

African Nutrition Leadership Programme: Leader Development Essays



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Leadership

By Johann Jerling, Leon Coetsee, Dia Sanou

Leadership capacity is recognised as a critical functional capacity to successfully bring about coordinated action in multi-sectoral settings to eliminate malnutrition. Strategic and operational leadership capacity at various levels and in different contexts to successfully implement multi-sectoral action for nutrition are deemed essential if we are to achieve World Health Assembly, the Sustainable Development Goals and related national targets.

What is leadership. A generic definition

Despite the large number of conceptual approaches, most definitions of leadership contain four common elements: that leadership is 1) an interactive process, 2) involves influence, 3) occurs in groups and 4) is centred around common goals. Given the multiple stakeholders needed to deliver nutrition change, these four elements are also key ingredients for harnessing multi-sectoral action to bring about change in nutrition.

Leadership is a set of orientations, attitudes and behaviours of which the purpose is to produce change. Kotter argues that leadership is required throughout an organisation, and that leaders bring about change by setting direction, aligning people to a common cause, empowering them, and creating motivating climates within which teams can excel. To achieve this, leaders align team members' behaviour by instilling a set of shared values, as opposed controlling them.

The Integrative Model of Leadership Behaviour

Behrendt and colleagues developed what they call the *Integrative Model of Leadership Behaviour*. This model comprises two interrelated leadership orientations¹ namely a focus on tasks to be performed, outputs to be achieved and working towards a shared purpose. The second orientation is a focus on interpersonal relationships that facilitate reaching shared purposes.

Task-oriented leadership behaviour (Purpose - achieving shared objectives or purpose)

Leaders **enhance understanding** of the situation at hand. Leaders help team members understand exactly what the issues are and what its causes and consequences are. They

¹ An orientation in this context, refers to the focus of leadership intent and actions



provide relevant information and help team members navigate the issue to ensure that they have the necessary insight that will enable them to commit to a shared purpose.

Leaders **strengthen motivation** by involving team members in developing solutions as equal partners which strengthens motivation to pursue both shared and individual goals that support the shared goals.

Leaders **facilitate implementation** by developing implementation plans and strategies to overcome obstacles. They acquire resources, gain support, develop skills, activate team members and focus and guide implementation of programmes or change interventions.

Relations-oriented leadership behaviour (Purpose - influencing other individuals such that they invest their efforts in the process of accomplishing common objectives)

Leaders **foster coordination** by communicating procedures clearly and explicitly using and maintaining a good structure of communication. They ensure that decisions are taken and communicated clearly and use standardized processes to ensure stability. Leaders convey personal competence and certainty in their actions.

Leaders **promote cooperation** by encouraging individual contributions to the team's progress, underlining these individual contributions and their uniqueness and indispensability to and effect on collective progress. They encourage and offer social support and delegate individual tasks in line with individual interests, competence, and values. Leaders also promote cooperation by permitting autonomy in tasks that contributes to empowerment.

Leaders **activate resources** by creating a positive atmosphere by rewarding valuable behaviours, enhancing self-efficacy and creating a strong group identity. These factors all contribute greatly to individuals' commitment.

We would argue that **self-management capabilities** in the physical, mental, social, and spiritual realms should be included in an integrative model. These would also include emotional competencies, leadership values, life-long learning and self-awareness.

Leadership and management are different but equally important

In a BBC interview leadership expert John Kotter explains the difference between management and leadership as follows "... management is a set of well-known processes, like planning, budgeting, structuring jobs, staffing jobs, measuring performance and problem-solving, which help an organization to predictably do what it knows how to do well. Management helps you to produce products and services as you have promised, of consistent quality, on budget, day after day, week after week." We routinely underestimate



the complexity of the task and it is clear that management is extremely important, but it is different to leadership.

On the nature of leadership Kotter says “It [leadership] is associated with taking an organization into the future, finding opportunities that are coming at it faster and faster and successfully exploiting those opportunities. Leadership is about vision, about people buying in, about empowerment and, most of all, about producing useful change. Leadership is not about attributes, it’s about behavior.”

