

Running Head: LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Leadership Philosophy; a Military and Law Enforcement Perspective

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Submitted to the faculty of

Brandman University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of

OLCU 600: Foundations of Organizational Leadership

June 25, 2014

Leadership Definition

Leaders drive people toward a common goal and set direction by compelling. While there are anecdotal perceptions and prescriptions to leadership, at its core, leadership is an art and a science because it demonstrates qualitative and quantitative properties. Further, there are several dimensions to leadership and application, which makes the leadership process complex and polymorphous. According to Northouse (2013), leadership is a process that is non-linear in nature and not restricted by a position or title (p. 5). Throughout history, leadership models have evolved from the “Great Man theory”, an ebb, and flow to meet the needs of the era. Take for example the shifts in world politics, economics, national security, and generational gaps; notably America’s leadership approach is impacted by global situations and crisis. International and domestic events have influence on the nation’s leadership application, which can persuade private and public organizations. Make no mistake; leadership is not a prefabricated discipline.

Situations vary and certain professions respond to particular leadership practices in efficient ways. For example, law enforcement organizations exercise process-orientated discretion where the application of situational leadership skills is most relevant (Haberfeld, 2006). From this perspective, it is imperative that leaders have situational awareness. Moreover, functional leaders are creative and critical thinkers who have an intrinsic consciousness and can operate effectively in unorganized settings and build follower commitment. Notably there is an increased mandate for transparency, accountability, and sustainable leadership. Further, the 21st Century demonstrates a surplus of challenges that are inherent drivers for more ethical leadership. Integrity and honesty is at a premium, and follower autonomy is a common mantra. While there are countless leadership theories, the application of these approaches are replete with ambiguity. Therefore, society continues to define and reshape leader concepts and practice.

Based on my leadership training, experience, and application, the United States (U.S.) Army has made a significant impression upon my understanding of leadership. According to military doctrine, Army leaders are catalysts for change, trained innovators, adaptors, and are situationally aware professionals who demonstrate ethical character in the smallest of tasks (Department of the Army, 2006). Army leaders confront uncertainty, which is an institutional staple, and versatility is a developed trait. Further, U.S. Army leaders are decisive and prudent risk takers who manage, lead, and grow organizational prowess. Furthermore, these leaders are encouraged to conceptualize trends to develop ways to leverage or exploit change; a strategy and vision is the end state that assumes calculated risk to increase combat power. Notably, leadership theorizing requires the integration of personal and situational characteristics to demonstrate usefulness (Wren, 1995). From this lens, the military leader self reflects to calibrate his leadership mettle, and strengthens weak points to build inspirational capacity and unit morale.

The U.S. Army evaluates traits and measures aptitude early to arrange its force and future leaders. In comparison, Kotter (1995) proposes aligning people within the organization and communicating the new direction to those workers who cultivate affinities, appreciate the vision, and are committed to its achievement (p. 86). The officer and noncommissioned officer corps are continually exposed to new leadership challenges and formal military educational experiences that work to develop leader talent. According to Korim (2011), the military understands how education can shape habitual mental processes, which manifests adaption skills (p. 2). This paper will examine three leadership theories that have influenced my thinking: Transformational, Servant, and Authentic leadership. The paper will also compare and contrast leadership and management and observe leader qualities and characteristics. Finally, this paper will discuss the importance of followership, and will assess my personal leadership style.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership as interpreted by Burns (1978) involves a process by which leaders affect the attitudes and motivations of followers (p. 131). This is accomplished when leaders tailor their approach to meet the needs of the follower in an effort to move them toward higher performance levels. Moreover, according to Bass and Avolio (1994), this model can range in style from democratic and participative to directive and authoritarian (p. 238). This is useful for military leaders and para-military organizations where the spectrum of leadership ought to consider bottom up and lateral approaches that encourages follower input and independent thinking. From this perspective, as an interpersonal, empathic and compassionate leader, this model allows me to influence the follower and engender commitment. Moreover, a leader, who effectively articulates a trusted and consistent vision, shapes individual and group beliefs, which mobilizes and transforms organizational thinking (Wren, 2013).

