Leadership

Resource: Exploring Leadership – An Overview

"Today effective leadership is much more about long-term approaches and processes"
(Morris, Willcocks, & Knasel, 2000, p. 19).

This resource has two parts. Part A, explores some leadership ideas and Part B defines some common leadership terms.

Part A: Introduction to Leadership

Leadership is, in so many ways, one of the business and people mysteries of the decade. Few other topics have received so much attention educational circles for those who lead opportunities for personal growth and development.

Gray (2004) describes leadership in simple terms: 'knowing what should be done, and influencing others to cooperate in doing it' (p. 76). References to components of self knowledge seem to be fundamental in any leadership definition through a variety of contexts from business to sport. As Lombardi says "Leadership begins with self knowledge" (p.11). Having that self-knowledge enables people to lead successfully. Excellent performance is achieved by an individual through a foundation of understanding of one's self, one's personal abilities and how one might interact with others.

In essence, any coaching programme designed to enhance leadership needs inherent in its objectives, content and stated outcomes, an understanding of the power of self belief and expectations. It might be that enhancing personal self belief and raising personal expectations is perhaps the most powerful tool of a successful leadership programme.

Several words are weaved throughout most leadership definitions, descriptions and stories: influence, situational, power, balance, character, integrity, charisma, change and so on (see Part B: Common Leadership Terms). Leadership is about the **influence** one individual has on others; it depends on the **situation** the leadership is occurring in. It involves the use or, in some cases misuse, of **power**. Real leaders find **balance** not only in their leadership but in other aspects of life.

The essence in application of foundation principles of leadership is perhaps in the individual's awareness of the **influence** they currently have as leaders and their untapped potential to **influence**. In addition, to grow an individual's leadership ability it seems appropriate to scan and analyse leadership in different situations – to encourage **situational** appropriate leader responses. To effectively coach, understanding and developing leadership requires an opportunity for individuals to understand themselves better before they can lead others more effectively.

Lombardi (2001) goes on to say "self knowledge is the basis for **character**…**character** is the root of **integrity**…**integrity** provides the foundation for leadership' (p 10-11). Lombardi believes with 'these building blocks in place' (p. 49) a person can lead.

"One word that occurs when thinking about leadership is '**charisma**'" (Morris, et al, 2000, p. 17). There is much debate over whether leaders are made or born. Is leadership **charisma** or an innate characteristic? Lombardi (2001) states 'Leaders are made, not born' (p. 49). Other views support the genetic factor of inherent innate qualities that made a leader.

If we subscribe to the view that leaders can be made or developed or grown in their leadership, then it seems coaching and developing leadership is a core necessity. Providing leaders with realistic, useable and appropriate tools for leadership should be the foundation of any leadership development programme. According to the athlete-centred approaches, coach developers aim to

develop influential leaders in coaching who are able to empower others through their understanding of athletes, teams and the context in which they operate.

'The behaviour – and the performance – of organisations are heavily dependent on the social behaviour and competitive performance of the individuals in them' (Gray, 2004, p.8). For coaches, this comment relates extremely well to the relationship between individual behaviour and group behaviour in a sports team situation.

In any practical coaching setting, if we are coaching from an holistic standpoint, then part of the leadership 'essentials' is in an understanding and implementation of the skills of humanness, and an understanding how the person we lead might best function in the world. Unlocking individual potential towards personal excellence is surely a key function of coach-leadership. 'Someone's ability to perform a task depends on two internal factors: their potential and the ways in which that potential has been developed through learning or training' (Gray, 2004, p.32). Potential, Gray (2004) goes on to say, 'usually refers to the qualities, skills, knowledge and experience a person has including…their ability to learn' (p. 32).

For individuals to survive, and indeed thrive, in the world of 2007 and beyond there is specific learning, beyond the traditional, that is essential. Any learning involves an element of **change**. In terms of any coaching environment the **transformational change** we are coaching for is to grow the potential (qualities, skills, knowledge and experience) of the learners (athletes).

Practising leadership and gaining and giving feedback are vital skills when developing people and an environment for success. Knowledge of leadership must be fuelled by an understanding of not only the 'what' of leadership but the 'why' that motivates to lead the 'how' to action leadership. A basic principle that underpins most learning… 'actions which are rewarded tend to be repeated' (Gray, 2004, p.39). Gray is referring to feedback in terms of positive reinforcement. It seems that the comment also applies to learners (athletes) who need to be rewarded appropriately for the work within the programme. Athletes would highly probably define 'appropriate reward' differently depending on who they are, the sport, the team and the wider context. Coach-leaders need to develop an understanding of the feedback and rewards that motivate each individual athlete they work with.

Some of the success of any coaching programme lies around the expectations of the participants. This refers to expectations in terms of the quality and content of the programme but, more importantly, the expectations the athletes have of their own performance as an athlete and in some cases as a leader. 'The expectations we have of ourselves can influence the targets we set for ourselves' (Gray, 2004, p.99).

Furthermore, 'People with high self-efficacy beliefs have been found to perform better at a variety of tasks, regardless of their actual ability and, importantly, regardless of whether their self-efficacy beliefs were 'natural' or had been artificially enhanced by false feedback' (Gray, 2004, p. 99).

"The first step towards earning respect as a leader is showing you are interested in people and demonstrate that you want to listen to them" (Morris, et al, 2000, p.39).

