

# Chapter I

## Leadership Traits

### A. **Understanding Leadership Traits: Traits to be developed and Traits to be avoided**

In psychology, a trait is a stable characteristic--potentially lasting throughout one's entire life. Coming up with an exact list of leadership traits is difficult. Different experts will come up with different lists.

It's reasonable to assume that certain personality traits are associated with leadership, while others are not.

*Great leaders grow deep roots!*

A leader should not only possess certain personality traits required to be successful but he should, like an Oak tree, have leadership roots sunk deep in the soil of his life.

A massive Oak plant grows from a small acorn when planted in the proper soil. Yet, the key to the oak's imposing stature is what lies beneath the soil out of view--its root system. And the oak's root system is just as impressive as its visible features.

As an example, the Oak's taproot can reach 60 feet deep, to search for groundwater. Some of its roots extend out more than twice the drip line. The oak tree's extensive root system anchors it against storm conditions and allows it to absorb water and nutrients from the soil. Its roots are the source from which the visible tree's greatness springs.

What the roots are to the mighty oak, leadership traits are to great leaders. Like roots, they may be invisible to the eye, but they are the true source of an exceptional leader's actions. If these unseen leadership roots are not sunk deep in the soil of one's life, the results will reveal themselves in visible leadership that is at best stunted and at worst diseased. Thus, *Great leaders grow deep roots!*

## I. Important Traits:

### *Passion*

"One person with **passion** is better than forty people merely interested." — E. M. Forster

"You never achieve success unless you like what you are doing."  
— Dale Carnegie

An effective leader is a person with a passion for a cause that is larger than they are. Someone with a dream and a vision that will better society, or at least, some portion of it. Here, a very key question has to be answered: Can someone who is a charismatic leader, but only to do evil or to promote himself, be a leader -especially if he has a large following?" The answer would be no, he is a manipulator.

Also, without passion, a leader will not make the necessary courageous and difficult decisions and carry them into action. This is not to imply that all decisions are of this nature. But you can be sure, some of them will be. The leader without a passion for a cause will duck.

### *Modesty*

A Chinese proverb says that "All things come to the person who is modest and kind in a high position. "

Everyone wants to support a leader who is modest and kind, but wants to destroy those who walk around with their noses up in the air.

Leaders have to display many qualities and many of them at the same time but to resist temptation of good living and that too, when you can afford, is a difficult self control, not very common today.

A few examples of modesty are given below:

### **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam:**

"I still lived more or less as I had lived then - in a room ten feet wide and twelve feet long, furnished mainly with books, papers and a few pieces of hired furniture. The only difference was at that time, my room was in Trivandrum and now in Hyderabad. The mess bearer

brought me my breakfast of idlis and buttermilk and smiled in silent congratulation for the award." *His thoughts when he got Padma Vibhushan award.*

"This story will end with me, for I have no inheritance in the worldly sense. I have acquired nothing, built nothing, possess nothing - no family, sons, daughters." *Extract from his autobiography 'Wings of Fire'*

### **N.R. Narayana Murthy:**

His personal net worth today is over Rs.4000 crores. His company 'Infosys Technologies' is the first Indian company to be listed on NASDAQ (USA).

But he still lives in the same house which he constructed 20 years ago. He keeps no servant at home, cleans his toilet himself and takes simple lunch in office canteen.

### **Irvin M Jacobs:**

Started career as a professor, he is now CEO of 'Qualcomm' USA, which he founded in 1985. With 3.7% stake in Qualcomm, now worth over \$2.7 billion is a celebrity in America.

Even so, Jacobs and his wife, Joan, still live in the same modest ranch house they bought in 1966, when Jacobs was a professor.

### **Azim Premji:**

He is the founder Chairman of WIPRO whose market capitalization is at number one. Once, when his driver did not reach airport, he took an auto, reached office and made no enquiry about it.

Once he was seen in 'Bombay House' Mumbai the HQ of Tata's - in line to collect pass to see **Mr R.M. Lala.**

## ***Devotion to Duty***

Devotion to duty is an essential trait of leadership which now rarely exists in India as it existed in past. Here are a couple of true stories in support. Devotion to duty was the hallmark of the character of both Tilak and Patel.

Tilak was writing the editorial for the Kesari when a telegram announced the death of his young son. He put the telegram aside, finished the editorial, and then went home grief-stricken.

Patel acted likewise. He was arguing a criminal case at Borsad when a telegram was delivered to him in the court-room. He read it, quietly put it in his pocket, continued with his arguments without displaying emotions. He told himself: 'One life has gone. Let me save another.' When he had finished his arguments, the judge asked him out of curiosity: 'Mr. Patel, may I take the liberty of enquiring as to what the telegram was about.' In a depressed mood, Patel said: 'My Lord, my wife is dead.' Patel's devotion to duty saved a life.

*Extract from the book written by B. Krishna "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: India's iron man"*

## ***Work commitment***

A popular verse of the *Gita* advises “detachment” from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Being dedicated to work has to mean “working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake.” If we are always calculating the date of promotion or the rate of commission before putting in our efforts, then such work is not detached. It is not “generating excellence for its own sake” but working only for the extrinsic reward that may (or may not) result.

Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world works means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. So, the *Gita* tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future.

Thus the best means of effective performance management is the work itself. Attaining this state of mind (called “nishkama karma”) is the right attitude to work because it prevents the ego, the mind, from dissipation of attention through speculation on future gains or losses.

