

# ***"Do Great Leaders Make Good Managers?"***

## ***Conversations in Organizational Studies***

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### **Abstract:**

An understanding of organizations cannot be complete without an understanding of the individuals who steer these organizations and help shape their very structure, culture, and future direction. When we think of these individuals, we often refer to them as leaders and managers; or "managerial leaders" as they are sometimes called (Quinn et al., 1996). In this author's opinion, the term "managerial leader" was coined by management practitioners and theorists in an attempt to quell the controversy surrounding "leadership" and "management" as mutually exclusive disciplines. The past two decades have seen the emergence of a vast amount of literature on leadership. Not only has it become a "buzz" word, but also an extremely marketable practice. The obsession with leaders and leadership has somewhat diminished and marginalized the importance of managers and the practice of management on the one hand, while compounding and further complicating the conflict between the two disciplines, on the other. Therefore, an attempt to integrate the two

disciplines under the guise of “managerial leadership” without truly differentiating one from the other can be considered a somewhat premature attempt to appease managers within organizations, who prefer to think of themselves as leaders without truly understanding the complexities involved with leading.

It is this author’s point of departure that “leadership” and “management” are not as closely related as many would like to believe. It is therefore important to examine and better understand how the two practices differ, before making an assumption about their interrelatedness.

Through this paper, an attempt will be made to dispel the myth that “managerial leaders” can be equally adept at carrying out both functions, i.e. “leading” and “managing” almost as though they are interchangeable and/or complementary functions. It is important to understand the intrapsychic conflict that is faced by individuals who are called upon to assume both roles in organizations, and how a few succeed, while many fail because they succumb to the organizational pressures and demands of the “here and now.” It is somewhat unfortunate that organizations have not been able to come to terms with the idea that “leading” and “managing” are actually dichotomous functions, and the tension that exists between the two, serves as a deterrent which undermines the paradoxical demands of this highly complex organizational role. While an attempt will be made in this paper to examine both “point” and “counterpoint” of the debate, the reader might discover this author’s bias toward viewing

leadership and management as “separate” but not necessarily incompatible functions. These ideas are drawn from the author’s life experiences as a corporate executive, organizational practitioner/consultant, and executive coach, and will undoubtedly evolve as he approaches his doctoral dissertation. Many theorists (both classical and contemporary) support these findings, yet very little research has been conducted in this area. It does seem to be virgin territory for exploration, and a great theme for a dissertation. On the other hand, the unavailability of adequate resources for this inquiry may present some challenge as the concept continues to evolve.

The final piece of this paper will consist of a real life case study drawn from the author’s own consulting practice. The facts and experiences of the case scenario might help illuminate the working hypothesis and will serve as the “applied” portion of this KA.

The journey into this knowledge area began with a weekend intensive in Philadelphia with Bob Silverman in May of 2004. It was a wonderful overview of organizational studies from several perspectives, and particularly useful from the standpoint of congregating with several Fielding colleagues around a common theme, but different approaches and variations of that theme. It has also been particularly helpful to discover Dr. Silverman's openness, and the space he has provided students to engage in learning which is both purposeful and meaningful to them.

What started out as an initial theme entitled "Do Great Leaders Make Good Followers?" is already beginning to develop into a more coherent inquiry. There was a need to fine tune the original question after some reflection, and some realization by the author that the purpose of this study is to explore the anxieties and challenges faced by leaders as they are placed in positions of "followership", i.e. "management" roles. After all, you cannot be a good manager if you are not a good follower. It is amazing how a change in the title has given more clarity and direction to this paper. Consequently, this paper now bears the new title "Do Great Leaders Make Good Managers?"

A generic definition of "leadership" must precede the definition of "greatness" and "management" as implied in this paper. These words mean different things to different individuals, based on their own worldviews,

paradigms, and personal beliefs and values. However, there are some widely accepted definitions, and so from the standpoint of this paper, it is important to make some generalizations and assumptions, much to the chagrin of our esteemed colleagues who will have opposing viewpoints. It is usually through the “tension of opposites” that we can have a healthy debate and a robust inquiry, but there needs to be a place of origin; a sort of anchor which can help us ground our ideas.

