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Leadership Is Everyone's Business and Other Lessons from Over a Dozen Years of Leadership Research

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

Beyond the horizon of time is a changed world, very different from today's world. Some people see across that horizon and into the future. They believe that dreams can become reality. They open our eyes and lift our spirits. They build trust and strengthen our relationships. They stand firm against the winds of resistance and give us the courage to continue the quest. We call these people *leaders*.

In the early 1980's we set upon a quest to discover what it took to become one of these leaders. We wanted to know the common practices of ordinary men and women when they were at their leadership best—when they were able to take people to places they had never been before. But knowing that the portrait emerging from the study of personal-best leadership cases was only a partial picture, we also explored the expecta-

tions that constituents have of leaders. Strategies, tactics, skills, and practices are empty unless we understand the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders and constituents. Our analysis of thousands of cases and surveys from over a dozen years of research has revealed a consistent pattern of exemplary leadership practices and fundamental constituent expectations (Kouzes and Posner, 1995).

In this article we discuss several lessons we've learned from thousands of venturers about what it takes to get extraordinary things done in organizations, and we examine some implications for the practice of organization development.

Lesson 1. Credibility Is the Foundation of Leadership.

The cynics are winning. People are fed up, angry, disgusted, and pessimistic about their future. Alienation is higher than it has been in a quarter century, so says an article entitled "That Shut-Out Feeling" in a 1993 issue of *Business Week*. Loyalty to institutions, and institutions' loyalty to people is sinking like a stone. No longer would we rather fight than switch; we just switch. Nearly half the population is cynical, and cynics don't participate in improving things (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989).

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In such a climate, how can a leader possibly mobilize a seemingly unwilling constituency toward some unknown and even more uncertain future? For the answer to this question, we turned to the constituents, the followers. We have asked thousands of people what they “look for and admire in a leader, in a person whose direction they would willingly follow.” The consistent winners: honest, forward-looking, inspiring, competent leaders.

Three of these characteristics—honest, competent, and inspiring—comprise what communication experts refer to as “source credibility.” In assessing the believability of sources of information, whether they are newscasters, salespeople, managers, physicians, politicians, or priests, researchers typically use the three criteria of trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism. Those who rate more highly on these dimensions are considered to be more credible sources of information. What we found in our investigation of admired leadership qualities is that, more than anything, people want leaders who are credible.

People want to believe in leaders. People want to have faith and confidence in them. People want to believe that their word can be trusted, that they are personally excited and enthusiastic about the direction in which they are headed, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead. Credibility is the foundation on which leaders and constituents build the grand dreams of the future. Without credibility, visions will fade and relationships will wither. We call this the “first law of leadership.” *If people don't believe in the messenger, they won't believe the message.*

At the core of personal credibility are one's beliefs. (Credibility derives from the Latin word *credo*, meaning “I believe.”) People expect their leaders to stand for something and to have the courage of conviction. If leaders are not clear about what they believe in, they are much more likely to change their positions with every fad or opinion poll. The first milestone on the journey to leadership credibility, therefore, is clarity of personal values.

What are the implications for organization development practitioners?

The capacity to win the personal credibility jackpot depends on how well people know themselves. To be credible, leaders must know who they are and what they stand for. Early in an intervention, OD practitioners can engage leaders in a process of self-discovery. By involving them in developing and articulating a clear set of guiding principles—a leadership philosophy—the better they know themselves and the better they can align words and deeds.

The efficacy of any change initiative is inextricably linked to the credibility of the person(s) leading the effort. Constituents will become willingly involved to the extent that they believe in those sponsoring the change. It is wise, then, to begin every engagement with a “credit check” of the leaders.

Credibility is the foundation on which leaders and constituents build the grand dreams of the future.

Lesson 2. Leaders Don't Wait.

When Dr. Charlie Mae Knight was appointed the new superintendent for the Ravenswood School District in East Palo Alto, California, she was the twelfth superintendent in ten years. She encountered a district in which 50 percent of the schools were closed and 98 percent of the children were performing in the lowest percentile for academic achievement in California. The district had the state's lowest revenue rate. There were buckets in classrooms to catch the rain leaking through decrepit roofs, the stench from the rest rooms was overwhelming, homeless organizations were operating out of the school sites, and pilfering was rampant. Gophers and rats had begun to take over the facilities. As if this weren't challenging enough, Knight had to wrestle with a lawsuit that had gone on for ten years, whose intent was to dissolve the district for its poor educational quality and force the children to transfer to schools outside of their community.

