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An ant knows almost nothing of the world around it. The few bits of information that it does have it uses to protect and serve the queen. This selfless contribution to the group, or society, of ants is remarkable yet not all that different from the societal structure of humans. Humans are, of course, wired significantly different from ants in that we devote much more importance to the survival of the *individual* and not the group. However, humans have kept the innate sense of hierarchy throughout the evolution of their species that leads to one individual having power over others. For example, humans accomplish complex tasks such as electing a president, mayor, or some other person to fill a role comparable to that of the ant's queen. This role has several responsibilities attached to it, and for the ant these responsibilities are rather straightforward: create eggs to keep the colony going. In comparison, humans developed the role of the 'queen' into an entirely new one: a leader. A human leader fills several roles in one. They must give structure and order to their followers while also offering protection in order to increase their productivity. Productivity is usually the metric that leaders are measured by, and productivity in of itself can mean many different things. Similarly, the exact responsibilities of a leader can vary as much as the many tasks humans are capable of creating; from mining resources out of the ground to flipping burgers.

While anyone could call themselves a leader, a true leader is much harder to find. A true leader may come with one or many good qualities and even some poor ones. However, every leader needs to have a good ability to communicate and gain their followers' respect. Different leaders may have different tactics for gaining those traits, yet they must have them in order to be effective. Communication is what makes cooperation possible at all, so any team effort will require communication throughout the whole process. Respect is what drives the followers to follow their leader; humans are highly individual so the leader must appeal to that individualism in order to increase the productivity of those followers.

One example of a true leader is my father. Throughout my life, he has provided the structure that I have been able to grow into. He, along with my mother, selected the places we would live, eat, sleep, and learn. Then, he also provided the money that paid for those things while my mother, my siblings, and I were staying safely at home. Those were my basic needs, and if they were not met, I would not have been able to be productive: less schoolwork gets done on an empty stomach. In addition to my basic needs, my father also filled more. He taught me many important things throughout the years, one of the most important being the importance of planning before making major decisions. He allowed me to mentally flourish as he encouraged my creativity and would add in his own at times when we would discuss philosophy at length. These aspects absolutely enabled him to gain and hold my respect throughout my life and has nearly made me an unquestioning follower of his while also drastically increasing the complexity of the tasks that I can accomplish.

As is with most things, history holds many great true leaders. One of the most well-known is Napoleon Bonaparte, whose coronation signified the end of the First French Republic

in 1804. While he is most well known for conquering most of continental Europe in the early 1800's, he impacted history most significantly because he was a true leader. He exhibited his leadership skills were, in addition to how to effectively use them. The first of these was to demonstrate his ability to develop superior tactics than his counterparts. He did so while still a commander in the French army; he scored a major victory against the Austrians, whom had a larger army, in 1796 which led to a favorable treaty for France ^[1]. This would have greatly increased the respect the men had for Napoleon and his leadership, and as such they would have believed more confidently in their future victories.

While he was a tactical mastermind, Napoleon was also somewhat of a logistics genius as well. He created and improved some important logistical systems within his army that enabled easier resupply. Mainly, he improved a system of standardization among his artillery that had been started by French officer Jean Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval earlier in the 1700's. This system mandated things such as barrel length and shape of the cannonballs ^[3]. With the improvements to his army's supply, Napoleon was able to lead them to a more certain victory. This increase of ability is mirrored in many other leadership scenarios where the leader can increase the amount of supplies their followers are working with.

Most critically, Napoleon showed a great amount of ingenuity in his implementation of emerging technologies. Napoleon distinguished himself for his usage of field artillery in ways that were very different from his contemporaries. He made his cannons lighter than his opponents, increased the number used, and mandated the mass standardization of calibers ^[2]. This allowed his army to engage its opponents more effectively and operate as a unit more productively. This is also directly comparable to the modern-day world; there always exists emerging technology, and whoever can harness that effectively will reap the benefits. One could look no farther than the tech companies like Facebook, Google, and Amazon when examining the benefits of exploiting emerging technologies, even in the modern day.

In order to fully appreciate a good leader, one must take a look at some of the worst leaders. Everyone has an experience with a bad leader, be it a teacher, boss, or some other person of authority. When communication breaks down, such as a teacher does not communicate the objectives of an assignment clearly, it becomes increasingly difficult for the followers, students in this case, to do the work they are needed to do. In some cases, such as the school example, a reduction in communication does not have the worst of consequences; a student may earn a lower grade through a miscommunication or a group of students misses an event that was not properly advertised. Yet the reverse can also be true. In some cases, the lack of a true leader can have catastrophic results. History gives us excellent examples yet again; most dictators throughout history have been horrible leaders. Absolutist rulers of many developing nations of Africa have demonstrated that just being in power does not make one a leader. The flaws of these rulers are easily detectable: they do nothing to secure the protection of their followers. This results in horrible productivity for those nations.

Sometimes, a leader can have some qualities that should make them a true leader, yet they corrupt those qualities once they have the ability. This results in some of the worst conditions, wherein a ruler is a pseudo-leader. A pseudo-leader can convince their followers that they are a leader, yet not have any intention of following through with their responsibilities as a leader. Examples of rulers like this are easy to spot because they usually wreck so much havoc on the world around them. Rulers such as Hitler and Stalin are grouped in this category. Hitler had charisma and ability to convince his people he had their best interests at heart, and yet did nothing to deliver on his responsibility to protect his people. In fact, he did the opposite: sending millions of innocent civilians to their death by a myriad of horrific ways as well as sending millions more soldiers to their death in battle.

What is interesting to note, is that as evil as Hitler was, he was almost a true leader. Other than failing to protect his followers, Hitler also suffered from horrible communication: he was paranoid of his followers and distrusted them; this was also due to his own poor leadership that his followers did not trust or respect him. The act of being a leader in of itself is detached from the morality of action, so it is not because Hitler was evil that he was not a leader, it is because he did not have the skills required to satisfy the responsibilities of a leader. Stalin falls into much the same boat; he did the opposite of what a true leader would do by persecuting his followers which led to them distrusting him. The result of this was the horrible losses the Red Army took in the opening stages of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalin had literally done the opposite of a true leader by lowering the productivity of his followers instead of raising it.

In conclusion, the traits that make a good leader depend on the situation the leader is in, but the traits that make a true leader always include good communication and the ability to garner respect from their followers.

Sources:

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