

PRESENCE, AUTHENTICITY AND COURAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

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***Abstract:** The main issue that is raised is that of the essential behaviours that directly affect a leader's impact on other people. Being present, authentic and courageous is a means of training charisma, a way of developing leadership and a criterion that must be taken into consideration during the efficient process of recruitment and selection of the authentic leaders.*

***Keywords:** leader / leadership / charisma / awareness / mindfulness / authenticity / courage*

1. THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

Being mindful translates into being a charismatic leader that does everything in his/her power to talk without any inhibition to a group of strangers, while smiling warmly to each and every person and maintaining eye contact.

It is very important to develop one's way of concentrating in such moments when, in order to be vigilant, one uses all senses, thus being fully present through sharp hearing, smell and the awareness of their own personal energy. Being mindful is what enables a human being to go beyond the limitations of humanity, to be relaxed enough to contemplate on the things that surround him/her, to notice their surprising features, to become acutely aware of the environment, the hidden tensions, the expectations and what people think, by observing certain details about their character, feelings, moods and anxieties and by being curious to find out new ideas, without judging them immediately and being careful not to hurt other people's feelings.

Most people do not possess the ability to be mindful because they are too submerged in this world, too busy in the urban space and because they lack any bond with nature or themselves. Some people also lose their mindfulness when they go through a period of sorrow or pain, but, in most cases, they lose it when they allow their natural energies to be weakened by certain factors, such as:

- A discouraging environment;
- Anti-leaders;
- Boring work;
- Conflicts between their own values and those of the organisation.

Hereinunder are some ways in which mindfulness can be improved:

- reconnecting with the world

It involves an activity that induces pleasure by making one feel comfortable in their skin, completely alive and vigilant, and that helps them become more centred to the extent to which they are able to forget about the tense state they are in, they no longer feel

upset and they manage to pull themselves away from the daily turmoil. Such activities include:

- listening to a concert;
- taking a walk alone;
- spending time in the nature with your loved ones;
- singing in a choir;
- getting fully involved in activities such as cooking, painting, dancing, reading, etc.).

- the rules of mindfulness

The aim of these rules is to create a deep connection with the people one addresses and the first one is to be fully present. The rules that must be complied with are the following:

- stop (don't speak hastily, use pauses to give yourself enough time to recompose mentally and emotionally);
- breathe (breathe in softly, without raising your chest or shoulders, hold your breath and count to five; by repeating this action several times, you will slow down your heartbeat, reduce the level of adrenaline and anxiety, therefore you will diminish the state of nervousness);
- look around (maintain eye contact with a few people in the audience in order to observe the receptiveness of the group you are addressing);
- listen (sounds are an indication that the audience is restless, while silence and stillness indicate that the audience is ready to listen to you);
- feel (intuition is very helpful in determining what is happening around you and not only there; by giving full reign to all your senses, you will manage to observe the subtle signs that might help you communicate better).

-using two types of energy

The two types of energy that a human being possesses are:

1. vigilance in focusing one's attention on the outside world;
2. self-awareness and compliance with one's personal values.

- revitalisation

Personal magnetism and the lively presence of leaders is all about using one's energy to the full extent, which is subsequently transferred to the audience through:

- the liveliness of the gestures and the sharpness of the mind;
- a positive attitude towards life in general and towards one's peers;
- smile;
- laughter as an expression of optimism;
- wide-open and lively eyes;
- a straight, but relaxed posture.

- increasing self-awareness

Most people tend to hide their self, which turns them into unauthentic and therefore, uncharismatic individuals. It is only true leaders that are intent on exploiting their self. The ways of improving self-awareness and, implicitly, leadership are:

- Listening to one's own intuition in the absence of tangible evidence:
- predicting, i.e. anticipating an event;
- The subsequent understanding of what caused a process;
- Gut feeling, i.e. the initial and likely answer to a problem;
- Knowledge manifested through the certainty that one knows:

- When is the best time to intervene;
- What is the meaning of an event;
- What is the best way to reach a solution;

- Forming bonds with people who are an inspiration.