Alan Bryman, in his essay “Leadership in Organizations” (Clegg & Hardy, 2000) makes the following interesting comments:

“Leadership, as one might anticipate, is not an easy concept to define. Its widespread currency and use in everyday life as an explanation affects the way it is defined and indeed probably makes it more difficult to define than a concept that is invented as an abstraction *ab initio*. Most definitions of leadership have tended to coalesce around a number of elements which can be discerned in the following definition by a researcher whose work had a profound impact on one of the stages of theory and research to be encountered below.”

“Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement.” (Stogdill 1950: 3)

Even though this may sound simplistic, it appears that three common elements are always present in the definition of leadership: influence, group, and goal. So

we now have a place to start our inquiry, but it is also important to define the meaning of “greatness” as it pertains to our leader. “Great” leaders have a “transformational” quality that is very characteristic of all their interactions, and particularly ties in with the leadership element of “influence”, as posited by Stogdill above. So, we might suggest that great leaders transform others through the conscious (and unconscious) exercise of influence. However, influence alone does not account for greatness, and may actually stem from other attributes. Bass’s research on transformational leadership is noteworthy when we think of other components that may determine how influence is generated, developed, and exercised by great leaders. Bass specifies four basic components:

- Charisma: developing a vision, engendering pride, respect, and trust
- Inspiration: motivating by creating high expectations, modeling appropriate behavior, and using symbols to focus others
- Individualized consideration: giving personal attention to followers, giving them respect, and responsibility
- Intellectual stimulation: continuing challenging followers with new ideas and approaches

In addition to Bass’s four basic components, great leaders also possess a high degree of approachability, adaptability, emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2000), self sacrifice, risk taking, compassion, dependability, and innovation



***The bi-directional arrow heads indicate that while it is possible for a manager/leader to wear different hats and move back and forth along the above continuum, it is important to understand that great leaders cannot lead and manage (follow) at the same time. This is because of the highly complex nature of a leader's "inner theatre." It may however, be relatively easy for a good manager to also be a good follower. As a matter of fact, good managers often are deemed to be good followers. They are able to quite effectively carry out the roles of director, producer, monitor, and coordinator. What is not so clear is how effectively they can concurrently discharge the other roles, i.e. mentor, facilitator, innovator, visionary, motivator, and catalyst, which are so characteristic of great leaders.***

In response to the above argument, the reader may be getting the impression that this author's bias toward leadership somehow suggests that managers can never become great leaders or that great leaders can never manage effectively. This is not true. What is being attempted through this paper is a process of differentiation before integration. Having been a corporate executive and consultant to organizations for several years, this author has been struck by the need for conformity, homogeneity, and collective thinking within many contemporary organizations; attributes that lend themselves well to "bureaucracy" but not great leadership in an organic

environment. The organizational identity and structural aspects of work often take precedence over the human assets. A command and control strategy continues to be much engrained in today's corporate culture; a largely unconscious process in direct opposition to the consciously stated "soft" goals of the organization. It is therefore not surprising that these very organizations talk about values such as openness, diversity, and trust, but sometimes practice just the opposite of what they espouse. So, how do managers and leaders function in such an environment? Do great leaders even have a chance to survive in such a paradoxical and complex climate, fraught with contradictions and irrational processes? Do managers have an opportunity to get out of the classic "management mindset" trap and practice good leadership skills? These are extremely difficult questions to answer, but an attempt will be made to illuminate some of these issues by examining the inner theatre of both managers and leaders, and the psychology (or pathology) they bring to their organizational roles.

As stated earlier in this paper, it appears that very little research has actually been done to understand why great leaders find it extremely difficult to function in traditional managerial roles. There is, however, some literature available that looks at the psychodynamics of leaders and followers in a dyadic relationship. Dr. David Berg, a professor of psychiatry at Yale and Dr. Howard Book, a practicing psychiatrist and organizational consultant at the University of Toronto have done some fascinating studies on the leader-

manager (follower) dynamics. We can begin to develop a preliminary working hypothesis based on some of these findings, and see what we make out of this complex scenario.

It is no surprise that given the obsession and fascination we all have for leadership roles within organizations, we would rather be seen as leaders, than followers. "After all, leadership tends to evoke powerful images of charisma, influence, inspiration, action, and making a difference. Followership, on the other hand, brings to mind doing what one is told, carrying out others' directives, and trailing behind---images of dependence, complacency, no mind of one's own and little autonomous action." (Howard Book, 2003). These images in our heads can be so powerful that they may shape and sometimes intensify our own need for individualism to the point of denigrating the important role of followership within organizations.