These challenges would discourage almost anyone. But not Knight. After assuming the post, she immediately enlisted support from Bay Area companies and community foundations to get the badly needed resources. The first project she undertook was refurbishing the Garden Oaks School. Volunteer engineers from nearby Raychem Corporation repaired

the electrical wiring and phone systems. A volunteer rat patrol used pellet guns to eliminate the pesky rodents from the site. The community helped paint the building inside and out, and hardware stores donated supplies.

Before too long, local residents began calling to find out what color paint was used for the school so they could paint their houses in a matching shade. They went out and bought trees and sod and planted them in front of their homes. New leadership came forth from parents who began to demand more of a say. In response, an "Effort Hours" program for parents was set up so that they could volunteer time at the school. Teachers began to notice that something was happening, and they wanted to be part of it too. The district was on a roll.

Within two years of Knight's arrival, the children exceeded the goal of performing in the fifty-first percentile on academic achievement scores. (Today one of the district's schools has climbed to the sixty-eighth percentile, miles above the first percentile where they had started.) The district was one of the first schools in the state to use technology in every discipline, outdistancing every school in California technologically, and it was the first elementary school to join the Internet. The lawsuit has been dropped. Revenues went up from \$1,900 per student to \$3,500. And for the first time ever, East Palo Alto received the state's Distinguished School Award, based on its improved test scores and innovative programs.

If we are going to have a future, let alone thrive in one, we learn from Knight that leaders don't wait (in fact they can't wait) for grand strategic plans to be completed, new legislation to be passed, or consensus to be built. Like other leaders who achieve extraordinary results, Knight knew she had to produce some early victories. "It's hard to just get anybody excited about a vision. You must show something happening." She further said, "Winning at the beginning was so important, because winning provided some indication of movement. I had to show some visible signs that change was taking place in order to keep up the momentum, and in order to restore confidence in the people that we could provide quality education."

If you're going to lead now or in the future, the first thing you've got to do is launch a voyage of discovery.

Leaders seize the initiative. Starting a new organization, turning around a losing operation, greatly improving the social condition, enhancing the quality of people's lives demands spirit and action. Waiting for permission to begin is not characteristic of leaders, but acting with a sense of urgency is.

If you're going to lead now or in the future, the first thing you've got to do is launch a voyage of discovery.

What are the implications for OD practitioners?

Make something happen. In our well-intended efforts to thoroughly diagnose the situation, to craft artful change programs, and to build broad consensus we stall progress. By all means, be true to intervention theory and practice, but also get things moving. Focus on small wins—things like fresh paint and clean school yards. Set up little experiments instead of grand transformations. Transformation is a scary word. It may even discourage people. It may also fuel cynicism. Little successive victories earn the leaders a lot of credit, and they inspire confidence.

Lesson 3. Leaders Focus on the Future Possibilities.

At 3:29 p.m. on October 15, 1978, a team of ten women accomplished something that no other group had ever done. The *American Women's Himalayan Expedition* was the first American climbing team to reach the summit of Annapurna I, the tenth-highest mountain in the world. Arlene Blum was the leader of the expedition. Her stirring account of that adventure, *Annapurna: A Woman's Place*, is a highly acclaimed adventure story (Blum, 1980). But why should someone, whether man or woman, want to do something like that?

"For us, the answer was much more than 'because it is there,'" said Blum. "We all had experienced the exhilaration, the joy, and the warm camaraderie of the heights, and now we were on our way to an ultimate objective for a climber—the world's tenth-highest peak. But as women, we faced a challenge even greater than the mountain. We had to believe in ourselves enough to make the attempt in spite of social convention and two hundred years of climbing history in which women were usually relegated to the sidelines." Blum talked about

how women had been told for years that they were not strong enough to carry heavy loads, that they didn't have the leaders' hip experience and emotional stability necessary to climb the highest mountains. After a climb of Mount McKinley in 1970, her personal faith in the abilities of women climbers was confirmed.

"Our expedition would give ten women the chance to attempt one of the world's highest and most challenging peaks, as well as the experience necessary to plan future Himalayan climbs. If we succeeded, we would be the first Americans to climb Annapurna and the first American women to reach eight thousand meters (26,200 feet)."

Not only do constituents demand that leaders be credible, they also demand that leaders be forward-looking: that they have a sense of direction, a vision for the future. Credibility is the foundation of leadership, but the capacity to paint an uplifting and ennobling picture of the future differentiates leaders from other credible sources.