It is clear that both leadership and management are essential in all organisations that want to play a role in the future. We still need to conduct our current business exceptionally well AND we need to look towards the future to be able to deal with emerging challenges and opportunities.

Kotter makes the assertion that we do not have enough leaders in organisations of all kinds and says “Unless we recognize that we’re not talking about management when we speak of leadership, all we will try to do when we do need more leadership is work harder to manage. At a certain point, we end up with over-managed and under-led organizations, which are increasingly vulnerable in a fast-moving world.”

The modern leader’s challenge is to develop the skills necessary and then to adequately balance leadership and managerial behaviour to achieve results.

Leadership is NOT a position

Because of the multi-sectoral nature of nutrition, change programmes or interventions are implemented by teams of individuals from different sectors and organisations who are often positioned at different levels in a hierarchy. These individuals may function in leadership roles which may either be assigned (formal positions by appointment) or emerges (based on their competencies, attributes or facilitating conditions), irrespective of hierarchy. Both kinds of leaders are equally important in bringing about positive and accelerated progress on nutrition and require common leadership capabilities that are important to influence change. Thus, leadership is not the exclusive domain of a few individuals high up in the hierarchy. John Kotter says, “*The notion that a few extraordinary people at the top can provide all the leadership needed today is ridiculous, and it’s a recipe for failure.*”

In many institutions however leadership is seen only as a position of power that is bestowed upon an individual. When that happens individuals often assume that they suddenly, by virtue of their new position, possess all the wisdom, become untouchable and is revered by all as a leader. In these contexts, team members or followers abdicate their responsibility to “*the leadership*” and develop a mindset of disempowerment by choice.

While one should not underestimate the role of extraordinarily gifted individuals, we cannot leave the responsibility to lead to only a small number of champions in the nutrition space



and focus our hopes and aspirations for the future on finding these individuals and convincing them to support our cause.

What is required is the development of a leadership mindset throughout the whole system.

At an individual level the starting point is taking the conscious decision to have a leadership mindset which is followed by a life-long process of learning, developing and growing your leadership capabilities.

Lead from where you stand

We often hear statements like “I am not a leader” or “I cannot lead because I do not have any authority” or “Leadership is for those at the top”. A leadership mindset says, “I can lead from where I stand!”. Well-known author John C Maxwell describes these individuals as 360 degree leaders who can lead up, lead their peers and who can lead down. When we are in the middle of our organisations, we can develop many skills that enable us to lead from where we stand. Managing your boss means leading yourself exceptionally well, manage your time, emotions, words and priorities really well. Walk the extra mile, solve problems, go beyond the call of duty, know your leader’s priorities and learn to work around their weaknesses. Effectively leading up also means developing an abundance mentality² and always being better tomorrow that you are today, learn from experience and be excellent at what you do. When leading people lower in the hierarchy focus on being an example, a role model of the behaviour, values and work ethic you would like to see, interpret the organisation’s vision to something that is very real in their context, praise and give recognition, be kind, be visible, be supportive and available.

Leadership development

There is little doubt that we can develop our leadership capabilities. There are a number of characteristics that great leaders naturally have, such as being positive, hardworking, decisive, charismatic, communicative and empathetic. However, leaders do not only rely on their innate talents, but continuously acquire new orientations, knowledge, skills and competencies to become more effective leaders. Developing and using our leadership

² Steven Covey coined the term, and he describes it as “The Abundance Mentality, on the other hand, flows out of a deep inner sense of personal worth and security. It is the paradigm that there is plenty out there and enough to spare for everybody. It results in sharing of prestige, of recognition, of profits, of decision making. It opens possibilities, options, alternatives and creativity.”



capabilities is an individual choice – it is not a matter of chance nor does it require the permission of someone else. The Center for Creative Leadership categorise the leadership capabilities that we can develop into three categories namely Self-management capabilities, Social capabilities and the Work facilitation capabilities. One can also easily see how all these capabilities are linked to the *Integrative Model of Leadership Behaviour* mentioned above. Self-management capabilities include the ability to balance conflicting demands, the ability to learn and leadership values. Social capabilities include the ability to build and maintain relationships, the ability to build effective work groups, communication skills and the ability to develop others. Work facilitation capabilities include management skills, the ability to think and act strategically, the ability to think creatively and the ability to initiate and implement change, including managing resistance to change.