### ***Sound mental health***

Sound mental health is the very goal of any human activity - more so leadership. Sound mental health is that state of mind which can maintain a calm, positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work life and social existence. Internal constancy and peace are the pre-requisites for a healthy stress-free mind.

Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:

***Greed*** - for power, position, prestige and money.

***Envy*** - regarding others' achievements, success, rewards.

***Egotism*** - about one's own accomplishments.

***Suspicion, anger and frustration.***

***Anguish*** through comparisons.

The driving forces in today's businesses are speed and competition. There is a distinct danger that these forces cause erosion of the moral fibre, that in seeking the end, one permits oneself immoral means - tax evasion, illegitimate financial holdings, being “economical with the truth”, deliberate oversight in the audit, too-clever financial reporting and so on. This phenomenon may be called as “yayati syndrome”.

In the book, the Mahabharata, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, he found the pursuit of sensual enjoyments ultimately unsatisfying and came back to his son pleading him to take back his youth. This “yayati syndrome” shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions (extrinsic motivation) and inner value and conscience (intrinsic motivation.)

## *Dreaming*

One of the traits of leaders is that they are dreamers and also have the capacity to execute their dreams. Giving shape to dream demands (a) definition of the dream (b) dead line to achieve (c) daring (d) decisiveness (f) discipline i.e. focused to the dream and many other qualities.

Americans dreamt of going to the moon. They went. J.N. Tata dreamt of a world class hotel, he built it. It is, therefore, said that *“Dreams are not that are seen when you sleep, dreams are those which never let you sleep”*

Today, let us all dream and work towards building a stronger India that can occupy its rightful place in the world affairs.

## *Teamwork/Carrying people along*

*“When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion”*. - Ethiopian Proverb

*“I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow.”*- Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), Twenty-eighth President of USA

*“It takes two wings for a bird to fly.”* - Jesse Jackson (1941- ), American political activist

*“A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle”*. - Japanese Proverb

Even the best leaders can not tackle most leadership jobs alone. They need to have and to motivate followers to become involved in getting the job done. They must trust other people to get a job done and they must be able to delegate.

A similar trait is the **ability to network** - to build linkages of friends and acquaintances that may be able to provide needed assistance at some future time. A classic study by James Coleman many years ago showed that who you knew was one of the most important things that influenced life successes.

While watching a flock of geese flying in their traditional "V" formation, heading for Canada, two engineers learned that each bird,

by flapping its wings, creates uplift for the bird that follows. Together, the whole flock gains something like 70 percent greater flying range than if they were journeying alone.

It's hard to think of a better description of teamwork and professionalism than the following description of how the earth's highest mountain was scaled without any loss of life or injury:

Excitement gripped the world when Edmund Hillary, a New Zealand beekeeper, and Tenzing Norgay, his Sherpa guide from Nepal became the first to climb Mt. Everest, the world's tallest peak in May of 1953.

During their descent, Hillary slipped and started to fall. But Tenzing immediately dug in his ice axe and braced the rope which held them together. Except for this quick action, Hillary most certainly would have fallen to his death.

At the bottom of the mountain, the news media was waiting and they soon learned of Hillary's near accident, and Tenzing Norgay's lifesaving maneuver. "Tell us all about it," the reporters shouted, focusing on the modest Sherpa guide. Tenzing looked at them with great calm. In a quiet voice, he replied simply:

"Mountain climbers always help each other."

### ***Integrity***

*"A liar needs a good memory."* - — Quintillian

*"If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything."* — Mark Twain

*"The man who trusts men will make fewer mistakes than he who distrusts them."* - Camillo Benso di Cavour

Integrity means that the inner and the outer aspects of a person's life form a unified whole. That what you project in public is essentially matched in private. That your stated values actually govern your behaviour. That your word is your bond. Integrity is that you do what you say you will. You are trust worthy. People can rely on you. You

keep your promises. The one thing that will most keep people from following you is if they can't know for sure if you will actually take them where you say you will.

Ultimately, you're not a leader if no one is following. In other words, exceptional leadership requires a climate of trust where people give you their wholehearted commitment. And nothing destroys that trust faster than a perception of hypocrisy and duplicity. Thus the importance of integrity.

Integrity is cultivated and maintained by making repeated decisions to live up to one's values and commitments. It's often difficult. Frequently inconvenient. And we certainly do and will make mistakes. But over time, people need to see that we are basically trustworthy.

No integrity = no trust. No trust = no followers.

In fact, the basic root of Mahatma Gandhi's success was his absolute integrity. Integrity leads to credibility. People find out very soon if there is a gap between what you preach and what you practise. The reason why many of our so called leaders today do not carry credibility is because there is a gap between what they practise and what they preach. The first requirement for a leader to be effective is absolute integrity. Integrity is of three types - moral integrity, financial integrity and intellectual integrity.

How does one develop integrity? Is there a formula for integrity? One of the methods to develop integrity is to have absolute faith in God. If you have faith in God, automatically you will develop a capacity to withstand any amount of pressure. After all you make compromises when you find that you may not be able to meet your immediate goals unless you compromise. Each one of us has various needs in the hierarchy of needs of Maslow and this may lead to a tendency to compromise. Nevertheless, if you have faith in God and believe that the right thing must be done, then automatically you find that you develop the requisite strength to resist pressures.

