

Leadership is an art which involves being, thinking and doing

The effectiveness of any leader is determined primarily by their being – who they are. This encompasses many dimensions including: personality; team role profile; strengths; skills; competencies; education; family; spirituality; past achievements; past successes; recurring patterns of behaviours; communication style; commitment to personal development; what they like doing; and above all their values. These complex factors all interact to determine who you are and will impact on your effectiveness as a leader.

The next important aspect of leadership is thinking, because thinking is the basis of everything. If you want something more than conventional results, you need to think in unconventional ways. James Allen wrote a wonderful book in the 19th Century called, “As a man Thinketh”. The foundation of your thoughts is your values. Your values are the basis of your beliefs. Your beliefs determine your attitude. Your attitudes are the foundations of your words. Your words determine how you come across, who you are and what you will do..

As one person wrote:

Sow a thought, Reap an action,
Sow an action, Reap a habit,
Sow a habit, Reap a character,
Sow a character, Reap a destiny.

What you think and who you are will determine what you will do, how you will do it. However, what and how you do things is the outcome of the ongoing process of personal learning and development and personal accountability. First, obtain feedback about who you are--- your strengths and weaknesses—eg McQuaig Personality Profile

The most important aspect of doing relates to learning role-specific skills which enable you to develop a competitive advantage over everyone else. Developing special skills will set you apart and allow you to excel. Next, you need to focus on the 80/20 rule where 80% of the results come from 20% of the focus. This will enable you to execute through focus. The rule of 10,000 hours as discussed by John Gladwell in ‘The Outliers’ (subject of an earlier blog) also applies if you want to become a world-class leader. A focus on these three things will help you to achieve great leadership.

There are, however, two other factors which are critical to achieving great leadership – the first is to have a great, noble and worthy cause which demands incredible performance and requires that you go to the next level of performance. Coupled with this is the need to be informed by someone who has been there and done it—someone who has experienced years of working in the trenches with the success and failure of leaders and focussing on coaching, learning and teaching the hows and the whys, and what does or doesn’t work.

Is the journey challenging and difficult? It’s more challenging than you can imagine! Is there a simple formula? No, as I said at the outset, leadership is an art which needs you to develop your own capacity for thinking, being and doing when you are charting your course.

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