Blum saw what others had not seen. She imagined something for her group that went far beyond the ordinary, far beyond what others thought possible. For Blum, it was proving that women are capable of doing things that others had thought impossible. She, and the other leaders in our study, shared the characteristic of "envisioning the future," of gazing across the horizon of time and imagining that greater things were ahead. They foresaw something out there, vague as it might appear from the distance, that others did not. They imagined that extraordinary feats were possible, or that the ordinary could be transformed into something noble.

The overwhelming consensus is that without vision, little can happen. All enterprises or projects, big and small, begin in the mind's eye. They begin with imagination and with the belief that what is merely an image can one day be made real.

What are the implications for OD Practitioners?

Climbing a mountain is a wonderful metaphor for leading organizational change. The summit is the vision. You always keep that pinnacle in mind as you prepare for and make the ascent. Don Bennett, the first amputee to climb Mt. Ranier, said that he imag-

ined being on top of the mountain 1,000 times a day. But how he got to the top, he said, "was one hop at a time." Vision and action are the yin and yang of leadership. OD practitioners can support leaders in making something happen, by helping them to constantly clarify and communicate an inspiring common vision. Without a clear view of the future, constituents will be as nervous as tourists driving the Pacific Coast highway in the fog.

Lesson 4. Leaders Affirm Shared Values.

As important as it is for leaders to articulate their vision and values, what they say must be consistent with the aspirations of their constituents. Constituents also have needs, interests, dreams and beliefs of their own. If leaders advocate values that are not representative of the collective will, then they will not be able to mobilize people to act as one. Leaders must be able to gain consensus on a common cause and a common set of principles. They must be able to build a community of shared values.

We have examined carefully the relationship between personal and organizational values, and our studies show that shared values:

- Foster strong feelings of personal effectiveness.
- Promote high levels of loyalty to the organization.
- Facilitate consensus about key organization goals and stakeholders.
- Encourage ethical behavior.
- Promote strong norms about working hard and caring.
- Reduce levels of job stress and tension.
- Foster pride in the organization.
- Facilitate understanding about job expectations.
- Foster teamwork and esprit de corps.

People tend to drift when they are unsure or confused about how they ought to be operating. The energy that goes into coping with, and repeatedly debating, incompatible values takes its toll on both personal effectiveness and organizational productivity. Consensus about long- and short-term values creates commitment to the organization's vision and strategy,

Little successive victories earn the leaders a lot of credit, and they inspire confidence.

i.e., where it is going and how it's going to get there. Although leaders do not wait for anyone, if they don't build consensus on vision and values then they will be all alone!

This dynamic tension between building consensus and creating forward momentum constantly pulls at leaders. We have learned that constituents expect leaders to be able to clearly articulate a vision of the future and to take a firm stand on principles. We have also learned that shared visions and values produce more successful organizations and healthier people. To turn this tension into action, exemplary leaders have to have their heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground. They know how to maintain the focus on exciting future possibilities while finding the common ground among constituents' diverse aspirations.

What are the Implications for OD Practitioners?

In order to take that first step toward renewed organizations—and a second, and a third—people must agree on some fundamentals. A helpful intervention requires coming to agreement on a desired culture, i.e., a common set of operating principles about how things will get accomplished. It also means skillful management of conflict. Helping your clients pool their abilities to achieve “wholeness incorporating diversity,” as scholar and *Common Cause* founder, John Gardner, calls it, and ensure that their stated values go beyond the poster-on-the-wall, laminated-wallet-card stage. RoseAnn Stevenson (1995), organization and management development manager at Boeing, analyzed a set of values statements from seventy-seven different companies and found nineteen commonly identified values. But she also found little agreement on the meaning of each of these values statements. She found, for example, that there were 185 different behavioral expectations around the value of integrity alone. A common understanding of values comes about through dialogue; it emerges from a process of dialogue, not a pronouncement.

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Lesson 5. Leaders Can't Do It Alone.

Early in our research we asked Bill Flanagan, vice-president of operations for Amdahl Corporation, to describe his personal best. After a few moments, Flanagan said that he couldn't do it. Startled, we asked him why. Flanagan replied, “Because it wasn't *my* personal best. It was *our* personal best. It wasn't me. It was us.”

Leadership is not a solo act. In the thousands of personal-best leadership cases that we have studied we have yet to encounter a single example of extraordinary achievement that occurred without the active involvement and support of many people. We don't expect to find any in the future either.