2. THE ROLE OF AUTHENTICITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

We live in a world that values dissimulation, which is the opposite of authenticity. Globalisation, the technology that changes our lifestyle, the coordinators of the election campaigns, advertising, virtual products and services, online communication, even online lovers represent only a few examples of things that conspire to undermine what can be considered real or sustainable in human relationships [Andrew Leigh, Charisma, 2010]. There is no formula, nor should there be one for how to be authentic. When an individual is authentic, he/she interacts in a simple manner, he/she acts like him/herself, not like anyone else and there is no rule on how to do this. We are who we are. Each and every one of us is born authentic. A baby never tries to be someone other.

From childhood to adolescence and then maturity, our spontaneity gradually diminished, until we end up wondering who we truly are. As adults, we make a distorted impression on other people, because of our inability to remove the social mask for fear that the people around us will see us for who we truly are. The internal signs of the social mask are an indication that the individual's feelings are completely different from what he/she says and that he/she disconnects from what is important to him/her, thus preventing the real self from surfacing, hiding his/her thoughts and feelings and strongly censuring all that he/she communicates. The external signs of the social mask give a warning that the individual bases his/her actions on what is convenient or easily acceptable to others, without that being actually right, acceptable or good for him/herself.

The signs of the social mask are:

- Friendship with people who have something you want or that could prove useful in the future;
- Preoccupation with getting as many business cards and phone numbers as possible from influential people that could help you professionally;
- Manipulating the people around you in order to gain what you want;
- Allowing other people to manipulate you;
- Focusing on gaining the approval of people, regardless of your feelings towards them;
- Being lied to;
- Feeling alone, disrespected and unengaged in relationships;
- Feeling inadequate, bored, underestimated and unappreciated at work;
- Being uninterested in personal development or even in small progress to this respect;
- Giving up being yourself in your spare time or no longer feeling good in the company of your old friends;
- Not believing in your own values or not complying with them in your actions;
- Paying free compliments that are obviously insincere to the people around you, thus making them feel uncomfortable.

Authenticity comes with charisma and it proves to be extremely important in leadership, which can be defined as the spontaneity manifested by individuals through their ability to express themselves, while remaining perfectly aware of the influence they have on the people around them [Andrew Leigh, 2010].

Basically, it's an act of double focus: firstly, it requires self-awareness and, secondly, it takes receptiveness with regard to the effect one has on the audience, both leading to a long-lasting impression and relationship. But apart from simply improving communication, building a team or promoting a product, authenticity brings a great benefit in that it enables the individual to identify the goals and values that guide people and even organisations.

The reputation of authenticity must be managed carefully. Authentic people are uninhibited, which sometimes makes them feel entitled to lose control by manifesting anger, restlessness or dissatisfaction, regardless of how this affects other people.

Being authentic is a process that is easy to manage by confronting reality in order to answer the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What is important to me?
- What do I really want?

Any discrepancy between the way one sees oneself and the way other people perceive them will diminish their authenticity and, implicitly, their charisma. Thus, authenticity is the result of:

- Manifesting psychological congruence (believe what you say and saying what you believe);
- Being trustworthy, which is proven by the fact that people around you rely on you for support, because you are punctual and you keep your promises;
- Assuming responsibility for your personal development, with a view to reaching your maximum potential;
- Keeping your internal reality and your external image in agreement.

3. THE ROLE OF COURAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP

Courage does not necessarily refer to assuming drastic risks; it can simply refer to having the guts to use one's body in order to impose oneself and to benefit from natural hand, face and body expressiveness.

Assuming calculated risks translates into having the courage to be different, fighting one's fears when everything goes wrong and finding ways of making the benefits exceed the costs when there's even the slightest chance that the worst case scenario is about to happen.