Much can be said about which leadership capabilities we should focus on in the nutrition space, who should be doing it and how it should be done. I could also take the decision to do what I can, with what I have, where I am and start somewhere – that is what leaders do.

Key leadership insights

- Leadership is required in nutrition to produce change
- Leadership is different from management, but BOTH are important
- Leadership is required through the whole system
- Leadership is not a position; I can lead without being in a position of authority
- Leadership capabilities can be purposefully developed
- Developing leadership capabilities is an individual choice –not a matter of chance.

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Chance or choice?

By Leon Coetsee

Which one of these factors – chance or choice - has played the most prominent and dominant role in your life and career up to this point? Think about this, come to a decision, and motivate your choice in two or three sentences.

Researchers estimate that the role of chance in our lives is about 10% while choices and the decisions we make account for 90%. Barbara Hall explains this as follows:

“You are what you are because of the conscious and subconscious choices you have made”.

However, not only were your past successes, failures, happiness and disappointments mostly determined by your choices, as one Frank Tyger enlightens us:

“Your future depends on many things, but mostly on you”.

Thus, your future achievements and the quality of life you will experience will be mostly determined by yourself - especially by the choices and decisions you will be making.

Having this insight that life events are mainly determined by own behaviour and not by chance or the behaviour of other people or circumstances, reflects the extent to which an individual takes responsibility and assumes accountability for his/her own behaviour.

Psychologists distinguish between people having an “**internal locus of control**” – those who are more inclined to take this responsibility and accountability, and those who rather indulge in blaming behaviour i.e., people with an external “**locus of control**”.

One should not deem this distinction as two opposing personal behaviour categories but rather view locus of control behaviour in terms of a scale ranging from a strong internal locus of control to a medium and then to a strong external locus of control. People falling in the strong internal locus of control range of the scale are referred to as “**internals**” and indicates an “**in spite of person**” while when falling in the external locus of control range (“**externals**”) depicts an “**as a result of person**” also known as “**victim behaviour**”. Based on this, psychologists can predict diverse behavioural patterns.

Two extremely important behavioural consequences of an individual's locus of control orientations are firstly that an internal locus of control is very strongly associated with a “**growth mindset**” while **externals** are usually inclined to a: “**fixed mindset**”. According to Carol Dweck, in her remarkably insightful book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, a **fixed mindset** assumes that character and abilities, such as intelligence, creativity and leadership competencies, are static and can't be enhanced and that this mindset is directly linked to ones' achievements and failures.

In contrast a **growth mindset** is characterized by the notion that character and abilities are dynamic, that they can grow and be stretched and thus competence can be increased



significantly. Failure is not rationalized (e.g., by blaming behaviour) but seen as a springboard for new growth.

The second important behavioural consequence is that it is extremely unlikely that a person with an external locus of control will be successful as a leader. It is to be expected that someone who continually shifts blame to other people or circumstances, or espouses victim behaviour, will not gain respect and be seen and experienced as an inspirational and competent leader.

Abundant scientific evidence exists that internals cope much better with the realities of life, show superior job performance, are more likely to seek health care, achieve career success and earn higher salaries. They tend to take better care of equipment, are more self-reliant, are more satisfied with training and are more involved in the planning of their own careers. The conclusion is that internals are more successful, are more satisfied and handle stress better than their counterparts.