Values-based leadership is a driving force in modern organisations, especially sport. In a world dominated by change, where individuals are required to respond to change with ease and 'handle the buzz and the blur' (Morris et. al, 2000, p. 28) consistent leadership is paramount. 'Buzz and 'Blur' is much of what coaching is inherently about as it is based so strongly on leadership of people in an ever moving environment.

References
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Morris, S. Willcocks, G. & Knasel, E. (2000). *How to lead a winning team.* Edinburgh, SC: Pearson Education.

Part B: Common Leadership Terms

The following leadership-related definitions help to develop an understanding about effective leadership. All definitions relate to various aspects are introduced as coaches go through the learning area of leadership of this module.

Transformational Leadership
"Transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on higher order intrinsic needs. This results in followers identifying with the needs of the leader" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformational_leadership.

Transformational leadership is "the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions or organization members (organizational culture) and building commitment for major changes in the organizations objectives and strategies" (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992, p 174).

Transactional Leadership
"Transactional leaders use conventional reward and punishment to gain compliance from their followers." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transactional_leadership)

A transactional leader "approaches followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions" (Burns, 1978, p. 169)

Influence
"Influence is a term that refers to the ability to indirectly control or affect the actions of other people or things" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Influence).

"The true measure of leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less" (Maxwell, 1998, p.11).

Empowerment
"An empowered person is one who has control of the decisions which impact his/her life" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment).

"Management and organizational theory, "empowerment" often refers loosely to processes for giving subordinates (or workers generally) greater discretion and resources: distributing control in order to better serve both customers and the interests of employing organizations." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment)

"As for the best leaders, the people do not even notice their existence. The next best people honour and praise. The next, the people fear; the next the people hate. When the best leader's work is done the people say 'we did it ourselves' " (Lao-Tzu in Morris, Willcocks and Knasel, 2000, p 124)

Values
"Principles, standards or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable by the person who holds them" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values)

"Assumptions, convictions, or beliefs about the manner in which people should behave and the principles that should govern behavior." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values).

"Values are standards or principles that guide your actions and beliefs" (Lee & King, 2001, p.55).

"Over time all other things may change – an organization's people, strategy, finances, beneficiaries – but its values should not. If these are allowed to degenerate, a team no longer has any unifying core" (http://www.trustedleader.org/team_values_g.asp?page=75)

Situational
"Of, relating to, or occurring in a particular set of circumstances"   (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Situational).

What are those situational elements (demands and constraints) that have a strong influence on leader behaviour?
- Size of the group
- Group technology
- Group formal structure
- Task of the group
- Organisational goals
- Norms of that social setting
- Nature of the group   (Chelladurai, 1998)

Qualities
Inherent or distinguishing characteristics (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Qualities).

"Leadership is not just one quality, but rather a blend of many qualities; and while no one individual possesses all of the needed talents that go into leadership, each man can develop a combination to make him a leader" (Lombardi, 2001, p.2).

Balance
"Balance is used to mean a point between two opposite forces that is desirable over purely one state or the other" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balance_%28metaphysics%29).

"Put first things first" (Covey, 1989, p.145).

"Balanced leadership is by no means easy. It's a constant juggling act, but it does increase your odds for success" (Rodek, 2006, retrieved on 2 February, 2007, http://www.hyperion.com/company/overview/thought_leadership/exec_perspectives/balanced_leadership.cfm.

Costs
"to involve the loss or sacrifice of someone or something" (http://www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers/features/chref/chref.py/main?query=costs&title=21st).

"Choices in careers, choices in leadership, and choices in life bring trade-offs. There are both costs and benefits" (Lee & King, 2001, p.29).

"Understanding the costs of leadership is important to understanding more about the context in which you currently lead or will lead in the future" (Lee & King, 2001, p.26).

Vision
 "An ideal or a goal toward which one aspires. *He worked tirelessly toward his vision of world peace"* (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/vision).

Quote:
"Presenting an idealized view of what the future can be: Some may feel that 'vision' is a tired concept, but properly crafted and communicated, it is a powerful motivator" (Barnes, 2005, retrieved on February 2, 2007 from (http://www.amanet.org/books/catalog/0814408346.htm)

Philosophy
"A set of principles that serves as a basis for making judgements and decisions. O*ne's philosophy of life"* (http://www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers/features/chref/chref.py/main?query=philosophy&title=21st).

"…a widely communicated leadership philosophy and a vision of what the leader wants an organization to be are essential to being an effective leader. One of the key first steps in becoming a leader is to develop and articulate this personal leadership philosophy" (Academy Leadership, 2006 retrieved on February 2. 2007 from http://www.academyleadership.com/leadershipphilosophy.asp).

Leadership Style

style *noun* **1** a manner or way of doing something, eg writing, speaking, painting, designing buildings, etc. **2** a distinctive manner that characterizes a particular author, painter, film-maker, etc. (http://www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers/features/chref/chref.py/main?query=Style&title=21st).

"The style that individuals use will be based on a combination of their beliefs, values and preferences, as well as the organizational culture and norms which will encourage some styles and discourage others" (http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/leadership_styles.htm).

Team Culture

Culture – "The beliefs, values, behavior and material objects that constitute a people's way of life" (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/culture)

Quote:"Creating, modifying or managing the team culture ultimately is what defines leadership success" (Hollway, 2006, retrieved on February 2, 2007 from http://www.nscaa.com/print2.php?id=134).

Change

"…to make the form, nature, content, future course, etc., of (something) different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone" (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/change).

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world" Mahatma Gandhi   (http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Change).

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