Many a time integrity can also be developed out of a realistic assessment of the situation. Once you have analyzed the situation and examined what is it that can happen, then you can face any situation – any threat. Normally a public servant yields to pressure because he

wants to stick on to a particular job, or a particular place and he compromises. Once he starts compromising, he loses his integrity, if not in the sense of financial integrity but definitely intellectual integrity and moral integrity.

We may now examine the aspect of moral integrity. How can we ensure that the decisions we take are correct morally? For this, we may adopt three way test described by Norman Vincent Peale and Kenneth Blanchard in their book “The Power of Ethical Management”.

### ***Three way test to moral integrity***

The first test is, ‘Is the decision that you are taking or action that you are going to take legal?’ If it is not legal, it is not ethical. The second test is ‘Is the action that you are taking fair? This means that the course of action must be such that it does not give undue benefit to any one side – either your side or the other side or the opposite side. For example, if you are entering into a contract, it must be fair for both the parties which are entering into the contract. The third test says that if the decision that you take today or the action that you are indulging becomes public knowledge, will you feel ashamed? If you feel ashamed, it means basically the action was not ethical.

The Tehelca.com expose of 13th March 2001 and the embarrassment it caused was an illustration of the failure of the parties exposed in the third test for ethical action.

### ***Vision***

*"The empires of the future are empires of the mind."* — Winston Churchill

*"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible."*— Jonathan Swift

*"Create your future from your future, not your past."*— Werner Erhard

Vision is essential to good leadership. Vision provides direction and without direction, there’s not much point to all that planning. The first

step towards leadership is creating a Vision Statement, because it embodies dreams and passions.

True leaders are visionaries. They can persuade and convince others that their cause is just and worth working for. A leader communicates his or her vision first by defining reality—a message that boils down to “where we've been” and “where we are.” The next is the challenge of vividly describing a new reality: “where we must go.”

In the words of Jack Welch, GE's noted CEO, "The leader's unending responsibility must be to remove every detour, every barrier to ensure that vision is first clear, and then real."

Leaders must feel the vision deep within. Great leaders have a deeply rooted sense of vision. *“Exceptional leaders do not so much possess a great vision, as they are possessed by a great vision.”*

Vision also means a capacity to see beyond today's realities. It is probably this aspect of business vision that gives a person to spot opportunities. In the days of the Permit Licence Raj, business associations and every Chambers of Commerce and Industry used to come with a list of demands to the Government. It was probably Reliance which used the very system of permit Licence Raj to look at opportunities and grow vigorously. Many may blame the Indian Industry of today because our plants are pigmies by global standard. This is because of License Raj which limited capacities. How do we explain the success of Reliance in the same permit License Raj and their success in building global level plants?

The leaders always have a vision about what the future should be. For example, Azim Premji who has built up WIPRO as a world class institution gave a talk some time back when he said that if you want to build world class enterprises in India, we need five things. The first is a vision. His vision was to make WIPRO into a Company that serves the customers best in the area of information technology. The second important aspect was values where we come across the concept of integrity and value based leadership. The third was innovation. The fourth was leadership and the fifth concern for the society.

In different parts of his career Jack Welch had come up with different ideas. The latest one was on quality or “Six Sigma”. Early in his career he came with the idea that GE should be either number one or

number two in any industry in which it operates. GE was a huge company with a wide range of products and services. He was able to use this mantra “number one or number two” to bring the vision of GE into sharp focus and concentrate the mind and action of all in his company. The supreme success of GE in the period when Jack Welch led the company, made him a legend.

### ***Deep Listening***

*“Who speaks, sows; who listen reaps.”*— Argentine Proverb

*"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."* — Stephen R. Covey

*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

*"If speaking is silver, then listening is gold"* — Turkish Proverb

*"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."* — Winston Churchill

It is combination of many traits that makes a person, a leader in the real sense. 'Deep Listening' is one of these traits of successful leadership.

Unfortunately listening has been a neglected area in management, in parenting, or in our educational system. While there are a plethora of books and courses and tutors on ‘effective speaking,’ a very few people or organizations cover training on ‘listening’.

Some views on this subject are placed hereunder:

- *When Gandhi returned from South Africa, Tilak advised him to listen for one year and not to speak.*
- *“Ironically, all through school, we were taught to read, write and speak, but never to listen, and the situation remains much the same today. Traditionally, Indian scientists have been very good speakers, but have inadequately developed listening skills.” - Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam*

- *"I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen."* - **Lee Ia Cocca**, Ex President Ford, Ex-chairman Chrysler
- *"Listening is one of the highest compliments we can pay anyone."* - **Dale Carnegie**

*"The reason that we have two ears and one mouth,"* said the Greek philosopher, Zeno, *"is that we may listen the more and talk the less."*

Of the top five areas employees feel management needs to improve, listening skills consistently ranks near the top.

Often, we are so far ahead of the speaker, lingering on another agenda, or worse, off on a mental excursion that we don't even hear, much less listen. And the sheer pace of the normal, hurried workplace speeding along somewhere near the speed of light aggravates the situation: we feel that we don't have time to listen to others. Of course, we always have time to do the work all over again because of our haste and poor listening resulted in misunderstanding.

The costs of poor listening are staggering – rework, missed deadlines, poor employee satisfaction and employee relations, lost sales, and compromised customer relations. In business, poor listening can be very expensive.

It doesn't matter whether you're managing, negotiating, supervising, or selling – you're going to be more effective by listening than by talking.

Here is a fundamental question to ponder: Is there a difference in "Listening to Respond" versus "Listening to Understand?"