It is relatively easy to determine whether an individual has a strong, medium or weak internal locus of control by observing individual behaviour such as their reactions to accidents or failures people have been involved in. Think of the very common incidences of blaming the referee when a team loses a soccer match or a person blaming others that they don't understand her or have not given him sufficient support. Locus of control can also be measured by means of a questionnaire (test) developed for this purpose and this is a very useful tool to help you grow as a leader.

The good news is that an external locus of control orientation towards work and life can be changed to become more internal. This requires a growth process (for which **adopting a Growth Mindset** is a prerequisite) and this entails:

1. **Acknowledging** that you are disadvantaged by having a strong 'external' locus of control
2. **Reflecting** about your past behaviour where you responded with external locus behaviour such as blaming or where your decisions were based on this kind of behaviour
3. **Visualising** how you could have responded alternatively in an internal locus manner
4. **Repeat** steps 1, 2, and 3 at the end of each day as part of your daily reflection session
5. Also reflect on how you are going to **remind yourself daily** on the importance of being an internal

Those individuals having registered scores indicating a moderate or strong internal score, most probably have an important advantage today but they still should stimulate and strengthen their internal orientation. Significant life, career and work crises have subjected people with a strong internal locus of control to negative attitudes and behaviour and becoming an external.



The first stanza of the poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox provides a beautiful summary of what an internal locus of control entails. Here is what she wrote more than a century and a half ago:

"Our lives are songs. God write the words

And we set them to music at pleasure;

And the song grows glad, or sweet, or sad,

As we choose to fashion the measure.

Another way of thinking about this is: "We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Recommended Video's:

William Kamkwamba – How I harnessed the wind.

https://www.ted.com/talks/william_kamkwamba_how_i_harnessed_the_wind?language=en#t-331050

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Why does vision matter?

By Leon Coetsee

Anyone taking the time to read about Leadership will very quickly realize that there are many different theories about and descriptions of the concept leadership, but that the one common feature to be found in almost all of these descriptions is that leaders focus on a vision and inspire followers to realize this vision. This is the essence of leading people.

Take a moment to think about this question: why is a common focus on a vision and realizing this vision highlighted as the most prominent feature of leadership?

Write your answer down and compare this with the description to follow.

One of the most influential books on personal growth and leadership is Stephen Covey's acclaimed best seller: *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Covey's first two identified habits have all to do with vision: Habit 1: *Being proactive* is described as "*Principles of personal vision*" and Habit 2 is: "*Begin with the end in mind*", where this "*end*" refers to a vision or purpose. Covey describes this habit as follows:

"To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means that you know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction". (Covey 1990).

One of the great advantages of "*beginning with the end in mind*" (thus with a vision of a desired future state, is also known as the '*far sighted principle*') is that it changes "*near sightedness*", e.g., the present status or situation of an organization or a team, into '*far sightedness*' – an understanding of the outcomes (purposes) to be achieved in the future.

A vision is a higher order **purpose of significant value**. A purpose of significant value is something **greater** and much **more enduring than the immediate self-interests** of the leader or any other individuals concerned – it is an **attractive** but **challenging** destination- something **significant** and **inspiring** for all the members of an organisation or community to strive for.

To qualify as a good vision a vision must be inspiring, it should **ignite positive emotions** in people. This happens when a purpose statement indicates the direction towards an **attractive/valuable** and/or a significant but **challenging destination** which then generates energy which then serve as motivation for those concerned to remain committed to this vision. These are very significant features of a vision because it brings meaning and significance to individuals' and team's contributions.

The achievement of this challenging future state (a higher order purpose or goal of significant value) results in satisfaction, which creates confidence in the leader and team members and ignites further energy and inspiration to strive for achieving new challenges.

The creation of new realities in the form of visions and purposes implies change and leading change - which is the core of leadership.



