FBG-4

Foundations of Leadership | C-U 002

14 December 2022

**Leadership Film essay**

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| By my signature below, I certify that I have not received improper help nor given it to others in writing this assignment, nor have I used any method that would give me an unfair advantage over others in the class. This assignment represents my own work only, and I had no assistance from another person or any other source unless it is referenced at the bottom of each appropriate page.  FBG-4  Date: 14-12-2022 |

Gaurav Singh - Initial Draft from movie references

Harsh Bindal - Initial draft from other resources

Kishlay Kumar - Final edit and proofreading

Nitish Kumar Mallick - Conclusion and Citations

Pranav Satheesan - Collation of the drafts and thesis statement

**Thesis:**

**“Even in the most difficult times, leaders not only do their best and motivate people around them by their optimism and actions but also trust them too.”**

"Life is Beautiful" is a story about an Italian-Jewish man, Guido, who finds himself caught in the horrors of the holocaust. Guido's determination to protect his son and wife drives him forward and helps him to maintain a sense of hope and optimism in the face of great adversity. Through his actions, Guido demonstrates strong leadership traits such as resilience, resourcefulness, and empathy.

Throughout the movie, Guido displays exemplary standards of grit and resilience. In the movie, Guido comes back to the camp after a lot of hard physical labor, but when his son asks him about the game and how many points he earned, he replies with an optimistic and enthusiastic smile. There are a lot of scenes when he trusts his son regardless of his age. Like the scene where the German children play hide-and-seek, then he not only guides Joshua to mingle with them, literally by just keeping quiet, but also believes in him that he won’t mess up.

Apart from Guido, Dora also displays great leadership qualities during her time before and at the concentration camp. She is able to stand up for herself and maintain her composure when the German soldiers try to intimidate her into going back home. However, her love for her child and Guido gives her strength to face them courageously as she willfully goes into the concentration camp. Dr. Lessing also displays authority at the camp where he sternly instructs the soldier regarding Guido’s fitness, thereby saving his life by making him wait tables. Thus, the movie shows how all the characters display traits of leadership through their acts of courage, composure, and nimble wit.

Guido’s life very much follows the **PERMA** model. (Seligman 2011). In the entire sequence of the concentration camp, we can notice the **Positive Emotion** in his behavior that helps his son to believe everything is alright, even though they are not. Guido refuses to give in to despair, even in the most difficult circumstances, and he uses humor and imagination to create a game for his son that helps him to maintain a sense of hope and optimism. This ability to stay positive and to see the good in any situation could be seen as a valuable leadership trait.

He also believes in making **Relationships**, which is visible throughout his interactions with everyone in the concentration camp and before. We notice his love for riddles in his interaction with Dr. Lessing which eventually bears fruit in the concentration camp. . He also uses his communication skills to persuade others to help him and his son, and to build connections with those around him. This ability to communicate effectively and to build relationships is crucial for effective leadership. But Guido also knows the limitations of the people around him and never asks anyone to do things which he was unable to complete. That's why he had not asked for his help to escape from the camp.

Also, when his family was thrown in the concentration camp, a normal human would lose hope and may find it a bit sensible for Euthanasia for his son by sending him for the shower but even in that situation, he had a **Meaning** of his life, i.e., to save the life of his son. He also shows his never give up attitude to us which is the jewel of the crown for every leader. Looking at his early life, before getting to the concentration camp, we can say that he was also living an **Accomplished** life. Starting from waiting tables he opens a bookstore through his hard work and efforts and goes on to marry the girl he loves even when the odds were against him.

Other than that, we can see examples of the same type in Victor Frankl’s book, “**Man’s Search for Meaning**.” where he was responsible for helping others to survive and maintain hope in the face of extreme adversity. Frankl emphasizes the importance of having a strong sense of purpose and meaning to inspire and motivate others. For example, in the concentration camp, Frankl found a group of young boys who were struggling to survive. They had lost all their hope and were on the brink of giving up, but he was able to inspire them and help them to find new meaning and purpose by encouraging them to focus on their relationships with each other and to support one another. He also provided them with practical advice and support, such as helping them to find food and shelter, and sharing his own experiences and insights. As a result, the boys were able to overcome their despair and continue fighting for their lives. (Frankl 1984, Pg. 75)

Along with that, Frankl is also able to trust others even in the darkest moments of the concentration camp. Frankl writes that he was exhausted and was close to death, and that he had almost given up hope of surviving. However, his friend convinced him to trust in his strength and determination and helped him to escape and find safety. This act of trust and support allowed Frankl to continue fighting for his life and ultimately to survive the concentration camp (Frankl 1984, p.136). However, contrary to Victor Frankl, Guido was an optimistic man who believed he still had much to lose even after spending time in the concentration camp. The horrors of the camp did not dissuade him from doing everything in his power to keep his child and wife safe. The positive light that Frankl found in his friend at the camp was what Guido was to others at the camp.

Not only in terms of the above examples, but there is also a lot of research that points to the same argument. For example: **“Development and Validation of the Short Grit Scale”** talks about grit, perseverance, and determination as the key qualities of leaders. It tells that leaders who can maintain their focus and determination in the face of obstacles and setbacks shine the most. (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009)

Even after whatever we wrote, the main support for our thesis will come from the “The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid”. In this grid, the main two dimensions are:

i). People

ii). Results

That grid identified five different leadership styles: Impoverished Management, Country Club Management, Middle-of-the-Road Management, Authority-Compliance Management, and Team Management. According to the Blake Mouton model, Team Leadership (High Production/High People) is the best managerial style. These leaders stress production needs and the needs of the people equally highly. (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009)

Our claim is that our thesis also matches this description as when a leader trusts his followers, then followers also understand the premise of the organization. Also, when he motivates his employees with his work, it creates a team environment based on trust and respect, which leads to high satisfaction and motivation and, as a result, high results. Guido displays a similar kind of trust for his fellow camp members.

All those things are obvious, like Warren Bennis also mentioned in his book, “**On Becoming a Leader**” that true leadership is not about power or status, but about inspiring others and making a positive difference in the world. He argues that trust is a key component of effective leadership, as it allows leaders to create a positive and collaborative work environment, to delegate tasks and responsibilities effectively, and to build strong relationships with their team members. Bennis also emphasizes the need for leaders to be trustworthy themselves to earn the trust of others. He advises leaders to be honest, transparent, and consistent in their words and actions, and to demonstrate their trustworthiness through their behavior and decisions. Overall, Bennis argues that trust is an essential quality for leaders to possess to be effective and to inspire and motivate their team members. (Bennis, 1989)

Despite his great qualities as a leader, Guido becomes impatient at the end of the war as he tries to save his wife which ultimately costs him his life. Even though he has support from other members of the camp, Guido always prefers the course of action that is safest for his family and is not able to gather the courage to revolt against the oppressive administration.

Despite his shortcomings, we can conclude that a great leader is not only a good worker, but also someone who leads by example and motivates othersthrough their hard work and dedication. They show their followers how to do the work, rather than just telling them, and they inspire them with their optimism and determination. In addition, a great leader trusts his team members and allows them to take on responsibilities and make their own contributions to the work. By being a role model and building trust with their team, a great leader can help to create a positive and productive work environment and to achieve success together.

**References**:

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