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Last Updated: May 7, 2009 - 9:16:05 AM

Morphosis Leadership Being visionaries in a changing world

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Volume 7 - Issue 2
May 7, 2009 - 9:11:24 AM

1. Introduction

Living in a rapidly evolving society where change occurs continuously and on multiple levels, has created a need, more than ever before, for leadership that reflects this new reality. The changes in demographics, the forming of multicultural families, the diversity on an economic, educational, social and ethnic level, as well as the further rise of multinational corporations are all changes that are challenging traditional values and principles. Thus the quest for Authentic Leadership is rising, and it is an idea which implies that leadership is very personal. Why Authentic leadership? One might ask. Because, "there is evidence of the desire for authenticity all around us in popular culture". (Goffee & Jones, 2006, p.3)

Current reality stresses and applauds the individual's ability to be independent and able to fend for one self. The Technological Interactive society sees the emerging of young people who are native in the digital world, who experience the manifestation of their desires at the press of a button. Yet, the adults who raise them, educate them and hire them to work for them are immigrants in this world. Furthermore, this situation where the adults control the assets, opportunities and are the authority may be indeed paradoxical but it is nonetheless a reality. While teamwork and effective communication are vital in a living and working environment, oftentimes communication is void of feeling, facial expressions and body language, as virtual reality creates a behavior that is anything but authentic. The gap between being independent and being interdependent is growing and more people are becoming isolated as they turn to their 'gadgets' for support, company and satisfaction. In the midst of darkness, Diogenes, the ancient Greek philosopher, was often seen roaming the streets, holding a small lantern and searching. When passersby asked this seemingly senile old man

what he searched for, his response was simply, "I am looking for human beings". Therefore, leadership is about building community, about creating feelings of belonging, about sharing a vision, about taking risks, about changing. It is about all those things that bring human beings together and break through the barriers of fear and of undermining others to get ahead in the game. "Leadership is Personal…unless you know who you are, what you are prepared to do and why, then you can't hope to achieve anything very grand' (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

2. The Morphosis Leadership

It is perhaps an oxymoron to suggest that any authentic leadership can be taught and learned. And while thousands of books and hundreds of thousands of articles have been published analyzing the characteristics and philosophies of leadership and "how to" leaders, there are certainly some innate characteristics that must be examined before the art of leadership can be learned. Among these is the desire to consider the good of the whole as opposed to the narcissistic view of only personal and professional satisfaction. Thus, basic moral and ethical values provide a good foundation on which to build. As academic institutions are building tomorrow's leaders, "academic leadership is necessary now more than ever before" (Gialamas, 2005, vol. 12.2). It is the authentic leader, the leader who is not afraid to accept the opinions of others, adopt ideas, communicate spontaneously, who does not hesitate to share personal failures as well as triumphs, the leader who dares to change, who leads institutions and its members into a desire to move away from the familiar to the unknown and teaches young people by example, to have a personal as well as a common vision. It is this leader who is "aware of and unfazed by the paradoxes of leadership" (Gialamas, 2005, vol. 12.2) as this leader is well aware that resistance is intrinsic to any kind of change, even change for the better (Pelonis, 2006).

The current article purports to share a view of leadership from the practitioner's point of view. Presented thus, is the concept of Morphosis Leadership, along with the Leadership Praxis. Morfosis was defined by ancient Greeks as the Holistic, Meaningful and Harmonious approach in Learning.

3. Fundamental Pillars of the Morphosis Leadership

The Morfosis Leadership is defined by the following three components
a. Leadership
Leadership is the continuous act of influencing your self and others to accomplish personal and professional goals in life
b. Know Thyself
1 Detect, and clarify your Personal Principles and Values
2. Define clearly your Professional Goal(s) in life
3. Recognize and internalize your Individual Goal(s) in life
b. Adhere to a Collective Leadership Partnership Approach
1. Develop a team by establishing a partnership relationship among the leader and the team members based on common Principles and Values, and similar personal and professional goals in life
2. Establish a partnership relationship that defines well the distribution of authority and decision making among the leader and the members of the team not necessarily equally
3. Define clearly the distribution including the type, magnitude and the areas of the decision authority that is given to the team members
4. Support, promote and encourage team members to use their decision making authority

5. Reflect periodically on the partnership and adjust, modify, upgrade and even remove authority of team members if it is appropriate

It is these components that guide the potential leader in identifying and clarifying his/her leadership philosophy that is personal yet has the innate ability to become interpersonal.