There can be no leaders without followers. More importantly, you could never be a great leader without "robust" followers. "Robust" followers, unlike their "passive" counterparts, do not need constant supervision, are able to assert when necessary, willing to engage and challenge their leader, and provide honest and well meaning feedback to her/him in an environment of mutual respect and trust. (Howard Book, 2003). Therefore, if we look at managers in the role of "followers" within an organization, then the robust managers will be those that possess some of the same attributes alluded to above. They, however become so very adept at efficiently carrying out

directives, enforcing the corporate policies and procedures, and managing processes, (rather than relationships), that it becomes extremely hard for them to depart from the gestalt; the "here and now" of the classic "managerial mindset" in an organization. It is their inability to depart from the drudgery of the day to day operations that makes "leading" a difficult task indeed. The organizational pressures and burden, the importance of deadlines, and the positive rewards and reinforcement for meeting objectives often leave managers with no time or space to think about, reflect on, and create a future vision for their departments. Very often, human relations give way to increasing corporate pressures. Leaders, on the other hand, have to pay special attention to "managing, cultivating, and preserving" relationships in an organization; something that is outside the general scope of a manager's job in the "real" organizational world.

Great leaders manage human assets with the same passion, as managers manage the work flow and processes in an organization. Then why is it that great leaders are often bored with the day to day operations of the organization? What is it about their "inner theatre" that makes them ill-suited for managerial roles? Why are they able to take such enormous risks, huge initiatives, and controversial stands that managers often shy away from? In order to understand this aspect of leaders, we may have to look at the concepts of "omnipotence and narcissism", which in healthy doses, may account for the incredible influence leaders have on their followers, and may

also help explain why they feel internally stifled by, and far removed from the harsh reality of the mundane, day to day operations of the organization.

(Maccoby, 2000)

In an interesting essay entitled “Narcissistic Leaders: The Incredible Pros, the Inevitable Cons” that appeared in the Harvard Business Review, January of 2000, Michael Maccoby discusses the case of Bill Gates and how his narcissistic tendencies and outspokenness, coupled with his daring entrepreneurial drive, are responsible for much of the success achieved by Microsoft Corporation. This single-minded awareness of one’s personal power and authority (if properly harnessed) often becomes the envy of followers, and in turn, produces a leader’s influence over others. In healthy doses, it is this narcissistic tendency that can often be transformed by great leaders, from an extreme love of self to the love of an ideal, love of a mission, and the desire to make monumental contributions to society. The fear of retribution from superiors often gives way to the passion that great leaders bring to the process of change and transformation within an organization. Managers, on the other hand are too concerned and fearful about speaking out. They are far too territorial and “in the box’ to think about issues on a macro level. They are too consumed with protecting their own jobs and turf to think about others.

Are great leaders ever called upon to follow? They certainly are, and must learn what it takes to be robust followers if they have to be effective

leaders. Aside from the organizational reality which calls for everyone on the hierarchical chart to follow the directions of someone s/he may be reporting to, there is yet another attribute of great leaders that makes them who they are. It is the ease with which they are able to mingle with and relate to their followers. This is not done as an inauthentic show of concern and support, but rather as a natural way of relating to those who account for your own success and make you who you are. Evolved managers do understand this wisdom, but many prefer to stay detached from their direct reports. The need for authority and control are far too important to them, and precludes them from ever getting into the minds of their followers in a caring and meaningful way.

Internationally renowned author, consultant, and educator, Professor Manfred Kets de Vries has written more than 22 books on the clinical aspects of leadership and organizational dynamics. In an interesting book entitled "Are Leaders Born or are they Made?: The Case of Alexander the Great" Dr. De Vries talks about how some scholars take an intermediate position of the "greatness" of Alexander the Great, which in part stems from his natural ability to show genuine concern for his followers, an incessant desire to succeed, yet at the same time be aware of his own frailties and shortcomings. It is this acute awareness of the self and others that transforms ordinary leaders into great leaders. (Kets de Vries & Elisabet Engellau, 2004) This constantly evolving inner theatre of great leaders

makes them highly adaptable and resilient in the face of change. It also gives them emotional courage to lead effectively. We often find managers somewhat deficient in this "emotional" component of leadership, or if they do possess this trait, they find it hard to express it in the organizational context in a meaningful way. This often translates into poor manager-subordinate relations, not to mention the impact it sometimes has on productivity and motivation. The "natural ability" of leaders to emote, care for, and connect with their followers, is something that cannot be faked. It can, however, be cultivated by managers who are looking to develop effective leadership skills.

