

*What is leadership? - It is in all
all of what some would say is
- all a constant element*

THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Many of you, I am sure, will have played in childhood days with a kaleidoscope and will have been fascinated by the apparently infinite number of patterns that could be brought into being by a shake of the tube. What really was happening? The constituent parts were unchanged, but what appeared was yet another new arrangement the same, but yet not the same.

an analogy
Can this give us an analogy for life? Something entirely new rarely arises. It is the periodic shuffling of the circumstances, situations and attributes which give rise to the changed pattern. The hand of the shaker will vary; the ultimate patterns are of infinite variety; the constituent parts remain the same.

The manner in which the patterns of leadership are formed depend upon the social, economic and political environment of the time, and it may be seen that frequency of change is also a very significant factor in this context. You will be anticipating a review of leadership within our profession, but before attempting this I would like to consider the subject more broadly.

One could draw an analogy between leadership and greatness; just as some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them, so one could say that some are born leaders, some achieve leadership and some have leadership thrust upon them.

I suppose that most of us have a mental picture of our ideal leaders; strong yet gentle, compassionate and understanding; wise and

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perceptive; knowledgeable and skilled; dynamic in action, positive in thought and determined in operation. Has such a leader ever existed? Almost certainly not! Would such a leader be suitable in all circumstances? The same attributes would be needed but we should have to shake our kaleidoscope to change the balance to the needs of the time and the situation.

Do we actually need leaders at all? It is a question that must be asked. In a truly democratic society should not everyone share in making decisions and seeing they are carried out? That might work in an ideal world, but as we have never found that ideal world we are not in a position to judge. In the meantime we must order our society to meet the needs of the world we live in, in a realistic way. People through the ages have felt the need for leaders. Where nobody has emerged or thrust themselves forward, the people have taken action to find one for themselves. Why is this? Why do we instinctively feel the need to be led? Is it a question of needing one person who can put our case and represent us? Is it the wish to focus, in one person, the direction and organisation of the group? Or is it perhaps, above all, the need that people feel to be able to look up to a figure head in whom they have confidence and from whom they gain inspiration.

~~THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP~~

There have always been theories of leadership. What are the essential attributes of a good leader? Why should one person succeed in leadership and another fail? Opinions have been expressed by poets, philosophers, leaders themselves, and more latterly by behavioural scientists. ^{Robert Lynd} ~~Thucydides~~ held that it was a misfortune to have very brilliant men in charge of affairs; "They expect too much of ordinary men"; and ^{John B. King} ~~Tacitus~~ believed that "Reason and calm judgement were the

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on day Chinese poems part of this story

special qualities of a leader". There ^{is} was also the theory of leading from behind. ~~As Lao Tsu said "But of a good leader who ask little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled they will say we did this ourselves".~~ ^{the best} ~~As Lao Tsu said "But of a good leader who ask little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled they will say we did this ourselves".~~ ^{his task is accomplished & the} ~~As Lao Tsu said "But of a good leader who ask little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled they will say we did this ourselves".~~ ^{the people all reward, we have done it ourselves} Disraeli maintained "I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?" And from Byron "And when we think we lead, we are most led!"

Possibly a reason why many people feel so confused about leadership today, is the range of ideas and theories which latter day researchers have offered over the past 50 years.

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The early view that a leader was born, not made, came about as a result of studies focused on the personality of the leader. Long lists of "traits" were compiled consisting of qualities which the leader should possess. These seemed to imply that the leader was assumed to be able to exercise his leadership in a vacuum and ^{best} Shaw ~~and~~ ^{read & write} Gouldner reviewing the empirical investigations concluded that "There is no reliable evidence concerning the existence of universal leadership traits".

A development from that ~~was~~ the "situational approach" which held that it was the social circumstances that commanded the degree to which anyone's leadership potential is used. It can be argued that a General would require and use a different set of personality traits / ability to inspire his men being uppermost - than a senior executive in an international business organisation, who seeks to direct action more impersonally / by establishing targets for profit, market share, or return on capital employed. The implication here is that leaders develop within situations rather than uniquely from their own abilities.

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Another theory - the "follow-up approach" - was presented by ~~Tannerbaum, Weschler and Massarik~~ ^{by other researchers}, as well as by Sanford. They put forward the idea that the effective leader was one who best satisfied the needs and aspirations of his sub-ordinates. Again this implies that leadership arises not from the leader's own abilities but in this case from his followers.

All these approaches have been criticised but this does not imply that they are necessarily without value. There is no doubt that certain researchers, Porter for example, did find that certain traits tended, rightly or wrongly, to be judged more important at high management levels. What was recognised was that the determination of specific traits, even as measured in personality tests, said nothing about the true nature of leadership. Nor, of course, can inborn traits be taught or learned.

The researchers turned therefore, to the behavioural approach. This offered the notion that the best way to consider the nature of leadership was to study what leaders did rather than what they were. ~~Fleishman~~ ^{Such researchers} working at Ohio State University approached this by collecting critical incidents of good and bad leadership for their degree of "goodness" or "badness". A questionnaire was devised such that leaders could be measured and scored against the checklist. ^{They} He concluded the following - "It is possible that future research will indicate that combinations of such things as group characteristics, needs and expectations, leadership attitudes, behaviours and perceptions, pressures from supervisors etc can yield more successful predictions where ordinary testing procedures have failed in the complex field of leadership and group effectiveness".