Courage represents the ability to emotionally adapt in order to be able to deal with unfavourable situations (after assuming physical, inclusive risks), by experimenting with and exploiting the area of risk [Andrew Leigh, Charisma, 2010]. There are courageous people who feel good when performing dangerous activities, such as mountain climbing or rafting, but who tend to avoid the social risks related to expressing their opinions and who, for this reason, avoid speaking in public. Being introverted or extroverted can influence one's ability to assume such social risks. Extroverts recharge with energy when they have the opportunity to be sociable and positive and to communicate with others, while introverts find it unpleasant to assume the risks related to opening up to their peers, feeling drained of energy in situations such as:

- Asking people questions that animate them, without making them feel threatened, by challenging them in a friendly manner and avoiding to bring out their mistakes;
- Having a personal point of view that generates an entirely new approach that starts with expressing your opinion according to your training and experience, by relating to your personal values, the existing strategy/rulebook, the way that other people's social opinions make you feel or even something that is completely unrelated;

- Expressing your point of view, sometimes even without being solicited, without being dogmatic, without trying to impose your opinions or giving unsolicited advice;
- Defending your beliefs and opinions before your opponents, by asserting your right to an opinion or to certain values and by asking people around to treat them with the same respect that you treat the opponents' views, without wanting to dismantle them;
- Accepting alternative opinions without becoming defensive, by applying the acceptance technique instead of discrediting different views, which involves trying to build up from a different opinion and relating it to your own beliefs;
- Maximising the use of body language, in accordance with the message you are sending and engaging in a subliminal manner to the opinion that you are communicating by means of:
 - communication gestures that translate directly into words and phrases:
 - the OK sign = thumbs up;
 - the victory sign = two fingers forming the letter V;
 - the greeting sign = waving;
 - support gestures that underline the message that is being communicated:
 - when you are talking about something grand = arms wide open;
 - when you are suggesting an action = firm forward movement of the hands;
 - emotional gestures that imply happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, delight, pensiveness or sorrow, which involve removing the mask and reaching your audience through:
 - facial expressions;
 - gestures;
 - body posture;
 - Relational gestures that encourage human relationships, by making the audience perceive the interlocutor as being warm, attractive, involved, well-intentioned and well-mannered – the lack of said gestures makes the interlocutor seem neutral, cold, rude, unfriendly and even repulsive. Such gestures include:
 - nodding to encourage the interlocutor to speak;
 - opening your mouth to show that you want to say something;
 - waving your open hand to encourage the interlocutor to continue speaking;
 - Gestures related to personal needs are involuntary and they indicate the individual's actual mood:
 - Flipping your hair = preoccupation for your appearance;
 - Rubbing your nose = embarrassment;
 - Interrupting eye contact by looking away to the left/right = insecurity;
 - Clenching your fists = aggressiveness and attempt to intimidate;
 - Lack of facial expression = lack of honesty;
 - Shrugging = indifference, unhappiness;
 - Raising only one shoulder = lie;
 - Doodling on a piece of paper = boredom.

4. CONCLUSION: LEADER COMPETENCY MODEL

The leaders' actions are determined by the environment and by their subordinates, but it is also true that "the leaders' inner theatre" is built according to the "scenario" that their essential needs have written in their past; therefore, their skills are the result of the leadership style they have applied [Kets de Vries, Leadership arta și măiestria de a conduce, 2001].

In conclusion, the leaders' style is the consequence of the interactions between the multitude of forces that are intertwined in the leaders' personal policy regarding their essential needs and the skills that they have acquired in time.