The know thyself component of the Morposis leadership is comprised by three fundamental elements:

(i). Personal Principles and Values (PPV)
Personal Principles and Values must be defined and clarified before one can proceed toward adopting and developing a leadership philosophy. Personal principles and values assist one in looking in the mirror and defining who one is. It is the innate desire to explore ones' core beliefs about oneself and about ones' life. It is these beliefs that lead to the clarification of what contribution one is prepared to make in the world and to humanity. The leader must determine, identify, clarify and practice the principles and values adopted. These leadership defining principles and values lead one into a process of exploration, of change and reconstruction that a leader must be prepared to undergo before he/she requires others to do so. Thus, "It is not the position that makes the leader, it is the leader that makes the position"(Stanley Huffty in Maxwell, 1998).

Leading with a purpose is essential, but "unless you are clear about your purpose and your values and are doing something you really care about, it is difficult to act as a leader" (Goffe & Jones,2006). Thus, in the process of defining ones' principles and values, these should reflect ones' unique characteristics as well as ones' strengths and weaknesses. The process of identifying ones' fundamental principles and values is briefly illustrated in the following way: Potential leaders are asked to identify at least three events in their life that they consider very important. They are then guided to identify and record words describing and reflecting the situation. The goal of the exercise is to identify feelings evoked by the particular events and to align these feelings with the thoughts of becoming a leader in order to more precisely define the role in leadership one is willing and capable of assuming. (Gialamas, 2007). (see Appendix). Clarity therefore is fundamental in effective leadership. "People can only speak the truth when speaking in their own voice…. when (one is) not clear about personal values it's hard to imagine how to stand up for ones' beliefs" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).
Once the personal principles and values (PPV) are clearly identified, they must be communicated effectively to all constituencies and it is the PPV that will guide all actions.

(ii) Leadership philosophy
A thorough search of the literature will assist one in collecting ones' thoughts about leadership and understanding what leading experts believe about the subject. The research is the culprit to incorporating pieces of popular theory with one's personal beliefs. Ultimately the goal is to integrate adopted principles and values about leadership while considering personal strengths and weaknesses or preferences. In the process of sorting through what fits and discarding what is not aligned with personal preferences, one is able to arrive at a leadership philosophy that best represents the whole person as a leader. The specific leadership philosophy must reflect one's principles and values, as well as one's personal and professional goals.
Stefanos Gialamas introduced the idea of leadership as a partnership with bounded flexibility (Gialamas 2003). In this particular approach the leader and the team members establish an authority, accountability

and decision making partnership. Both parties agree on the principles and rules of the partnership. The flexibility allows both parties to occasionally adjust the level and depth of the partnership. The partnership must be well defined vertically and horizontally in the institution. To develop such leadership both partners must be open minded and creative. They must understand, accept and embrace the principles and values that the leader brings to the institution along with the leader's vision for the institution. This partnership has multiple parameters. It requires a lot of energy, time, reflection and analysis by the leader and the team. The parameters also include but are not limited to the culture of the institution, the strengths and weaknesses of the team members, the institution's leadership history as well as the local constraints or opportunities. The leader must remember at all times that every member of the institutional community is unique and has different dreams and aspirations. The leader must encourage and advocate disagreements in terms of differing points of view. More importantly however, a leader must advocate honest and true partnership and must demonstrate this advocacy through action.

(iii) Individual Professional and Personal Life goals
Oftentimes one is faced with the challenge of having either conflicting professional and personal life goals or these do not harmoniously compliment one another. To avoid such conflict a leader must first reflect on his/her adopted leadership philosophy, accepted principles and values and clearly identify his/her professional life goals. This is also a way to clarify what impact the leader would like to make in the institution as well as the community that he/she serves. In addition however, a leader must independently identify his/her life goals. Once these are clearly defined, they must be carefully examined to determine if they are in conflict with one another or rather that they compliment one another. If such a conflicting situation exists, one or both must be modified because it is essential that they co exist in order to acquire personal and professional harmony. One way to identify and define both goals is to ask oneself the question of how he/she would like to be remembered by family members, friends, colleagues and the community at large. As such, leadership is a personal Odyssey. It is on the road that lies the adventure, the learning the modifying. It is within the process that lays the ability to grow and accomplish the goals set. There is never really an end result. The journey is the most important ingredient in life rather than the destination. Ithaca is always a step away, as the authentic leader continuously evolves and as a result, influences those around him/her to evolve according to their own professional and personal life goals. In fact, as John Maxwell (2006) puts it, "leadership is about influence- nothing more nothing less" (p.17).
Authentic Leadership is interrelated to the leader's behavior, and actions which reflect of how he/she serves the Institution.