Transformational leadership is attractive to my personal needs because of its proclivity to be inspirational and move followers to an advanced moral stage. Like U.S. Army leaders who prescribe to customs, traditions, and warrior ethos, transformational leaders work to encourage followers to develop a set of values that accentuates justice, autonomy, and parity. Thus, transformational leadership is critical of its interpersonal relationships as it orientates people toward moral purpose. Further, transformational leadership is concerned with positive collective outcomes for both genders. According to McDonough (2012), women demonstrate a leadership advantage due to their natural penchant towards a transformational leadership style (p. 23). Transformational leaders gain trust and confidence and build shared vision by serving as consummate role models. Transformational leaders like military leaders move people to exceed standards and push teams past complacency for maximum organizational efficacy.

Servant Leadership

From my perspective, the most prolific leaders are servants. Servantship requires humility, a trait that most people find very difficult to develop or correlate with leading. Drawing an inference to the servant leader from Kelley (1988), followership dominates personal and professional settings but is absent from our conceptual leader interpretations (p. 195). From a military perspective, sergeants are servants. This is an explicit explanation of what a leader should do; serve the country, the organization, and colleagues vertical and horizontal, unselfishly. Take for example a Soldier. From the onset, he is compelled to service, and is then developed and competes in equitable settings for promotions. Thus, the propensity for a servant to nest leadership behaviors increases when the leader understands how to be a credible follower-servant early. Because I have experienced in both of my professions discriminatory managerial practices, I believe the idea of *Servant as Leader* (2008) avoids cronyism, which sustains meritocracy, ethics, and improves the human experience put forth to achieve common goals.

According to Northouse (2013), this approach supports subordinate autonomy and the need for control as it relates to their influence on work structure (p. 144). Because servant leadership stimulates communication levels, it can decrease ambiguity, increase follower understanding, and create synergy. I have certain fervor for this leadership theory as it was a theme during my experience while attending the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy. When leading with a servant lens, the leader is developing and preparing the followers ability to serve others. The servant leader orientates values by inculcating ethics, integrity, discipline and other leader attributes into his approach, aligning them with the organizations intent. This is most analogous with strategic leadership where character is integral. In military and police settings, this design fosters a sense of belongingness and commitment that supports a rite of passage.

Authentic Leadership

From my perspective, the authentic leader theory has a nexus to U.S. Army leadership attributes. At its core, the U.S. Army instructs Soldiers to serve as warriors and grow as adaptive leaders. Because U.S. military leadership philosophy and culture is affixed to over 230 years of tradition, customs, and ethos, there is an intrinsic faith that occurs in leader development. This perspective is in alignment with the authentic leader intrapersonal perspective where authentic leaders are convicted to lead; leader experiences and the connotation attached to those interpretations (Northouse, 2013). In comparison, in defining authentic leadership, the theory has developmental properties, authentic leaders can be nurtured, and in other words, it is teachable and not innate (Northouse, 2013). Moreover, the U.S. Army cultivates flexible leaders that can learn and adapt in ambiguous situations and dynamic settings. This requires trust, ambition, moral courage, and prudence at all levels, tactical, operational, and strategic.

Further, the U.S. Army fashions leaders who can deliver the necessary faith and assurance in people during irregular uncertainties. Northouse (2013) asserts due to modern day failures in national security, private business, and banking, public confidence has eroded (p. 255). As the modern Army takes shape, leaders are facing irregular hybrid threats and low intensity conflict that requires agile and critical combat readiness. To command these units effectively, leaders must be bold, determined, creative, and able to apply their leadership skills to a variety of contexts (Brown & Sims, 2005). To increase efficacy, the U.S. Army works to build psychological fitness levels through the Master Resilience Training (MRT) program, which is a subset of the positive psychology theory. In striking similarity, authentic leadership is developed from positive psychology qualities and is morally sound (Walumbwa, et al, 2008). Notably military leaders demonstrate intrinsic authentic leader attributes, which manifests leader efficacy.

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are two separate systems, but should intersect to manifest a powerful synergy successful organizations cultivate and design. Managers operate best in anticipated settings, bring order to chaos, plan and resolve organizational gaps. Leadership occurs on human terrain, and is not a mechanical process. From a military leader perspective, managers are needed to maintain order in a disciplined profession of arms. Managers like leaders should work to build organizational depth and contingency plans. In the modern Army, there is a push for military organizations at all levels to build intellectual capacity; advanced academic initiatives to increase leadership breadth. While lines of reasoning may seem clear, leaders should consider a full range of perspectives during the decision making process. On the contrary, managers are perhaps better equipped to react and resolve ill-structured problems for short-term compliance. Still, leaders should be intellectually stimulated to build their inspirational capacity in order to remain adaptive and agile influencers positioned to affect long-term change.