Creating competition between group members is not the route to high-performance; fostering collaboration is—particularly if the conditions are extremely challenging and urgent. Author and university lecturer Alfie Kohn (1986) explains it this way: “The simplest way to understand why competition generally does not promote excellence is to realize that trying to do well and trying to beat others are two different things.”

One is about accomplishing the superior while the other is about making another inferior.

One is about achievement while the other is about subordination. Rather than focusing on stomping the competition into the ground, true leaders focus on creating value for their customers, intelligence and skill in their students, wellness in their patients, and pride in their citizens. In a more complex, wired world the winning strategies will always be based upon the “we” not “I” philosophy.

Exemplary leaders make other people feel strong. They enable others to take ownership and responsibility for their group's success. Long before “empowerment” was written into the popular vocabulary, credible leaders knew that only when their constituents felt strong, capable, and efficacious could they ever hope to get extraordinary things done. Constituents who felt weak, incompetent, and insignificant consistently under performed, wanted to flee the organization, and were ripe for disenchantment, even revolution.

When we examine the times when people feel powerless and the times when they feel powerful, we are struck by the clear and consistent message: feeling powerful, literally feeling "able," comes from a deep sense of being in control of our own lives. When we feel able to determine our own destiny, when we believe we are able to mobilize the resources and support necessary to complete a task, then we will persist in our efforts to achieve. But when we feel we are controlled by others, when we believe that we lack the support or resources, we may comply but we show no commitment to excel (Bandura, 1990; 1986). Credible leaders choose to give away their own power in service of increasing another's sense of self-confidence, self-determination, and personal effectiveness. Making others more powerful is truly what enhances the possibilities of success.

What are the Implications for OD Practitioners?

Organization development has probably contributed more to advancements in teamwork and trust than any other field of practice. Our roots are in group dynamics and our heart is in personal growth. But as practitioners, we sometimes become enamored with new, often faddish, movements. While it is important to innovate continuously, we should never forget that our foundation is grounded in the behavioral sciences.

For OD to be successful in the future, bonds have to be strengthened between leaders and constituents. Our practice will thrive to the extent that we and our clients are competent and confident in the fundamentals of interpersonal relations. This is our heritage, this is our future, and this is our legacy.

Lesson 6. The Legacy Leaders Leave Is the Life They Lead.

The first thing Les Cochran did after becoming university president at Youngstown State University in July 1992 was to purchase an abandoned building on the edge of campus and spend his free weekends working with construction crews to transform it into a residence for his family. While it is not unusual for college presidents to live near their campuses, Cochran's determination to do so attracted a great deal of attention and set the tone for his presidency.

Although leaders do not wait for anyone, if they don't build consensus on vision and values then they will be all alone!

To many, Cochran was literally putting his life on the line, for the once lovely neighborhoods surrounding YSU had surrendered to increasingly aggressive gangs and escalating drug-related crime following the collapse of Youngstown's steel mill dependent economy in the early 1980s. Cochran believed that the only way to reclaim YSU from the fear, hopelessness, apathy and mistrust that paralyzed the campus and the surrounding community was to start the process by claiming as his home one of these decaying neighborhoods. His message was clear: "We are responsible, both individually and collectively, for the fate of this community." Thus, when he declared "Together We Can Make a Difference," his philosophy of individual contribution to community involvement, people knew he believed deeply in what he was saying. By buying and refurbishing a home in an area he was determined to reclaim for YSU, Cochran "walked the talk."

When asking others to change, as Cochran did, it is not enough for leaders to deliver a rousing speech. Much as compelling words are essential to uplifting spirits, Cochran and other leaders knew that constituents are moved by deeds. They expect leaders to show up, to pay attention, and to participate directly in the process of getting extraordinary things done. Leaders take every opportunity to show others by their own example that they are deeply committed to the aspirations they espouse. Leading by example is how leaders make visions and values tangible. It is how they provide the evidence that they are personally committed. That evidence is what people look for and admire in leaders, people whose direction they would willingly follow.

In our extensive research on leader credibility, we asked people to tell us how they would know if someone is credible. The most frequent response: "They do what they say they will do" (Kouzes and Posner, 1993). Example-setting is essential to earning credibility. When it comes to deciding whether a leader is believable, people first listen to the words, and then watch the actions. A judgment of "credible" is handed down when the two are consonant.