A. Behavior and Actions
It is human nature from some members of an institution to resist change as the forces of the status quo act like a magnet, pulling one in the direction of the past. The leader must be staying focused on his/her vision and goals by surrounding oneself with those who have adopted the vision of the institution are thus essential. "There is no point in being a leader if no-one is willing to follow" (Terner & Pew, 1978). Practically speaking, the leader must develop consistent behavior in accordance to their principles & values. Furthermore, this behavior must be continuously implemented in accordance to the mission of the institution and hand in hand with the leadership philosophy. It is important that a leader avoid extremes, thus one must balance analytical thinking and logic with feelings and compassion. The

leader must lead the institution daily by accomplishing more than expected. A leader's daily task is to continuously strive to improve every function of the institution by searching for new ways to do things and thus improving the quality. Quality is never obtained by accident and only when the pieces to the puzzle come together is one able to see the full picture in that particular area. Much like an orchestra coming together, at the hand of the conductor, to communicate an inspirational musical number that may otherwise sound like random noise or disconnected music, a leader puts the pieces of the puzzle together because he/she is able to see the full picture long before everyone else can. In fact, "a conductor is as good as his orchestra and the orchestra is as good as the conductor" according to Stefanos Gialamas.

The objectives a leader has defined are largely accomplished primarily through others. Therefore a leader must have the ability to inspire, motivate, guide, direct and listen to members of the institution in order for others to truly understand, accept, internalize and implement the mission of the institution.

B. Serving the Institution

Serving the institution means understanding the existing culture of the institution, including any and all subcultures that may exist. Thus, by understanding the past, one is better prepared to influence or create change. It is however, very important that a leader does not get caught up in the culture of the past, for that has an intrinsic danger of repeating the mistakes of the past, trying to please the members of the institution, and paving the pathway to the future of the institution. Therefore, a leader must create vision for the institution that reflects a future reality. A reality that is in accordance with leading edge approaches to student learning and which is always in alignment with the leader's principles & values as well as his/her leadership philosophy. There is no doubt that in the midst of such change, the earth shakes from its core and the immediate reaction of the institutions' members is to resist change in an attempt to bring back a well known familiarity and one that everyone is comfortable with. (Pelonis, 2006) It is obvious then, that perhaps the toughest job a leader must undertake is to influence the members of the institution to come on board the "new ship", to embrace the mission and vision of the institution in new ways and therefore, to embrace change. During times of change it is important to remember that an institution exists only to provide the best opportunity for student learning. That is, to promote, embrace, focus on, celebrate and maximize student learning. Moreover, professional development, curriculum and instruction, facilities, technology, services and operations have only one purpose, to improve student learning.

Change in the institution means change in the external community as well. Students, teachers, administrators and parents who adopt the new philosophy begin to live it. They talk to others, make decisions according to their own principles and values that are constantly being modified in accordance with the institution's philosophy and make choices that reflect what they are learning daily within the institution. There are always those who will continue to resist change and will be unable to stay on board the ship. But, this "natural selection" process will once again determine that institution's new face. It is a cyclical process that is never ending. (Pelonis, 2002)

A Leader

DREAMS – ACTS – FINE TUNES

Is Is Does

Decisive Assertive Follows things closely
Resourceful Courageous Inspires feelings of security
Energetic Time efficient Neutralizes potential conflicts
Approachable Stimulating Encourages initiatives
Multitasked
Self –aware Turns problems into solutions
Utilizes manpower appropriately
Negotiates best scenarios
Enjoys the process
Steps further back

Leaders must choose their battles wisely. Equally as important, knows when to go to battle. Thus setting priorities is essential to effective leadership. Leaders push their organizations to move up, to leave the comfort zone, to take risks. While resistance is a normal part of change, too much resistance can hinder the growth of the institution, thus if one cannot facilitate change in all individuals within the organization then one must change the culture of the organization by finding, supporting and promoting people and projects that effectively demonstrate the "New Way" the "new culture".
Leaders are great performers and they effectively model the way to others. They are also great storytellers. A scintillating story makes abstract change real. People get excited about a compelling leadership story. However, it is a fact that leaders are either hated or loved but never ignored because they challenge the very core of the institution and thus they challenge the very core of each individual member. Those who rise to the occasion are inspired by their leader, those who deeply resist the change, are threatened by the new way of being. Nevertheless, leaders enjoy leading and taking the winning shot. They think big in order to stay one step ahead of the game. Leadership is a personal and authentic quality and leaders by no means remind others who is in control they motivate others to become leaders themselves. Finally, leaders take responsibility visibly for the decisions they make as well as for the outcomes of their decisions. This is true at any level, in any position and for every member of a leader's team.