Perhaps, one of the best known accounts of the leader-follower dynamics in organizations is provided by Dr. David Berg, Associate Clinical Professor at the Yale School of Medicine. In his essay entitled "Resurrecting the Muse: Followership in Organizations" Dr Berg reinforces the notion that there is a collective devaluation of the "followership" role within organizations, to the extent that we have come to associate it in a rather subservient light, not to mention the mental associations we often have when we think of these "gofers." Words like "passive", "obedient", "serf", "lemming", "mindless" (Berg, 2000) speak to the manner in which we have come to think of these poor folks who submit themselves to their superiors in an endless cycle of subjugation, loss of personal authority, and a diminishing sense of self worth. This is a very frightening situation indeed. Typically, managers within

organizations are themselves no different when it comes to “following” directives.

When our firm conducts workshops with managers, their mental association of “followers” often softens and even becomes more flattering when they come to the realization that to be a good manager, is to be a good follower. The new associations around followership tend to coalesce around words such as “implementer”, “cooperative”, “team player”, “learner” etc. Isn’t it intriguing that when people realize that they are no different from those that they once devalued, they suddenly become more sympathetic toward them? However, “this collective effort to resuscitate the notion of followership is only partially successful.” (Berg 2000) Unfortunately, because we have been so conditioned by organizations (who seem quite obsessed with leaders at the expense of followers), we may have unconsciously colluded with them and split off from the follower role in our own minds. Consequently, a reintegration and reclamation of that notion becomes quite challenging. It may help explain why so managers struggle with the notion that they are quite simply, “followers”, and that to be leaders, they would be called upon to break out of hackneyed thinking and the traditional “management mindset” trap. This is a huge stretch for many traditional managers and might help explain the leadership crisis in today’s organization. As a manager, how can you break away from a command and control strategy, to one that has the potential of evoking feelings of vulnerability and

a loss of control? Great leaders seem quite comfortable with this ability, which in part, may explain why they have such an overwhelming influence on those they lead. They have the uncanny sense that people often relate to you in a very profound way when they know, deep down, that you too can be as vulnerable as them. They are comfortable with the notion that they are not perfect. This, of course is a difficult reality for managers to come to terms with. The “picture perfect” myth is difficult to shatter in ones mind and explains why organizations are so unforgiving and intolerable when it comes to mistakes, even though they overtly profess to be “learning organizations” that care for and support the development of their human assets.

The more evolved organizations are slowly coming to the harsh realization that in training “obedient followers”, they may have unwittingly created an atmosphere of dependency in which autonomy and independence have been suppressed. People are scared to voice opinions, challenge authority, and express their feelings and emotions in an atmosphere of trust and interdependency. Managers are in a particularly difficult situation and have to hold the paradoxical demands of their jobs. Berg discusses how the notion of management has come under attack from corporate leaders. Here are some excerpts from his previously cited essay:

“Now, all of a sudden, those at the top wanted their followers to speak up, to offer new ideas, to criticize if such criticism could improve organizational performance. The whole notion of management came

under attack from academics and corporate leaders. The consummate manager was now inadequate for the task. Organizations needed leaders at all levels, people with initiative and vision, not just people who followed directions. Those aspects of most people's jobs which had just recently been rewarded were, over the course of a decade or so, devalued. What had been a limited but valued concept of followership was replaced by the notion that organizations didn't need followers at all; they needed more leaders [...]

