thousand soldiers but very difficult to find a general,’ says the Chinese proverb. One reason is that the combination of the necessary intellect with proven inspirational ability as a leader is very rare. I don’t mean academic scholarship or what is commonly called being clever. ‘Too much intellect is not necessary in war,’ Napoleon once wrote in a letter to his brother Joseph. ‘Probably the most desirable attribute of all is that a man’s judgement should be above the common level. Success in war is based on prudence, good conduct and experience.’

The Greeks, of course, had a word for it. The essential quality they looked for in a strategic leader – essential for leading one’s personal life too – was phronesis. Translated into Latin as prudentia and thus into English as prudence, it really means practical wisdom. You may like to reflect upon my suggestion that practical wisdom is composed of three principal ingredients: intelligence, experience and goodness. That is why we call Gandhi or Nelson Mandela wise, but not Hitler,

Stalin or Saddam Hussein.

A key point to remember about strategic leadership is that in all but the smallest organisations the role is too big for one person to do it all him- or herself. You have to be able to delegate effectively, leaving yourself time to think and time for people. You may even share the role (as a chairman and chief executive do). Be that as it may, you will certainly need to build a strategic leadership team around you – including the senior operational heads – to ensure that you meet the challenges of the three circles in these turbulent times of change.

## LEADERSHIP FOR DESIRABLE CHANGE →

### Case Study

Change and leadership are closely linked. Change throws up the need for leaders; leaders bring about change. As the proverb says, ‘The bird carries the wings and the wings carry the bird.’ You can manage the effects of change maybe, but positive, desirable change always calls for leadership.

That principle, incidentally, not only applies to your organisation as you navigate its path forward on the turbulent seas of change. It is true, too, of society at large. Democracy always calls for good leaders – and leaders for good. ‘Men and women make history’, President Harry S Truman said, ‘and not the other way round. In periods where there is no leadership society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skilful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.’

*Your position never gives you the right to command. It only imposes on you the duty of so living your life that others can receive your orders without being humiliated. Dag Hammarskjöld*

## GROW LEADERS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION →

### Case Study

When you are young, or at least upon the early rungs of your career, you are understandably focused upon developing to the full your own potential as a leader, but once you are in a leadership role at team level you have a responsibility for developing the individuals in your team (the third circle), and that includes their abilities as leaders. At the strategic level, so important is this work of fostering effective leaders for today’s performance and tomorrow’s growth that it constitutes one of the seven core functions that together make up the role. How do you do it?

- 1) develop a strategy for leadership development
- 2) selection
- 3) training for leadership
- 4) career development
- 5) line managers as leadership developers
- 6) culture
- 7) the chief executive

Finding greatness in people

In conclusion, developing future leaders is not a mystery.

We know the laws of aerodynamics that undergird successful and sustained leadership development. The seven principles identified in this chapter are the foundations you are looking for, but it is up to you to apply them in the context of your organisation’s needs and requirements.

So it is going to take you some time, effort and money. Why bother? The answer is simple. The tasks that face us are ever more challenging. In order to respond to them, people at all levels need effective and inspiring leaders.

As John Buchan said, ‘The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already.’