However, there is another precondition which a good vision should meet – the vision must be as **concrete** as possible. Examples of vision statements that lack concreteness are the South African Department of Education’s vision of: *“A South Africa in which all our people have access to lifelong learning.”* Or *IKEA’s* vision – *“To create a better everyday life for the people”*. A problem with the first example is if *“having access”* on its own, will make a significant difference? A valid question in regard to the second example is *“what does a better everyday life entail* and will the answer be the same for all the people of different countries? Other examples of visions that are not concrete enough are vague visions starting with or including wording such as: *being the renowned provider of....., being recognised as the leader in....., setting the trend as....*

The lack of concreteness is thus to be found in either the vision formulation itself or being unable to specify objective indicators/criteria whereby the successful achievement of the vision can be monitored and evaluated.

An excellent example of a concrete vision is that of Microsoft in the early 1990’s:

“A computer on every desk and in every home.” In the field of nutrition, a good example of a concrete vision is that of the SUN Movement - *“By 2030, a world free from malnutrition in all its forms.”*

To formalize concrete vision statements for organizations rendering services are usually more taxing than in the case where a specific product is at stake. However as explained above, concreteness is also to be found where the specified service referred to in a vision statement is indicated by objective indicators/criteria. An example of this is NI’s vision: *“A world where everyone, everywhere, is free from malnutrition and able to reach their full potential”* where we know that objective indicators for *‘freedom of malnutrition’* and *‘full potential’* exist and are applied to measure progress towards realizing their vision. To summarize the characteristics of a good vision statement: a good vision statement

- pinpoints the future of the organization or team, provides the specific purpose to be focused upon
- unifies the organisation’s key activities and keeps everyone focused on what really matters most for their organisation or team
- is both an aspirational (challenging but realistic) and inspirational (motivating) purpose that unites and spur people to action
- invites innovation and change
- is concrete in formulation and/or having specified objective criteria to gauge success

Two closely related concepts which a leader must understand and not confuse with the concept vision are the concepts mission and values.

The **mission** of a company or team describes its **present business, it’s reason for existence** and not a **future purpose to be focused upon** as in the case of a vision statement.

Values, in the context of our discussion of vision, refers to a set of behavioural principles focused on guiding the organization’s or team members’ actions and conduct to achieve



their particular vision. The vision highlights **what** has to be achieved while **how** it is to be achieved are captured by three or four specific values which organization or team members should cherish. Examples of organizational values are integrity, client focus, transparency, teamwork and accountability.

Because **what** we want to be achieved and **how** it should be achieved are so intricately interwoven some experts see a specified value system as an integrated part of the vision of a company. The truth is that a vision statement must be based on a set of specified values.

It is of great importance that leaders should constantly talk about and remind their followers of the vision that they are focused on achieving and emphasize the core values which all members must live and promote as the way in which the vision should be accomplished.

SELF REFLECTION/REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

Take a moment to think about the following: Why is focusing on a shared vision and realizing this vision highlighted as the most prominent feature of leadership?

Write your answer down your answer and compare this with the answer you formulated at the beginning of this topic description

What do you see differently now?

Think of your employing organisation's vision statement. To what extent does it meet the characteristics of a good vision statement?

If this vision falls short of these characteristics, how would you reformulate it to meet these requirements?



Making values work for you

By Leon Coetsee

Have you ever come across a family having a rule and regulation book in their home which they often update and supplement with additional rules? Do you know of families where the behaviour of parents, children (and even pets) are continually managed, controlled and even measured in terms of these rules and regulations?

The exceptional cases where families are driven and monitored by such rules and regulations, will certainly be regarded as unusual and even as abnormal by most of us. The functioning of a family, i.e., the relationship between the family members and the way that matters are arranged, planned and executed and differences and conflicts resolved, are usually not prescribed by laid down and recorded rules and regulations.

A family's functioning is rather based on several **shared values** (some experts refer to these as **principles**) which are not necessarily exactly described, but which all family members are aware of, ascribe to and which influence and direct the behaviour of all family members. When you explore this phenomenon further by asking children questions such as: - "*what is important in your home? What is often emphasized by your parents?*", they will probably mention some of these: honesty, respect for one another and each other's belongings, sharing, keeping one another informed about where one is going, consideration, supporting each other. **Honesty, respect, sharing, consideration and support** are all **values** and if all family members support it and abide thereby the family will function effectively being directed by this **set of shared values**.