This conscious emphasis seems to suggest that if the follower were more like the leader, the organization would be better able to face and solve its problems. The focus remains on the subordinate rather than on the leader-follower relationship and the implicit devaluation of followership is now total and complete. The ideal organization is populated exclusively with leaders who, paradoxically think and act in accordance with the leader at the top of the hierarchy." (Berg, 2000)

At a rather unconscious level, we relate to managerial leaders as those folks who are willing and able to subordinate their own opinions to those of their higher ups in the organizational chain of command. Doing otherwise, can often spell disaster. Conforming, on the other hand, is rewarded with pay raises, promotions, and accolades. There is no question that "unquestionable loyalty" to your superiors is expected and demanded of managers. In turn,

managers expect and demand this loyalty from those who they manage. This is how the seeds of collusion are often sown in organizations and people regress very quickly to organizationally acceptable norms of behaving and relating, even if they feel very passionately about difficult issues. It is the inability to discuss these issues openly that undermines leadership in organizations and immobilizes good managers who are attempting to be leaders. Truly great leaders remain undeterred by this harsh reality and are able to express views that are contrary to the norm, if they feel that adding their voice would be helpful to the organization. It is this "risk taking" trait that is typical of great leaders and often causes them a lot of hardship in their roles. Managers are usually unable to take such risks.

Now that we have some understanding of the separate roles of leaders and managers, with their inherent limitations and challenges, let us begin a process of integrating the two functions and see if we cannot chart out the role of a "managerial leader" that was alluded to at the beginning of this paper. Is there a future for good managers who also want to be seen as great leaders by their followers? Are great leaders able to truly demonstrate their leadership within contemporary organizations, which are so fraught with contradictions and turbulence? What kind of transformation needs to happen in the organizational mindset to create a space for managerial leaders? Is it even possible in the real organizational world? An examination of the paradoxical demands placed on both roles can be a point of discussion

because it also helps illuminate what organizations need to do to facilitate integration. Putting managers through leadership training programs is not the entire solution. Creating a space for them to “practice” those skills may be even more helpful.

After a recent leadership training program, a manager was heard commenting to her colleague that none of what she learned in the class had a chance of being implemented because her boss just did not have it in him to allow her the freedom or space to practice her suggestions. He was too concerned with the organizational deadlines to even want to have such a discussion. This is not an uncommon reaction. If what we learn cannot be implemented, we lose interest and enthusiasm very quickly. For managerial leaders to function effectively, they not only need to practice their own learned skills in the workplace, but allow their direct reports to do the same. It is this mutual collaboration between leaders and followers, and the ability to embrace both roles when called upon to do so, that might make the integration of leadership and management easier.

So, do great leaders make good managers? Based on this author’s years of experience in organizations, he continues to believe that they probably don’t, given the way they are wired. Correspondingly, good (as in highly efficient) managers generally do not make great leaders. If there is such a role as a “managerial leader” it is probably an ideal we hold in the head, rather than a hard reality. As this question becomes a topic of research for his future

dissertation, the author realizes that this paper will likely raise more questions than provide answers. There are no real answers that will emerge from this paper. However it is hoped that it will help fine-tune the research question down the road.

What follows below is the “applied” portion of this KA which is being presented in the form of a case study drawn from the author’s consulting practice. The real identity of the organization or the players is not being disclosed for reasons of confidentiality. It is hoped that the case study will throw some more light on what has been examined in this paper, thus far. It is by no means a definitive conclusion to the questions posed here, but rather a supporting piece that may build further on the working hypothesis offered in this paper.

### **APPLIED PORTION OF KA 717:**

#### **The case of Tom Duly, Executive VP at ABC International Inc:**

Tom Duly is Executive Field Vice President at ABC International Inc., a giant in the communications industry and a leader in the broadcasting business. Tom has been with the corporation for over 30 years, having risen to his present position literally from the ranks. He started out as a mailroom clerk in

the early seventies when there were fewer competitors, and the bulk of the business came from large, blue chip corporations. He has always been a highly dedicated and committed employee, is well liked by his superiors and customers, and is known for his ability to follow directives and get the job done. However, he is also known as a maverick and visionary who is not afraid to make tough choices and voice his opinion when necessary. Clearly, Tom's uncanny ability (at least in the eyes of upper management) to be highly effective at both, managing and leading people has earned him the respect of his colleagues; not to mention his present position in the executive ranks of the company.

About six months ago, Tom was asked to head up the IA division of the company after the regional executive of that division stepped down and took another position in West Virginia. This is an entirely new operation for Tom, and even though he considers it to be a challenging opportunity, he is also feeling uncertain and anxious in his new work environment. In his new position, he is responsible for Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and Virginia. His direct reports include four senior consultants, an education/training manager, and two administrative assistants. With the exception of one new consultant who joined recently, the others have been with the company for more than 20 years, but do not know Tom personally.