Listening to understand, on the other hand, seeks first to fully understand the other person's viewpoint BEFORE replying or responding. This type of listening implies that you must question to gain clarification, and parroting back what you have heard to insure you got the intended message. People don't always say what they mean, and they need help from you to *commune* their thoughts and feelings with you.

The author, Steven Covey, said it best in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*: Seek **first** to understand **before** being understood.

### **JRD TATA - Source:** Beyond the Last Blue Mountain

...Dastur goes on to relate that at Frankfurt the Government of India summoned a conference on how to encourage European tourist traffic to India. The Minister for Tourism, Dr. Karan Singh, J.R.D., the Director-General of Tourism as well as all the European station heads of Air India were present. Everyone was enthusiastic and talked a lot about India's biggest attractions which they felt were Goa and Kovalam beach in Kerala. **Only one person sat silent.** The effervescence of the others passed with the conference but J.R.D. came home and suggested to the Taj mahal Hotel to start a complex in Goa, says Dastur, which resulted in the Fort Aguada Hotel and the Taj Village. **'He listens,' notes Dastur.**

### ***To celebrate success.***

There's no denying that competition exists; business is more competitive now than ever before. A leader turns this into a game of sorts—setting team goals and rewarding those who meet or beat them. Leaders examine shortcomings and celebrate accomplishments. Big visions and ambitious goals mean there is always more to be done and higher ground to be reached. However, focusing only on what is yet to be accomplished can ironically lessen the likelihood of success. An effective leader knows that progress must be celebrated if high morale and commitment is to be maintained

### ***Creativity/Innovativeness***

Creativity is often thought of in terms of artistic expression in music, writing or the visual arts. These certainly are expressions of creativity, but they are not the only ones. As an aspect of leadership, creativity is often expressed in problem solving.

In the movie Apollo 13, there is a scene where a number of engineers are given an assortment of objects and told that these are all the pieces of equipment available to the astronauts to create a filter to purify the air off carbon dioxide. The engineers' task is to create such a filter from items that were never intended for that purpose within a short

period of time so that the astronauts can replicate it. Now that demands creativity!

Creativity is natural. Current thinking by creativity researchers contends that the question is no longer, "Are you creative?" but rather, "How are you creative?" Our challenge is to discover, honor and develop our natural creative energies.

Mr. N Vittal, Ex CVC, had once mentioned about the importance of creativity in a manager's or leader's life by narrating his own experience as follows: "When I became the Managing Director of a fertilizer company we had a problem of solid, liquid and gaseous pollutants. We were burning thousands of tons of coal per day, producing four hundred tons of fly ash. We were handling six and a half millions of gallons of water per day which have to be treated. We had sulphur in the fuel oil which was our feed stock for producing the fertilizer, Urea.

What we did was to operate on the principle that if one man's meat is another man's poison, one man's poison is another man's food. One industry's pollutant can be the raw material for another industry. Therefore, we started using the fly ash for the recovery of ravine lands by land fills. Similarly to tackle liquid pollution, we made the water used in the plants to come up to BIS irrigation standards. The villagers gladly utilized this effluent water to develop cotton and wheat in their villages which were otherwise prone to frequent droughts. We recovered sulphur through sulphur recovery plant and marketed it readily thereby earning profit to the Company and reducing pollution. The vision I had was that the Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizer Company must be a zero pollution plant and the objective was achieved.

The age old **story of tortoise and hare** is modified here to show how creativity or innovativeness makes the difference in maximizing results. In the race between hare and tortoise, the tortoise had won thus establishing that "**slow and steady wins the race**". However, when the hare practiced racing without sleeping mid way, it won the race. So the adage was rephrased as "**steady and fast wins the race**". The tortoise then decided to change the route of the race so that a lake comes in the route. The hare failed to cross it while the tortoise crossed it with ease. Now, the saying was rephrased as "**Creative or Innovative wins the race**" But the fourth time the tortoise and hare decided to run together; on the

Leader should use his creativity to find the right job for each person. In the hands of a great master, everything is of value. An artist has a lot of colors on the palette and an organization has a lot of different kinds of people. Like a great artist, the creative leader makes the best use of each one.

Can we not call the decision to adopt “non-violence” as a tool for achieving freedom, the biggest “innovation” of all times? It was beyond our imagination and beyond the imagination of those who ruled over us. In modern terminology it is called thinking “Out of the Box”.

### ***Communication/ persuasiveness***

*"Without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of others are never captured."*— John P. Kotler

Leaders have impeccable skills for being understood and understanding others. Great leaders create an environment where the lines of communication are always open, and those around them feel comfortable sharing information. When they have information to share, leaders always consider the methods available and choose the one best suited for their message (voice mail, email or in person). They develop their written and oral skills, ensuring that voice-mail messages are concise and to the point, and that letters and emails are clear and easily understood. Most importantly, leaders consider their audience. They never speak down to anyone, or use language that is over others' heads. They know it's more important to connect with their team than to try to sound important or intelligent.

Leaders also recognize that not everyone processes information the same way, and so they are skilled at flexing their communication style to maximize their success with others. They follow the KISS principle (Keep It Simple and Straight)

How does one communicate? Here charisma comes in. Charisma is nothing but the capacity to simplify and exaggerate. Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha is an excellent example of how the message about the harm caused by foreign rule was communicated to the entire country more than half of which was illiterate. If salt, a poor man's need, can be taxed, it means that the government was anti-people to that extent.