The Institution
The making of a great institution starts with an idea and the passion with which a leader approaches it! For, "all living systems begin small…The mighty sequoia tree begins in the humbles seed. It is no different in growing a new organizational culture." (Senge, 2007). If one is not passionate about an idea, he/she might as well abandon it. The idea then becomes the vision for the institution he/she leads. The idea is reinforced by giving it continuous attention; that is, by thinking about it, imagining what its manifestation would feel like and envisioning the final result. Thus, the idea becomes a dominant thought and eventually it crystallizes into a belief. Once, the leader believes within his/her very core in the idea, forces will come together to help it materialize. Doors will open, opportunities will arise and people will cooperate. The leader remains focused on the end result, the goal, and behaves daily in ways that ensure the materialization of the vision. Joy is an intricate part of the process, for the leader enjoys the journey every step of the way to accomplishing the goal. Furthermore, the leader is

adept in engaging others to adopt his/her passion.

Leaders promote the idea to their people in order to encourage them to "own" their place in relation to the vision. In other words, leaders help members become owners of the dream and of the outcomes. This then becomes a guiding force in helping others unleash their talents. It is thus important for leaders to trust and honor youth. They must also lead people to lead. If fact the best way to develop leaders is to let people lead and while the leader mentors, supports and guides them. Leaders do not tell others what to do. They help them make their own decisions. Consequently, leading is about making decisions and being responsible for ones' decisions. A leader does not provide a mold of leadership when grooming others to become leaders, he/she inspires diversity in thinking, analyzing and acting. Hence leadership cannot help but be and adventure.

The Vision Praxis
Exciting-Unique-Clear
• Clearly state the vision
• Communicate the vision to all constituencies
• Develop comprehensive plans to materialize the vision
• Identify and select the members of the leadership team
• Engage the leadership team in defining specific strategies
Including a time table to accomplish the vision
• Establish implementation teams and assign members of the
Leadership team to lead components of the implementation
Team
• Empower all members of the institution at the appropriate
Level to be active members in the implementation process

The leader must be vigilant and must continuously scan the environment as well as the institution constituents, in order to get a sense of, and decide which strategies are more effective in moving the organization towards the vision. Leadership credibility is earned by three things: making decisions, accomplishing goals based on the decisions made and getting results either small or large in behavior and in the daily relationship with members of the institution and the community. It is indeed important to remember, that the leader influences behavior at all times and by inspiring others to accept values, the adoption of which, many say, is impossible in today's materialistic society, such as integrity, humility and honesty, could slowly contribute to making the world a better place to live.
Inclusive in Leadership, are the continuous challenges that often seem to bring out negativity in each of the members. For example, it is desirable for leaders to be result-oriented but must also be thoughtful and reflective. They must be compassionate, sympathetic and kind but also demanding.

"The Leadership Praxis" is summarized below:

• Understand, Study and Respect the external environment and the institution
• Develop a Vision for the institution in line with its mission
• Establish a leadership team by utilizing existing human resources and if necessary recruiting new personnel
• Communicate the vision to all constituencies and work with the leadership team to develop a comprehensive implementation plan
• Establish implementation strategies and an

implementation team
• Continuously communicate the vision, plan and implementation strategies to all constituencies
• Setup measurable goals and outcomes
• Celebrate accomplishments and give credit generously to members of the institution
• Regularly assess, reflect and modify the implementation plan
• Evaluate the success of accomplishing the vision
• Improve and modify vision

Leaders must understand and internalize the magnitude of their influence in every situation and in relation to anyone they come in contact with either within the institution or within the community. Indeed, "A great leader has the ability to instill within his people confidence in themselves" (Maxwell, 1995,p.55). Yet, the leader must always be in the front line ready to assume every challenge and take any blow in order to protect the members of the institution. International education in particular is becoming experientially more complicated. Thus the leader must continuously consider the vision of the institution but more importantly the leader must behave according to the vision . To this end, 2, 500 years ago, Thucydides, the Greek Historian wrote: "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it."

In the end, perhaps leadership is nothing more than

Vision
Integrity
Kindness.

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