This is necessary to build commitment across organizational platforms. I have experienced management as a means of correcting behaviors and practices in a military setting, where policy, doctrine, and procedures drive the command climate. From this perspective, we can derive logical conclusions that management processes are perhaps progenitors of habitual organizational practices designed to set boundaries, left and right limits to sustain structure and operational tempo. According to Zaieznik (1977), the difference between managers and leaders, rests in the conceptions they hold, deep in their psyches, of chaos and order (p. 231). In order to maximize successes, you need strong managers who excel at execution and oversee day-to-day efforts as well as inspirational, visionary leaders who bring a big-picture perspective; both act in concert to produce winning teams (Brookmire, 2014).

Leader Qualities and Characteristics

Personality traits are observable indicators in most leadership challenges. Leader qualities are often perceptive indicators of leader efficacy. For example, military leaders do not have traits identical to those of business leaders (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Further, drawing from qualitative research by Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), integrity and confidence are two of six traits that exist in ones DNA and or can be learned (p. 22). While the style approach facilitates goals and harmonious relations, it concentrates in what leaders do, as opposed to traits that focus on what leaders should be. Northouse (2013) asserts isolating sets of traits that are characteristic of leaders is difficult without considering situational effects and the ability to adjust and be adaptive to different environments (p. 31). In leadership definitions, it is generally accepted that superior personality traits are one of the factors that influence successful leadership practices. Therefore, leader qualities and characteristics provide a standard for how leaders behave and respond.

According to Wren (1995), effective leaders utilize communication as a tool to meet their desired end state, by matching behavior with goals (p. 430). Further, the assessment of leadership efficacy has inference to expertise, meaning, consummate leaders are also expert practitioners. The trait approach examined in the texts provides insight to how and why leaders are effective, which are also perceptions based and leader focused. According to Northouse (2013), quantitative studies of leadership traits and characteristics spans over a century, this provides empirical evidence to give it validity (p.30). The data reveals patterns of repeated qualities throughout the research, such as intelligence and confidence. Intellectual managers are better prepared to lead and solve complex problems. Intelligence is an indicator of leadership capacity, but needs nurture to manifest effective leadership to be considered a character strength.

Followership

From my perspective, the study of followership is one of the more profound discussions points. The follower remains a valuable component in the leader-follower relationship, perhaps more impactful than the setting and situation. This is because people spend more time as followers than leaders. The follower has the ability to make or break a leader and in some instances demonstrates the cognitive ability to maneuver groupthink around position-sitters. In other words, the follower, while not necessarily occupying a power position can undermine a leader's ability to influence and set direction, especially if the leader lacks confidence or does not understand follower needs. Kelley (1998) asserts, followership dominates organizations but our cognitive space is preoccupied with the next promotion or position of authority (p. 195). Thus, followers are the driving force behind organizational objectives, lest leaders forget this intrinsic principle, the organization is vulnerable to a plethora of problems.

In redefining the roles, leaders cannot have a dominate perspective of their position where they are considered more important than the follower (Wren, 2013). Rather, leaders should consider themselves in charge, but more of a facilitator of people toward common goals. In order to hone follower skills, the follower, e.g., the street level cop or lower ranking Soldier needs to be valued as a critical contributor to the organization; otherwise, the follower base will diminish by way of attrition, which is antithetical to good follower management. One of the methods the U.S. Army brings followers into the fold is through inclusion during the counseling process. Military followers are provided frequent counseling, ratings, and performance evaluations so they know strengths and weaknesses. In order to compel organizations to encourage followership there has to be a follower motivation. Organizations that desire follower benefits must discover ways to reward the effort, a method to bring the follower into the department fabric of trust.