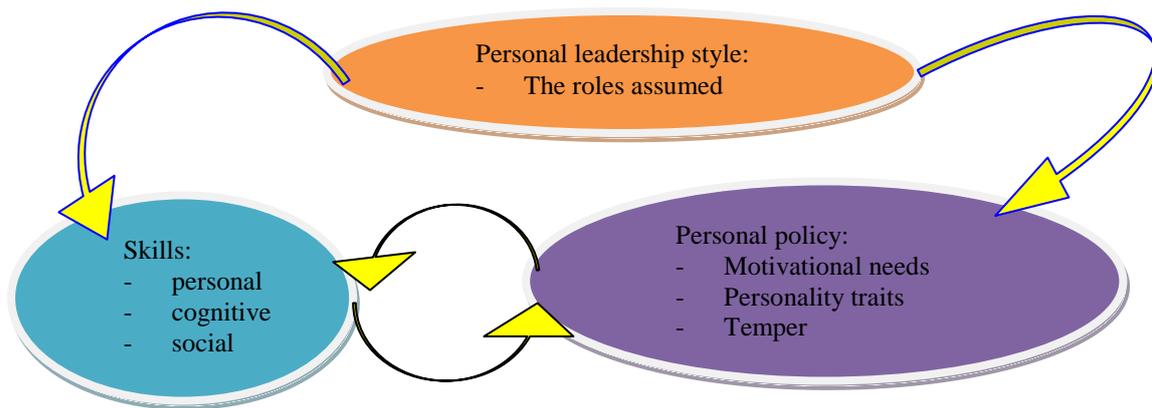


FIG. 1 Dimensions of the leadership style

In any given situation, there is a set of skills that contributes to leadership efficiency and, for leaders, the challenge is to develop their repertoire of skills that are appropriate for most cases. The personality traits that constitute the basis for many of these skills are the individual's authenticity and integrity. According to the leadership model created by Manfred Kets de Vries [Kets de Vries, Leadership arta și măiestria de a conduce, 2001], we shall envision a matrix of leadership skills based on two dimensions:

- Intelligence (this dimension shall translate into the level of professional qualification – high/ average/ low/ lacking personal qualification – and the actual competence in the field of qualification);
- Dynamism (this dimension can only be translated through the rate of reaction that results from the courage to remain authentic, by choosing integrity in relation to one's personal values).

| | | THE LEADER'S INTELLIGENCE | |
|-----------------------|------|---|---|
| | | LOW | HIGH |
| THE LEADER'S DYNAMISM | LOW | Enforcers that rank at the base of the hierarchy I | Management at the middle of the hierarchy III |
| | HIGH | They fulfil the obligations, but comply with the values of the organisation to a small extent only Charisma effect II | Upper management at the top of the hierarchy Charisma effect IV |

-The 4th quadrant refers to people with a high level of intelligence, i.e. those employees who have a high level of qualification and actual competence, who have the courage to remain authentic and upstanding in what concerns their personal values, which are in fact shared by the organisation, who treat their subordinates, colleagues and superiors fairly on a daily basis, wherever they may be. Therefore, it is recommended for such leaders to be part of the organisation's upper management, because they are charismatic, capable of making decisions in uncertain conditions and capable of becoming a source of inspiration and an example of professionalism and morality.

-The 3rd quadrant refers to people with a high level of intelligence, i.e. those employees who have a high level of qualification and actual competence, but who do not have the courage to remain authentic and upstanding in what concerns their personal values; however, they comply with the values of the organisation when interacting with the others, regardless of whether they are superiors, co-workers or subordinates. Therefore, even though they lack charisma, it is still recommended to have such leaders in the field of staff management, because they are capable of making decisions in risky situations that involve diligence, concentration and hard work for the collection, processing / analysis / argumentation and provision of the information required by the upper management.

-The 2nd quadrant refers to people with a low level of intelligence, i.e. those employees who are either unskilled or have a low / average level of qualification, thus showing a lack of actual competence in the profession they practice, but who have the courage to remain authentic and upstanding in what concerns their personal values, which, unfortunately, are contrary to the values of the organisation, thus becoming a danger for the institution, particularly because they possess charisma and can create proselytes and launch a sort of crusade against the organisation, by trying to impose their own values that are opposite to the fundamental vision of the upper management. Therefore, it is recommended to terminate the employment agreement of such people.