### *People Centered perceptive*

A leader must be **sensitive** to other people's wants and needs and to changes in these wants and needs. Genuine interest in another person will often develop a sense of trust by that person. A gifted politician is one who can carefully always perceive the current mood of his constituents.

Leaders have a deeply rooted concern for those whom they lead. Effective leaders care about the success of others. They care about the well being of those in their charge. They do not use people as simply as a means to an end. They genuinely want others to develop to their full potential.

People will follow leaders whom they sense genuinely care for their wellbeing -- even to the ends of the earth. Ask Ernest Shackleton. After leading an expedition to the Antarctic in which his 27 crew members faced eighteen months of extreme challenges and the constant threat of death, 8 of the crew signed up to do it all again when Shackleton organized another Antarctic expedition a few years later. What motivated them to risk their lives again? Those who kept journals commented on Shackleton's genuine concern for the lives of his men. They wanted to be around someone who really cared for those he led.

Another useful characteristic is the ability to **remember personal characteristics** such as names, items about the family, how many children they have, etc. People like to hear their names. It recognizes them as a unique individual. This characteristic of Gujarat's CM

Narendra Modi has made him very popular among the people and his team workers.

### ***Trustworthiness/Probity***

Only a highly trusted leader is going to generate support for a new vision. This means being candid, truthful and consistent. It means being authentic and reachable when others are more concerned about maintaining an image.

A leader needs to be honest both now and in the future. Most people will believe and follow someone they trust. Openness and candor are characteristics that most people appreciate. There are a few people who will take advantage of such traits, but the vast majority will appreciate them.

The age-old Golden Rule: "**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you**" is a good standard to follow both today and tomorrow.

A study examined over 75 key components of employee satisfaction. They found that:

Trust and confidence in top leadership was the single most reliable predictor of employee satisfaction in an organization.

### **Mahatma Gandhi told his philosophy about trust in his own words as under:**

*It is true that I have often been let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent of my association with them. For I know how to non-co-operate, as I know how to co-operate. The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.*

*I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world.*

*A breach of promise shakes me to my root, especially when I am in any way connected with the author of the breach. And if it cost my life which, after all, at the age of seventy has no insurance value, I should*

*most willingly give it in order to secure due performance of a sacred and solemn promise.*

*To my knowledge, throughout-my public and private career, I have never broken a promise.*

In *Laws Of Leadership*, Maxwell says, *The leader finds the dream and then the people. The people find the leader and then the dream* .The leader can not be separated from the cause he promotes. It cannot be done, no matter how hard you try. It's not an either/ or proposition. The two always go together. Take a look at the following table. It shows how people react to a leader and his vision under different circumstances.

LEADER +	VISION	=	RESULT
<i>Don't Accept</i>	<i>Don't Accept</i>		<i>Get Another Leader</i>
<i>Don't Accept</i>	<i>Accept</i>		<i>Get Another Leader</i>
<i>Accept</i>	<i>Don't Accept</i>		<i>Get Another Vision</i>
<i>Accept</i>	<i>Accept</i>		<i>Get Behind the Leader</i>

***When followers don't like the leader or the vision, they look for another leader.***

It's easy to understand the reaction of people when they don't like the leader or the vision. They don't follow. But they also do something else: They start looking for another leader. It's a no-win situation.

***When followers don't like the leader but they do like the vision, they still look for another leader.***

Even though people may think a cause is good, if they don't like the leader, they will go out and find another one. That's one reason that teams change coaches so often in professional sports. The vision for any team and hence, for coach always stays the same i.e. to win a championship. But the players don't always believe in their leader. And when they don't, what happens? The team management doesn't fire all of the players. They fire the leader and bring in someone they trust and hope the players will trust or accept.

***When followers like the leader but not the vision, they change the vision***

Even when people don't like a leader's vision, if they've already put trust in him, they will keep following him.

When followers don't agree with their leader's vision, they react in many ways. Sometimes they work to convince their leader to change his vision. Sometimes they abandon their point of view and adopt his. Other times they find a compromise. But as long as they still trust the leader, they won't out-and-out reject him. They will keep following.

***When followers like the leaders and the vision, they will get behind both***

They will follow their leader no matter how bad conditions get or how much the odds are stacked against them. That's why the Indian people in Gandhi's days refused to fight back even when soldiers mowed them down. That's what inspired the U.S. space program to fulfill John F. Kennedy's vision and put a man on the moon. That's the reason people continued to have hope and keep alive the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., even after he was gunned down. That's what continues to inspire followers to keep running the race, even when they feel they've hit the wall and given everything they've got.

As a leader, having a great vision and a worthy cause is not enough to get people to follow you. First you have to become a better leader; you must get your people to trust *you*. That is the price you have to pay if you want your vision to have a chance of becoming a reality.

***Patience and perseverance***

Leadership in major projects will require a large amount of stamina and perseverance.

There are times when you will need to relax and wait for events or time to pass. Many new ideas will become accepted after people have had time to think about them. Most people who are angry or excited about a proposed change will cool down with time. Patience is a hard attribute for many young and not so young to learn. Most things,

especially if they are worthwhile, do not happen quickly. Self-discipline is an essential trait for leadership.

Patience and persistence are essential twins for getting things done. Always remember *it takes time*, time for leadership, **and time for change**. Patience and persistence are very difficult traits for the young.