In contrast with well-functioning families most public and private organizations are still controlled and managed by applying rules and regulations prescribed by a rule book which tend to become thicker and thicker as time goes by. This is one of the grounds for the leadership expert Warren Bennis' exclamation that our organizations are "**over-managed and under-led**". Control by rules and regulations is associated with the concept management while guiding and inspiring people based on a set of shared values is at the heart of leadership.

Effective leaders build **trust** (which means that they are recognized as being **trustworthy**) by "*walking the talk*", by giving **recognition** to team members who proved to be **trustworthy** and by showing trust in them. Effective leaders thus gain trust by not focusing on their own interests but by relinquishing control and power and by **sharing** knowledge and information and giving **recognition**, and rewards. What leaders **say** about values is important, what they **do** is more important, but what they **are prepared to sacrifice** is most important. Values must influence the choices leaders make – but even more – team members' alignment to values take shape when these values 'happen' – when they are transformed into everyday behaviour that can be seen and experienced. It constitutes a very dangerous practice when leaders are not role models of the values espoused by their organization and themselves. People are more committed to leaders when leaders live these values. However, before followers will trust leaders, they will evaluate the leader's motives and sincerity in living the



values. Where members share the same goals and values, an organization's performance is improved, but even more, the experienced job satisfaction and quality of work life is enhanced significantly.

The bolded concepts in the description above: **trust (being trustworthy), recognition and sharing** are all examples of values representing beliefs and attitudes of overriding importance and which are often incorporated in organizations' value systems. Other examples are **integrity, respect, accountability, honesty, fairness, learning, growing, teamwork and beneficiary/client focus**. To be effective it is strongly advised to focus a value system to 3 or at the most 4 values. To exceed this number makes it impossible to entrench these values in an organization.

To decide which 3 or 4 values to incorporate in a value system, it will be helpful to answer some of the most applicable questions from the following list:

Which three or, at the most four, values:

- support our vision best?
- link individual efforts to organizational purposes?
- emphasize what we stand for or emphasize how we would want to be perceived by the community?
- Will help people find meaning in their work?
- motivate the most conducive employee attitudes and behaviour?
- improve ethical behaviour and help to counter corruption?
- focus efforts on beneficiary/client needs?
- serve as guidelines for interpersonal relations at work?

An organization's value system is not just a few words painted on the wall or displayed on posters but is a reflection of enduring commitments - not vague promises or empty platitudes such as: *arrive early, stay late, look busy*.

Leaders are the custodians of the shared value system of an organization. This includes their own adherence to, and also their active promotion and efforts to embed the value system. To embed a value system, leaders actively use a variety of what has become known as **embedding mechanisms**. These embedding mechanisms include:

The things (events, behaviours, attitudes incidents) leaders pay attention to, emphasize and talk about, for example, the stories a leader talks about to people and at events.

- What behaviours and performance leaders reward and celebrate? What do they get upset about and/or censure?
- On what and with who do leaders spend time with?
- How and to what leaders allocate scarce resources?



- How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises?
- What criteria are used when leaders recruit, select, promote, retire or get rid of members?
- What kind of organizational rites and rituals the leader sets up or keep intact?

Values become powerful when they are understood and effectively translated into habitual behaviour by all team members or employees in their own work contexts. They have to understand each value in operational terms as it applies to their own responsibilities. This will be different for each team member depending on their roles and responsibilities in the organisation, but it is applicable to everyone.

Let us consider the example of an organisation that has *Transparency, Care and Dignity* as their three core values. For each team member/employee these values have to translate into conscious, habitual behaviour at every level. At a very personal and practical level as an individual, I have to be able to complete the sentence, starting with a verb...