How you lead your life is how people judge whether they want to put their lives in your hands. If you dream of leaving a legacy then you'd better heed the Golden Rule of Leadership: DWYSYWD: Do What You Say You Will Do.

What are the Implications for OD Practitioners?

The truest test of credible leadership is what leaders pay attention to and what they do. Leaders are judged by how they spend their time, how they react to critical incidents, the stories they tell, the questions they ask, the language and symbols they choose, the measures they use, and their design of physical space. Every organizational assessment should include an audit of these dimensions. To find the clues you'll have to follow the leaders around for a few days and hang out with them in their own settings. Interviews and survey questionnaires just don't cut it when it comes to trying to determine whether leaders do what they say.

Help leaders to look in the mirror. Help them become conscious of the messages they are sending with their actions. And help them to improve the alignment between what they practice and what they preach so that they set the example for others.

Lesson 7. Leaders Keep Hope Alive.

Employees at *Synergistic Systems, Inc.* located in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, have always known Jean Campbell, founder and CEO, to be positive, organized, enthusiastic, personable, caring and unflappable. Campbell's leadership had been tested many times since 1984 when she started and began growing this computer-based medical billing company. The company is now a trusted firm that employs 200 people and handles over \$200 million in charges for more than 1,200 physicians in 84 medical groups nationwide. Yet never had Campbell been as challenged as she was on the days following Monday, January 17, 1994, when at 4:31 a.m., a major earthquake rumbled through the San Fernando Valley, shaking her world to its very foundation.

Credible leaders choose to give away their own power in service of increasing another's sense of self-confidence, self-determination, and personal effectiveness.

On Monday afternoon, as she inspected SSI's 25,000 square foot tile ceiling lying collapsed on the floor, its 28 foot high south wall pulled 10 inches off its concrete base, its overturned desks, scattered files, and leaking ceiling pipes, she saw that she had "a no-business business." To others the goal of being fully operational within two weeks might have seemed impossible. Not to Jean Campbell: to her it became a mission.

Working closely with IBM Business Recovery Services, Campbell began going through a logical review of critical business requirements. From a business in shambles, Campbell organized, planned, listened, reassured and motivated Syners (as the SSI employees call themselves) and contractors alike to restore essential services within 48 hours and full services in less than 10 business days.

With reconstruction complete, Jean Campbell held a Town Hall meeting on February 2, declaring "It's time to celebrate our victory, with all those who helped to bring it about, and to give heartfelt thanks to so many..." Campbell knew all too well that the climb to the summit was arduous and steep. People became exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted. They often were tempted to give up. Leaders, like Campbell, encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on. With genuine acts of caring they uplift the spirits and sustain hope.

What are the Implications for OD Practitioners?

Individual recognition and group celebration are crucial to sustaining change efforts. People need to know that someone is paying attention to their hard work. When people are asked to go beyond their comfort zones, the support and encouragement of their colleagues enhance their resistance to the possible debilitating effects of stress. And if reward systems are not aligned with new norms and new forms, the new structure is destined to collapse. To assure long-term success make sure that you encourage your clients to say "thank you" in as many ways as they can.

Lesson 8. Leadership Is Everyone's Business.

Myth associates leadership with a superior position. It assumes that leadership starts with a capital "L," and that when you are on top you are automatically a leader. But leadership is not a place; it is a process. It involves skills and abilities that are useful whether one is in the executive suite or on the front line, on Wall Street or Main Street.

And the most pernicious myth of all is that leadership is reserved for only a very few of us. The myth is perpetuated daily whenever anyone asks, "Are leaders born or made?" Leadership is certainly not a gene, and it is most definitely not something mystical and ethereal that cannot be understood by ordinary people. It is a myth that only a lucky few can ever decipher the leadership code. Our research indicates that leadership is an observable set of practices that can be learned. In over fifteen years of research we have been fortunate to hear and read the stories of over 2,500 ordinary people who have led others to get extraordinary things done. There are millions more. If there is one singular lesson about leadership from all of the cases we have gathered it is this: leadership is everyone's business.

Just ask Melissa Poe (1993) of St. Henry's School in Nashville, Tennessee. On August 4, 1989, as a fourth-grader fearful of the continued destruction of the earth's resources, Poe wrote a letter to President George Bush, asking for his assistance in her campaign to save the environment for the enjoyment of future generations.

