

WHO IS THE LEADER? AND WHO IS ACTUALLY LEADING?



Have you ever stopped for a second to ponder on what the words “Leader” and “Leading” actually demonstrates? No, I am not talking about the former being a noun, and the latter a verb. I am talking about something much more, something amassed.

I write this article based on my notion on Internal Communications and leadership in business enterprises, and how very much it is being neglected in recent times.

Some months ago, I visited a friend at her office on a hot Friday afternoon. We were supposed to hang out at close of work; the organization I worked for at the time went on a short break, and so I was home bored out of my brains. That day, I was so bored I could hardly wait for her to close from work, so, I went over to her office. Sensitive to the fact that she was still working, I kept the chit-chat to a minimum. My friend at that time worked as the Front-Desk Officer of her organization, and so she got to attend to visitors a lot (Not me obviously).

All of a sudden, this unpleasantly large fellow, with scratchy & unkempt beards, scattered all over his chiseled face, surfaced from God knows where and demanded in the most ruthless manner a certain document from my friend. I paid no mind to his growl as none of it was my business. But then, a thunderous yell shook me to earth, “Barbara are you stupid?” Mr Grumpy-face hollered. I was in awe, this was too embarrassing. I began to wonder what must be causing the

brouhaha between this man and Barbara my friend. I could not wait to get the full "GIST".

Apparently, this man was my friend's Boss; and the reason he embarrassingly chastised her in public was because she some days prior to that day, handed over some important staff pension documents to the pension board representatives in charge of the her organization's pension scheme processes without consulting her Boss.

I know you're thinking, "Wo-oh! She brought it upon herself, why did she have to do that?" Well, how about this, Mr. Grumpy-face had handed over to her, management of the entire pension scheme process & documentations. He warned her sternly not to bother him about anything concerning the pension scheme process. When I say "sternly", I mean "STERNLY".

According to Barbara, her Boss was not joking about these warnings. Clearly, he is not the type to kid around.

If you are following through this story as I hope you are, you will see clearly the reason behind Barbara's actions. Well, maybe she could have thought a little bit more before making the decision on her own, but I think lady was just trying to avoid a face-off with her Boss.

My question however is, whatever happened to effective & thoughtful leadership and communication? Couldn't Mr. Grumpy-face communicate clearly and in the most logical manner what his idea of "handing over management to a subordinate" meant?

This is not a fiction, this is an incident I witnessed, and it was sickening.

I find Simon Sinek's book titled "START WITH WHY" very thrilling, because of the insights it gives on how NOT to be a LEADER, but to always be the ONE WHO LEADS. Confused? Let me break it down.

Pay attention to how Sinek explains the concepts of being a "Leader" and one who actually "Leads":

"There are LEADERS and there are THOSE WHO LEAD. Leaders hold a position of power or influence. Those who lead inspire us.

Whether individuals or organizations, we follow those who lead, not because we HAVE to, but because we WANT to. We follow those who lead not for them, but for ourselves”.

Now ask yourself, “I’m I a leader? Or I’m I an individual who leads?” big difference. This of course does not exactly imply that by the usage of the word “Leader”, you are not an inspiring person. It simply means, although you have been put in a position of power, do not let that get into your head. If you do, as Sinek says, your subjects will follow you not because they want to, but because they have to, they don’t have a choice right? But I bet you, if they happen to get the slightest opportunity, they will abandon you. And guess what? They would rather follow someone who has the potential of actually leading, because this is where their inspiration comes from, where their sense of belonging emanates, and this is where they receive the opportunity to truly be heard and respected. Finally and most importantly, they do not “have” to follow this person; they actually “want” to follow him/her.

I’m just wondering, what would have been the turnout of events if Barbara’s grumpy-faced Boss were to be someone who leads? Well, your guess is as good as mine.

Ponder on this leadership quote I love so much by John C. Maxwell:

“Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flow charts. It is about one life influencing another”.

Regards,

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