### *Praise giving*

"**Strokes**" - almost all people like **praise and compliments**. Almost everyone likes to be recognized especially if they have worked hard on the project. It may be possible to give too many kind words, but it is very difficult to do so especially if they are given in a sincere manner. If you, a leader, are working with a committee or other team, make absolutely sure that everyone is given full public recognition. If you don't, your support the next time is likely to be much less.

The folk saying: "praise in public and criticize in private" is very effective. But the praise should be deserved; a person can quickly develop a reputation as overly "smoothie."

Another folk saying that comes to mind: "honey attracts more flies than vinegar." People are more attracted by praise than by criticism and will be willing to work on change if their contributions are acknowledged.

A simple *thank you* is very effective especially when sincerely given and meant!

### *Possible*

A leader must be **realistic** to determine the art of the possible. How much can realistically be accomplished in the time and resources available? How strong is the desire for change? Are the people willing to pay the price either in reduced services or higher taxes - what ever it takes? Very often people call for changes, but when they find out how difficult or expensive it will be to solve the problems, they will not support the proposed solutions. The skill of determining which ideas in any organization or setting are politically and economically feasible and which are not is a vital asset for any leader. Do not jump into "solving" a problem until you have given very careful

consideration to the process of solution. Will the other people support the proposed solution? A little caution can be the decisive factor for success or otherwise. Bold and swift action by the knight on the white horse occurs primarily in the movies. An old folk saying has considerable wisdom for leadership: "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

### ***Practical***

A leader must realize that pleasing all of the people all of the time is not possible. A leader must be practical in decisions made catering to the majority, perceptive enough to realize when the majority is right and strong enough to take action without the support of the majority when the majority is wrong. At the same time you must be strong enough to stand by your convictions and accept the criticisms - valid and invalid - which are sure to come.

**Practical** and **possible** are twins that have considerable interrelationships.

### ***Prepared***

A leader must be **knowledgeable** about his or her goals, the variety of means for reaching the goals, the needs necessary to meet the goals and about the people in the group. An effective leader must be both organized and prepared. Many leaders have opened their mouths and inserted their foot and suddenly found that they were no longer regarded as leaders.

A more modern folk saying is that "you should not have your mouth in gear while your mind is in neutral."

*A leader has to be a student.* In general it is hard for a leader to be around enough other leaders to pick this up just through discussion, so a leader has to be a reader and a learner. Furthermore, you can't see someone leading in a field they know nothing about.

### ***Courage***

Leaders are often called upon to take courageous actions. Confronting poor performance, deciding who to lay off, announcing unpopular decisions, implementing change that will cause significant distress for

people, staying optimistic in the face of problems, and advocating on behalf of your followers to those above you in the chain-of-command are a few of the myriad ways in which great leaders demonstrate courage.

Our acts of courage may not be so grandiose or visible but they are still fundamental to being an effective leader.

The following incident shows the courage demonstrated by **J R D Tata**.

*Darjeeling was the summer capital of West Bengal. A British Governor, with a fascination for freezing weather, turned up in Darjeeling that Christmas. When returning from their honeymoon, after Christmas, JRD and Thelly were driving down by car.*

*On their way home the police stopped the car of JRD and Thelly. Even though it was a bitterly cold morning the police halted traffic for almost an hour. All this was to give the Governor's car precedence. JRD and his wife decided to register their protest. They planned that when the Governor's car came, Thelly would step in front of it while JRD would give his Excellency a piece of his mind. It worked. Thelly and JRD boldly stepped in front of the Governor's car when it came up. When it stopped JRD ran to the Governor's window and shouted: 'Who the hell do you think you are, keeping five hundred people, women and children, in the cold for an hour? You damn fool!'*

*Source: **Beyond the Last Blue Mountain***

### ***Supreme Self Confidence***

A successful leader has supreme confidence in himself and never loses his confidence. Ultimately, in any situation, it is the confidence of the person which is the engine for results and success. For example, Mr. Akio Morita in his book “Made in Japan” has pointed out how when the brand name Sony was not known in the US and the name Bulawa was popular, a suggestion was made to him that he could sell his products under the Bulawa brand name but Morita insisted that one day he would like Sony to become as popular a brand name as Bulawa and would not compromise on the suggestion. What gave him the supreme confidence in himself and his organization?

If we see the tremendous success of Dr V. Kurien who brought the White Revolution in the country, we find again a sense of supreme confidence. He has been able to take on the multi-nationals. He has been able to take on the government bureaucracy and also sometimes make very bold commitments and succeed.

## Chapter II

### Caselets and Stories

#### *Caselets*

##### **A. Case 1: Decision Making**

A group of children were playing near two railway tracks, one still in use, while other was not in use. Only one child was playing on the track which was not in use; the rest of the boys were playing on the track which was in use.

The train was coming from distance and one person was beside the point of interchange of tracks. He could make the train change its course and save most of the kids. However, which would also mean, that the only child playing by the track which was not in use would be sacrificed.

OR

Would he rather let the train go its way killing many boys?

#### ***Suggested answer for discussion***

Most people might choose to divert the course of the train and sacrifice the only child. We might think the same way. We guess because to save most of the children, at the expense of one child was a rational decision.

But let us think that the child, who did not choose to play with the rest on the operational track, but chose to play on the track not in use, had in fact made the right decision to play at a safe place.

This kind of dilemma happens around us every day. In the office, community, in politics and especially in a democratic society, the minority is often sacrificed for the interest of the majority, no matter how foolish or ignorant the majority is, and how farsighted and knowledgeable the minority is.