Tom begins his new position with a "lets get to know one another" meeting with each of his direct reports. He prefaces each individual meeting

with the comment that he would not be engaging in work-related discussions, but wanted it to be a free and open exchange of information, thoughts, and feelings. He professes to be very interested in getting to know his colleagues and their families, to understand what makes each team member tick, and get an understanding of their individual styles and preferences. This approach is well received by the team members and the meetings go off quite smoothly. Tom is trying very hard to project an image of him as a caring and compassionate leader.

During the weeks following the individual meetings, Tom's emails to the team begin to take on a slightly different tone. He interjects in almost every piece of communication between the consultants or other team members, which he is copied on. It seems that he has something to say even when his opinion is not directly solicited. This becomes more intensified when there are email exchanges between the consultants and Kelly, the senior administrative assistant who is greatly admired and respected for her knowledge, resourcefulness, and responsiveness. It is puzzling to team members that Tom should begin to show signs of irritation, rather than be pleased that Kelly is a wonderful resource to the operation. This feeling in him intensifies further after Kelly is called upon to assist Tom's direct boss Bill, who has just lost his own executive assistant Wendy to an interdepartmental transfer.

Tom's communication with team members begins to get more direct and less tactful. His demeanor is pushy, matter of fact, and hurried. It appears that his sense of community and camaraderie are quickly giving way to organizational pressures of the "here and now", not to mention his insecurities around authority and control. He tries very hard to maintain his composure, but there is an edgy quality about his interactions with direct reports. It is a very puzzling change that seems to be unsettling the team members and causing a great deal of anxiety in the work group. Tom is very careful about the way he conducts his personal interactions with the more experienced and tenured employees, but it's a whole different story when it comes to the newly hired consultant, Robert. He invites Robert to a private luncheon meeting in Maryland. Here is how the discussion unfolds:

Tom: "Robert, why don't we order a quick sandwich and then move to a more secluded area of the lobby where we can sit and talk in private? I would prefer that over lunch, we do not discuss business. Tell me something about your family, how everyone is doing, and how you like your new position."

Robert: "Oh, my family is fine. My daughter was just visiting with us from Georgetown and left last night. She is studying for her MCAT exam which she plans to take sometime in April. How is your family, Tom?"

Tom: "Wendy is OK. The kids are away to school in Virginia, so we are getting to have some quality time to ourselves. By the way, it was Wendy

who asked me to approach you today and bring up some issues that are beginning to concern me. Let me ask you a question? How do you feel about the geography you are covering in your new position; oh, I mean it must be quite stressful, all this driving and running around? (This conversation is happening during lunch).

Robert: "Well, Tom, I can't complain. It comes with the territory, doesn't it? I knew it when I took the job 2 months ago. I am kind of getting used to it."

Tom: "Can you spell out for me the successes you have had during your first 2 months? What have you done to drive sales production? What are your projections for the next three months?"

Robert: (Very puzzled and taken aback by this line of questioning) "Tom, I am very new to the business and do not yet have a feel for the market or our agents. Your question sounds kind of odd, given that I have barely had an opportunity to meet for the first time the 32 agents in my territory. I don't know much about their operations and so it is difficult for me to answer the question definitively. It will take me a while to get the market pulse."

Tom: "Take you a while! How long do you think the company is going to wait for you to get up to speed? You should have been out to all the agents at least twice (suddenly realizes that it is inappropriate to continue this discussion over lunch). Tell you what? Gobble up that sandwich and let's go somewhere else and chat."