-The 1st quadrant refers to people with a low level of intelligence, i.e. those employees who are either unskilled or have a low/ average level of qualification, thus showing a lack of actual competence in the profession they practice, who do not have the courage to remain authentic and upstanding in what concerns their personal values; however, they comply with the values of the organisation when interacting with the others, regardless of whether they are superiors, colleagues or subordinates. Moreover, they are very disciplined and honest in carrying out their professional activity, always wanting to improve; therefore, they are recommended for performance jobs that require a low or average level of qualification.

The recruitment and selection of leaders for management positions should only be carried out with people that fall perfectly under the 4th quadrant (for upper management) and under the 3rd quadrant (for the middle management).

The authentic leaders referred to in the 4th quadrant possess skills that can be classified through a process of stratification (figure no. 2). The needs, defence mechanism, motivations and personality traits are positioned in the centre, followed by their values, attitudes and self-image and finally, their skills and knowledge [Kets de Vries, *Leadership arta și măiestria de a conduce*, 2001]. The leaders' behaviour and actions are in fact the result of the interaction of the values that support skill development:

- Personal skills (courage, integrity, authenticity, efficiency);
- Social skills (empathy, influence, discernment);
- Cognitive skills (conceptual thinking, strategic thinking, verbal / rational / emotional intelligence, creativity, the capacity to synthesise and analyse).

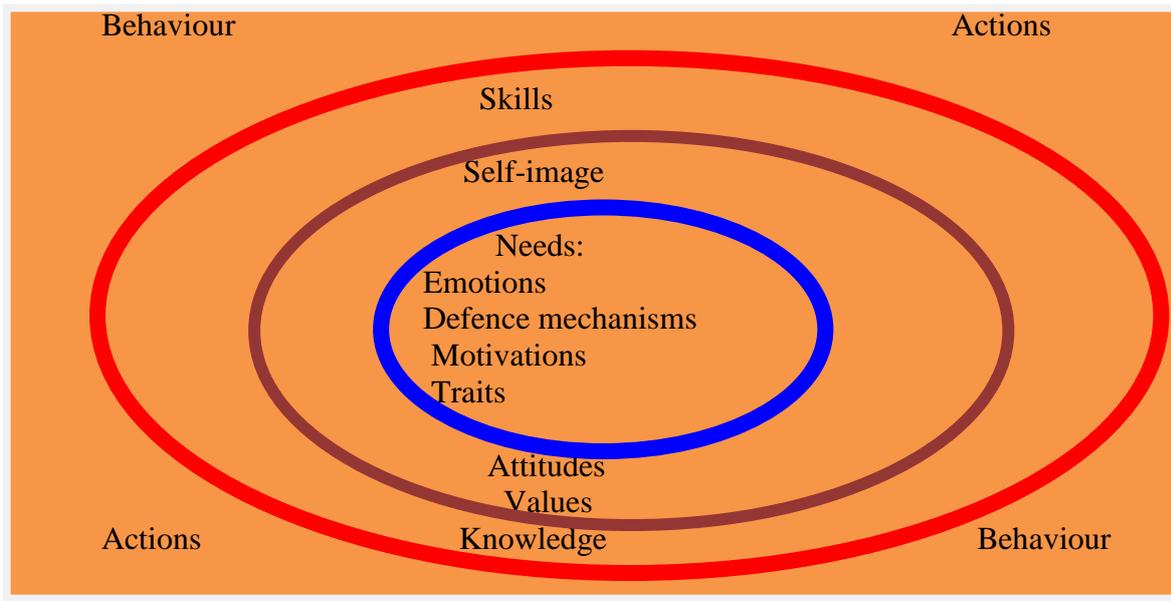


FIG. 2 Circle of skills

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