The person incharge of changing the track should not try to change the course of the train, because the kids playing on the operational track

should have known very well that the track was still in use and as they should have moved away on hearing the siren.

Moreover, the other track was not in use, probably because it was not safe for the train passengers. If the train was diverted to the track not in use, it could put the lives of all passengers on board in danger! And in attempt to save a few kids by sacrificing one child, one might end up sacrificing hundreds of passengers as well.

“Let us remember that what is right may not be always popular and what is popular may not be always right”.

If we risk nothing, we risk everything.

## **B. Case 2: Finding faults with others v/s sharing problem**

A child was born to a couple after many years of marriage. They were a loving couple and the child was an apple of their eyes and when he was two years old, one morning the husband saw a medicine bottle open. He was late for work, so he asked his wife to cap the bottle and keep it in the cupboard. The mother, preoccupied in the kitchen, totally forgot the matter.

The boy playfully went to the medicine bottle, and fascinated with its colour, drank it all. It happened to be the medicine meant for adults in small dosage. When the child showed signs of poisoning, the mother took him to the hospital where he died. The mother was stunned. She was terrified as to how to face her husband. When the distraught father came to the hospital, on seeing the dead child, he looked at his wife and uttered just a few words.

- Questions:**
1. What were the few words the husband would have spoken to his wife?
  2. What is the implication of this story?

### ***Suggested answer for discussion***

The husband just said “I love You, Darling”. The husband is indeed a genius in human relationship. The child is dead. He can never be brought back to life. There is no point in finding fault with the mother. Why most of the time only wife is held responsible? Husband could

have closed the bottle. Wife had also lost her only child. What she needed at that moment was consolation and sympathy from the husband. That is what he gave her.

If everyone can look at life with this perspective, there would be fewer problems in the world. A healthy journey of thousand miles of life begins with a single step of love. Let us remove all our anger, selfishness, intolerance, fear and fault finding habits from our life.

Let us develop “Do it now attitude” for better and happier life.

Sometimes we spend time asking who is responsible or who to blame, whether in a relationship, in a job or to the people we know. We miss out some warmth in human relationship to give support to one another. Let us share the sorrow. Let our love be stronger than our hate or anger. Love is little more “WE” and little less “I”.

### **C. Case 3: Dealing with superiors or Reframing**

David and John are planning to attend a religious service... David wonders whether it would be alright to smoke while praying.

John replies, “Why don’t you ask Father?”

So, David approaches the Father and enquires, “Father may I smoke while I pray?”

The Father says, “No my son, you may not. That’s utter disrespect to religion.”

David goes back to his friend and tells him what the good Father told him. John says “I am not surprised, you asked the wrong question. Let me try”.

***Question:*** what did John ask Father?

***Suggested answer for discussion***

John goes up to the Father and enquires “Father may I pray while I smoke?”

To which Father replies, “By all means my son. By all means”.

#### **D. Case 4: turning adversity into opportunity**

Many years ago in a small village, a farmer had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a village moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, fancied the farmer's beautiful daughter. So he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgo the farmer's debt if he could marry his daughter.

Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal. So the cunning moneylender suggested that they let Panchayat decide the matter.

He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty bag. If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven. But, if she picked the white pebble she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven. However if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into the jail.

All the villagers were standing on a pebble path in the farmer's field. As they talked the moneylender bent over to pick two pebbles.

However, the sharp-eyed girl noticed that the moneylender had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl to pick a pebble from the bag.

Now, let us imagine we were standing in the field. What should we recommend the girl to do?

#### ***Suggested answer for discussion***

Let us think of the consequences if she chooses the above logical answers.

Well, what she did was...

The girl put her hand into the moneybag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it, she fumbled and let it fall onto the pebble path where it got mixed with all the other pebbles.

“Oh, how clumsy of me” she said “But never mind, if we look into the bag for the one that is left, we will be able to know which pebble I picked”.

Since the remaining pebble was black, it was assumed that she had picked the white one. The moneylender dared not admit his dishonesty. The girl changed what seemed an impossible situation into an extremely advantageous one.

#### **E. Case 5: A Positive Mindset**

A man was walking down a deserted Mexican beach at sunset. As he walked along he began to see another man in the distance.

As he grew nearer he noticed that the local native kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it into the water. Time and again he kept hurling things out into the ocean.

As he approached even closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish that had washed up onto the beach and one at a time he was throwing them back into the ocean.

The first man was puzzled. He approached the man and said, “Good Evening Friend, I was wondering what you are doing”. And he replied, “I am throwing these starfish back into the ocean. You see, it is low tide right now and all these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don’t throw them back into the sea, they will die”.

“I understand my friend” he replied “but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach and you could not possibly get to throw all of them back into the water. There are simply too many and don’t you realize that this is happening hundreds of beaches up and down this coast... don’t’ you see that you cannot possibly make a difference?”

**Question:** What did the local native say?

The local native smiled, bent down, picked up yet another starfish... and as he threw it back out into the sea he replied, “It made a difference to that one”

We may feel that we cannot make difference in the world today. But WE CAN make a difference, at least in one's life.

## F. Stories

### *Hare And The Tortoise Part – I*

The king of forest, Lion, once declared that he would like to have a gathering of all the animals. He issued invitations and requested all the animals to participate in the sports gathering he had organized. He wanted to spread the message of Goodwill and Love for all, the noble king that he was. He believed in offering opportunities for competition to one and all, small and big, weak and strong.