As Tom and Robert approach a secluded area of the lobby to further discuss the assessment, it is clear that the climate has already become adversarial and confrontational. In all probability, Tom has started to push Robert's buttons in what could be considered a rather direct and brash approach. They both spend about 45 minutes together after lunch. The communication has become increasingly defensive and Robert leaves the meeting, feeling bruised, misunderstood, and upset. In his mind, he is questioning if this is really the kind of boss he could get along with. He has received no support, training, or assistance from Tom after he joined. To think that his very first private meeting with Tom would take such an ugly turn is very disconcerting to him. Tom's inappropriate line of questioning which transgressed the boundaries of the relationship (especially when Tom makes "personal" comments about him during the remaining interview) further aggravates the situation. Robert decides to approach Tom's boss and also the human resources department in order to address his issues. Apparently, other team members too have complained about Tom's aggressive stance and the company decides to hire an executive coach to work with Tom. The author of this paper is approached and contracted as an executive coach to Tom over an initial six-month time frame. The goal is to assess Tom's interpersonal and behavioral issues, work with the rest of the team, and recommend an intervention that could help alleviate the growing tension in the department. The organization requests that special attention

be paid to the fact that Tom is an extremely valued and well respected leader. The company does not wish to lose him at any cost, and it is hoped that his defenses are not raised to the point that he becomes more agitated, which could result in declining productivity and morale.

The coach has a series of meetings with Tom, with the specific purpose of “getting to know” him. Tom candidly talks about his days as a “jock”, his highly competitive style, and how he needs to win at any cost. He admits that because he has worked “too damn hard” to get to where he is, failure and mediocrity are options he never wants to consider. He cannot understand why his team cannot step up to the plate and get out there every single day. He finds it hard to accept the fact that the company even thinks there is something the matter with his leadership style. He has always been publicly acknowledged as a “great” leader, a “mover and shaker” who gets the job done. His attention to detail, his commitment to the organizational deadlines, and his unquestionable loyalty to the company have always earned him the deepest respect of his colleagues. He talks about how focused he is on the “day to day” operations and leaves stuff like the vision and future direction of the company to those higher up in the chain of command. He does not seem to think that front line leaders should have anything to do with all that stuff. They should be focused on driving results. His biggest goal each day is the number he needs to achieve and couldn’t care less how he gets the job done.

As the discussion with Tom gets more focused and situation specific, his anxieties begin to get heightened and he seems visibly upset with the coach's line of questioning, which he thinks is "inappropriate and accusatory." He begins to get quite defensive and pulls out the year end results for 2004 to show how his region is poised to lead the country in several lines. He is wondering why his team members seem ruffled over his style when they are already performing so well. Clearly, Tom is not "seeing" how his behavior and style are impacting his team members. He is so focused on the external objectives (while ignoring the human aspects of work) that he has probably rationalized to himself over the years that as long as the job gets done, no one cares about how people feel. Tom thinks of himself as a great leader and continues to convince himself that he knows how to lead people and take the organization to greater heights. He obviously thinks that he is "influencing" his direct reports very positively, or they would not be producing the results they are. It is surprising that he does not talk about compassion, camaraderie, and mentorship. Either he is not aware of these attributes of great leaders, or has come to believe that they are not important from the standpoint of his job. The troubling aspect that comes to light during the discussions is that not only Tom, but also the senior leadership in the organization think of him as a leader and not a manager. They attribute the excellent results he has been producing over the years to his great

“leadership” style and probably overlook the fact that great leadership does not mean getting the results at any cost.

For the coach to be successful with Tom there has to be a two-fold strategy. Tom has to be made aware of the impact his poor leadership style is having on others. He needs to understand that his strengths are in the area of sales management, and not leadership, and that he will need to work very hard to develop his leadership skills. The organization, on the other hand has to come to grips with the fact that managing and leading are very different functions, each with its unique skill sets and emotional demands. This is a very challenging task for any consultant and it may take years for the organizational culture to change. Awareness alone will not do it, either for Tom or the senior leadership team. The coach decides to use a combination of an action learning strategy, “appreciative inquiry”, a 360 feedback mechanism, and periodic check points to reinforce the importance of leadership within the organization. In addition, he works with Tom on a weekly basis (in person and on the phone) and with the remaining senior leadership team on a monthly basis, using a unique group coaching methodology that incorporates both, elements of group dynamics and group analysis. The results have been quite encouraging so far. Tom is slowly coming to terms with the fact that to be a “managerial leader”, he will need to have the flexibility and courage to move back and forth on the management-leadership continuum. He is also learning that his style in the

past has lent itself more to pleasing his higher ups in the organization, rather than motivating and inspiring his team members. His relationship with Robert and others is still not where it should be, but he is trying very hard to become a better leader. The organization is also recognizing that it probably has very few great leaders who are being wasted in management roles. By the same token, there are also individuals such as Tom, who are good managers, but not great leaders.

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