Self-Assessment/Conclusion

This paper has examined leadership theory and practice and as a result, it has provided insight to my own style of leadership and application. In assessing my style of leadership, I have discovered several trends and habitual conceptions. For example, while leader theories have broadened my academic understanding of leadership, I tend to correlate positive experiences in military situations and negative implications with law enforcement leadership. Perhaps this is because for law enforcement, leader training and development begins too late in the career path. Another reason for this paradigm is that potential police leaders are affixed on management not on leadership. Developing leaders is a long-term process where encouragement, modeling, and support are fused with natural skills; leader training should begin at career infancy (Bergner, 1998). Because of early nurturing in my military career, I have developed into a conceptual leader who views strategy as a way to work more efficiently rather than a method of promotion.

Moreover, conceptual skills demonstrate the ability to understand and interrelate various parcels of information, which appear unorthodox (Swanson et al, 1998). Whether leaders are born or made, there is an intrinsic worth to a distribution of power in order to flatten the organizational lines of effort. The military and law enforcement domain requires an increasingly profound level of leadership to remain relevant and effective to confront modern threats. Henceforth, the models covered in this paper are most useful to building teams and solidifying successful outcomes in uncertain, dynamic, and ambiguous settings. For example, in exercising outcome-oriented discretion, street-level police leaders should employ transformational models; considering societies interests when making dynamic decisions (Haberfield, 2006). Authentic leader intrapersonal perspective suggests authentic leaders are convicted to lead. While the study of leadership is an evolving concept, its moral dimension is an ends, ways, and means to success.

Reflective Analysis

Growing in leadership is a transformational process in and of itself. I believe anyone seeking tradecraft capacity should consider it a transcending process. Transforming leaders places self-interests behind follower needs, which matures values and discernment. Theoretically, this process grows moral reasoning capacity, which can shape leader habits to serve the collective good (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). From my perspective, thinking traps are antithetical to transformational leadership; they are simply derivatives of complacency, fixed and rigid thought patterns. In power positions, it is easy to become comfortable, rest on one's laurels, and become ensnared in self-interests. This is especially true in hierarchal institutions such as in military and law enforcement settings due to bureaucratic and political stovepipes. Masi (2000) hypothesized that in military settings, transformational leadership behavior leads to high levels of subordinate motivation, commitment, and efficacy, (p. 20). This is because transformational leaders demonstrate an intrinsic morale value with deontological characteristics (Kanungo, 2001).

As I mature in leadership practices, I am determined to apply the theories we have analyzed to both of my professions. There is always room for improvement, but it requires open-mindedness, thinking outside of one's own cognitive perceptions and inside another person's experience. From this perspective, military and police organizations are result driven and at times, this means obtaining results at the expense of junior development. Northouse (2013) extrapolates this condition as swallowing convictions in the interest of progress (p. 81). A watershed moment in this course came from Greenleaf, who proposes that while society is enveloped in evil, the real enemy is the vague thinker (2008, p. 46). In other words, when natural servants fail to apply their intelligence to the application of leading, the enemy is the internal practitioner who takes and blames, not the external retarded organization (Greenleaf, 2008).

While my callings bring order to societal threats, I need to become a better progenitor of organizational servanthip. I have taken a few steps in this direction by creating a physical fitness-training group to help the police department achieve a better ranking in an annual 120-mile running relay competition. This is a genuine approach to increase athletic ability, team synergy, and department morale. Improving our departments, running times will strengthen hope, and will win hearts and minds. I am also cultivating coalitions by sharing my expertise in gang and detective work with junior officers who aspire to achieve a position in a special assignment. I can improve my chances of positive influence by practicing authentic leader attributes. In other words, I should avoid expressing disenchantment with leaders and colleagues. Doing so only atrophies the servant leader process, makes me the problem, and places blame rather than discovering professional approaches to address department shortfalls.

While results to my leadership challenge may be delayed, nesting authentic interpersonal relations with my peers and managers will encourage a shift in optimism, a change in consciousness, and perhaps a new paradigm of thinking that will encourage ethical practices and equitable outcomes across the department. Greenleaf (2008) proposes some institutions only win short-term merit through the intelligent use of people, people using, not building (p. 41). Further, another leadership lesson is the servant leader model becomes transformational when leaders facilitate follower proactivity by increasing group confidence levels to initiate change. This is key, as adaption requires social relationships to earn buy-in. Finally, leaders should possess the required interpersonal skills to achieve a common operational picture. Through the employment of an assortment of leadership models, leaders can increase organizational synergy and will compel people toward a common goal. While the definition of leadership is open to interpretation, anyone can lead; it only requires an enthused person to say, "Follow me."

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