One of the events was a race between the Tortoise and the Hare. The route was agreed upon and they started off the race. The hare shot ahead and ran briskly for some time. Then realizing that he was far ahead of the tortoise, decided to rest and relax for a while, before continuing the race. In the intoxication of the impending victory, he fell asleep. The tortoise plodded on, overtook the hare and finished the race. The hare woke up, but it was too late. He lost the race.

The moral of the story is "Slow and steady wins the race". This is the version of the story we all have been grown up with. However, an expanded version on this story is presented hereunder which makes it very enlightening.

But before we continue the story, here are some more positive thoughts.

- Every individual, however small, has his own strength. One should, therefore, not belittle him.
- Like hare let us not take the things for granted. Race is not won till it is actually won.
- Person with careless attitude loses the battle even though he may have much better capacity.
- God helps only those who help themselves. Let us think positive, give our very best and let God do the rest.

### ***Hare And The Tortoise Part - II***

The hare was disappointed at losing the race and he did some soul-searching. He realized that he had, lost the race because of careless attitude. If he had not taken things for granted, there's no way the tortoise could have beaten him. Hare approached the lion king and requested for another match. Tortoise agreed for a rematch.

This time, the hare went all out and ran without stopping from start to finish. He won by several miles.

#### ***The moral of the story:***

- It's good to be slow and steady, but it's better to be fast and reliable.
- Hare lost the 1st round, but learned a lesson.
- When we lose, let us learn a lesson.
- Hare lost the race and was shocked, but success is courage when disaster falls. Failure does not mean we have wasted out time, but it means we have a reason to start a fresh. We should not give up. Failure means, we must try harder.
- If we have two people in our organization one slow, methodical and reliable, and the other fast and still reliable at what he does, the fast and reliable person will consistently climb the organizational ladder much faster than the slow methodical chap.

### ***Hare And The Tortoise Part - III***

Tortoise though disappointed, did not lose his composure. He did some thinking this time and realized that there's no way he can beat the hare in a race the way it was organized. He thought for a while and suggested to King Lion that he is prepared to run one more race. King Lion was surprised, but gave him one more chance. Tortoise made a suggestion that he would like to change the route through which they ran two races. Hare agreed without going into the details of route through which they were to run.

They started off. In keeping with the self-made commitment to be consistently fast, the hare took off and ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. The finishing line was a couple of kilometers on the other side of river.

The hare was confused and frustrated at this sudden turn of event. The hare sat there without doing much and just kept wondering what to do. Ultimately, he found out a circuitous route which added a few kilometers more to reach destination. He had no choice and ran but it was too late. The tortoise trundled along, got into the river, swam to the opposite bank, continued walking and reached the finishing point before hare could make it.

***The moral of the story:***

- Let us start from where we are with what we have.
- First let us identify our strength, accordingly select the field and then give the challenge.
- Tortoise lost the second round but was not bitter.
- Tortoise was calm and composed. The difficulties in life are meant to make us better and not bitter.
- Hare accepted the challenge blindly, in over confidence, thinking he is big, he is fast; he is reliable and so he cannot be beaten, but hare lost the race. So let us never accept challenge blindly and let us never underestimate our competitor. The person who is overconfident loses the race.
- Winner never quits. The quitter never wins. So never give up. Tortoise never gave up the commitment to himself. Hare instead of trying something quickly, sat down on the bank of river with frustration.
- In an organization, if our strength is analysis, let us make sure we do some sort of research, make a report and send it upstairs. Working to our strength will not only get us noticed, but will also create opportunities for our growth and advancement.

### ***Hare And The Tortoise Part – IV***

During all the three races, the cunning fox was watching the game with interest. In order to carry favour with the King Lion, he came forward and suggested that he would like to run race and compete with Hare and the Tortoise. The King Lion replied that he had no objection provided both, Hare and the Tortoise were to agree to run race against the Fox. Lion, therefore, called both of them and informed them of the challenge thrown by the Fox. Having played together three games, the Hare and the Tortoise had established rapport and therefore huddled together for a conference and ultimately came to the decision to accept the challenge.

"Hare and the Tortoise" joined hands to run the race against the Fox. Fox agreed because the route was the same and his competitors were no match for him.

As agreed upon, they met the next day and started off. Fox ran with all his speed without bothering to look behind and without bothering to know about the plan which his competitors had devised. On reaching the river, he quickly took the circular route on other side.

Here in the beginning, Hare ran with Tortoise on his back up to the river. On reaching the river, they had the advantage as the Tortoise could swim and Hare sat on his back and they easily swam and reached the other side covering substantial distance quickly.

On reaching the bank on the other side, they again switched their roles and with tortoise on his back, hare ran and reached the destination much before Fox and won the race.

***The moral of the story is :***

- The hare and the tortoise had learnt a lesson.
- When we stop competing against each other as a rival and instead start competing against the adversary, we will perform far better.
- Teamwork is mainly about situational leadership, letting the person, with the relevant core competency, for a situation, take a leadership.
- Hare and tortoise both felt a greater sense of satisfaction. Let us share our knowledge. Knowledge shared is knowledge gained. Two heads are better than one.
- Fox is known for his cunningness/craftiness, but that clouded his vision.
- In an organization it's good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies, but unless we're able to work in a team and harness each other's core competencies, we will always perform below par, because, there will always be some situation at which one will do poorly and other one will do better.
- Let us work together and we will be rewarded with success.