After sending the letter, Poe worried that it would never be brought to the president's attention. After all, she was only a child. So, with the urgency of the issue pressing on her mind, she decided to get the president's attention by having her letter placed on a billboard. Through sheer diligence and hard work, the nine-year old got her letter placed on one billboard, free of charge, in September 1989—and founded *Kids for a Clean Environment* (Kids F.A.C.E.), an organization whose goal is to develop programs to clean up the environment.

A common understanding of values comes about through dialogue; it emerges from a process not a pronouncement.

Almost immediately, Poe began receiving letters from kids who were as concerned as she about the environment. They wanted to help. When Poe finally received the disappointing form letter from the president it didn't crush her dream. She no longer needed the help of someone famous to get her message across. Poe had found in herself the person she needed—that powerful someone who could inspire others to get involved and make her dream a reality.

Within nine months more than 250 billboards across the country were displaying her letter, free of charge, and Kids F.A.C.E. membership had swelled. As the organization grew, Poe's first Kids F.A.C.E. project, a recycling program at her school, led to a manual full of ideas on how to clean up the environment. Poe's impatience and zest motivated her to do something, and her work has paid off. Today there are more than 200,000 members and 2,000 chapters of Kids F.A.C.E.

Poe is proof that you don't have to wait for someone else to lead. You don't have to have a title, you don't have to have a position, and you don't have to have a budget.

By viewing leadership as a set of character traits with which one is born or as equivalent to an exalted position, a self-fulfilling prophecy has been created that dooms societies to having only a few good leaders. It is far healthier and more productive for us to start with the assumption that it is possible for everyone to lead. If we assume that leadership can be learned, we can discover how many good leaders there really are. Leadership may be exhibited on behalf of the school, the church, the community, the scouts, the union, or the family. Somewhere, sometime, the leader within each of us may get the call to step forward.

Certainly we should not mislead people into believing that they can attain unrealistic goals. Neither should we assume that only a few will ever attain excellence in leadership or any other human endeavor. Those who are most successful at bringing out the best in others are those who set achievable but stretching goals and believe that they have the ability to develop the talents of others.

From what we observed in our research, as more and more people answer the call, we will rejoice in the outcome. For what we discovered, and rediscovered, is that leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Whether you are in the private or public sector, whether you are an employee or a volunteer, whether you are front line or senior echelon, whether you are a student or a parent, we believe you are capable of developing yourself as a leader far more than tradition has ever assumed possible. Liberate the leader in everyone and extraordinary things happen.

What are the Implications for OD Practitioners?

When you think about it, aren't we all about liberating the leader in everyone? Aren't we about reaching inside the organization and releasing the capacity of everyone to excel? We must enable our clients to broaden their concept of leadership to include those on the front-lines as well as those in the executive suites. When everyone is a leader—when everyone challenges, inspires, enables, models, and encourages—commitment is far greater and success is more likely.

In Conclusion

In our classes and workshops we regularly ask people to share a story about a leader they admire and whose direction they would willingly follow. From this exercise we hope they will discover for themselves what it takes to have an influence on others. We have another objective as well: we want them to discover the power that lies within each one of us to make a difference.

Virtually everyone we have asked has been able to name at least one leader whose compelling impact they have felt. Sometimes it is a well-known figure out of the past who has changed the course of history. Sometimes it is a contemporary role model who serves as an example of success. And sometimes it is a person who has personally helped them learn—a parent, friend, member of the clergy, coach, teacher, manager.

If there is one singular lesson about leadership from all the cases we have gathered it is this: leadership is everyone's business.

Veronica Guerrero made us realize just how extraordinary those around us can be. Guerrero selected her father, Jose Luis Guerrero, as the leader she admired. Guerrero told the story of her father's leadership in the Union Nacional Sinarquista (UNS) back in the early 1940's. She related, in detail, what her father did and summed it up with this observation from Jose Luis: "I think the work that I did back then helped me extend myself and others to levels that I didn't know I could reach... If you feel strongly about anything, and it is something that will ultimately benefit your community and your country, do not hold back. Fear of failing or fear of what might happen does not help anyone... do not let anyone or anything push you back."

Veronica Guerrero closed her description of her father (who was then dying of pancreatic cancer) with this observation: "As I heard his story and I saw a sick, tired, and weak man I could not help thinking that our strength as humans and as leaders has nothing to do with what we look like. Rather, it has everything to do with what we feel, what we think of ourselves. . . Leadership is applicable to all facets of life." That is precisely the point. If we are to become leaders, we must believe that we, too, can be a positive force in the world. It does have everything to do with what we think of ourselves. ■

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