Operationalising value	Examples of behaviours
"I am transparent when I...."	Disclose all conflicts of interest Publish all data I have gathered Share all the reasons for making my decisions Report mistakes that I have made
I care when I.....	Enquire about team members well being Put the needs of beneficiaries before my own Encourage my colleagues to do their best Implement work policies in a way that makes it easy for parents to honour their family life commitments
I treat others with dignity when I...."	Allow them to make choices Deliver food aid in a culturally acceptable way Address people in an appropriate way Respect team members' opinions

The same "*value translation*" process for each of the values should also be repeated in teams. It is important for each functional team to formulate and have a clear understanding of how values are operationalised at team level (in addition to individual level) e.g.: "***We are creative (one of a set of 3 or 4 values) when we design, evaluate, recommend and implement new methods to serve our clients better***"

When these practices are followed it entrenches values. If the extent to which employees live the shared values is made part of the performance evaluation of each member and of teams, it solidifies this entrenchment.

The important role of a shared value system from a leadership perspective cannot be overestimated. Apart from the functions it serves as outlined above, it is also the foundation of an organization's culture -which is the essence of its identity – the principles, beliefs or philosophy it espouses and lives. Many organisations focus mostly on the



technical competencies and tend to neglect shared core values which enable the underlying competencies that make those organisations run smoothly and efficiently.

A value-driven organizational culture can be created by an incremental suspension of rules, regulations and control over time and replacing this by a shared value system. This requires a change from a traditional management orientation from *getting people to do things according to regulations* – to a stronger leadership orientation of *enabling them to want to do things empowered by a set of shared values*. This is illustrated very well by the example of the value: *innovation*. This entails creating a value driven culture in an organization which encourages and stimulates learning and creative thinking. This is a much more effective way **to create an innovation supportive and enterprising culture** than trying to enforce this top downwards by means of rules and regulating behaviour.

Values represent '*how we do things in this organization*'. If these values are **emphasized by leaders**, and if all employees and managers **know** and **understand**, **cherish** and **live** these values, it becomes a **value-aligned-organization**. When leaders focus a value-aligned organization on a vision which everyone **knows**, accept, **cherish**, the organization is effective because it is aligned and committed to a specific purpose.



SELF REFLECTION/REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

- Which values do you think you need to promote and embed to increase your multisector nutrition platform's or team's effectiveness?
- How will promoting and embedding these values contribute to successful implementation of your plans?
- Which 3 values do you regard as your personal and/or your own core leadership values?
Define each of these values operationally as shown in the example above:

My three core leadership values are:

1.	2.	3.
----	----	----

Operationalising value	Examples of behaviours starting with a verb
EXAMPLE: "I am transparent when I...."	Disclose all conflicts of interest Publish all data I have gathered Share all the reasons for making my decisions Report mistakes that I have made
Operationalising my core leadership values	Examples of behaviours starting with a verb
1.	
2.	
3.	



Growing for success

By Leon Coetsee

Jack Welch is widely regarded as one of the most successful business leaders and his leadership orientation, style and behaviour have been studied in-depth and are widely used as models in the training of business leaders. One of his very descriptive and potent quotes about leadership is:

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others” Jack Welch

Experts agree that self-knowledge and self-insight are prerequisites to understand other people and to lead them. Self-leadership equates to the leadership competencies of learning, self-observation, self-correction and self-management which impact all aspects of life, including the relationships with the people being led. Leadership always implies change and a leader cannot change situations or people’s attitudes and behaviour if he/she cannot change him/herself.

A **growth mindset** is characterized by the notion that orientations, character, style, abilities, competencies and behaviours are dynamic, can grow and thus competence can be continuously strengthened. Failure is seen as a learning opportunity and a springboard for new growth. Such a **growth mindset** is required from both leaders and team members throughout the organisation.

Unfortunately opposing **fixed mindsets** are common in organizations. A fixed mindset is based on the individual assumption that one’s character and abilities, such as intelligence, creativity and leadership competencies, are static and can’t be enhanced and that this is directly linked to ones’ achievements and failures. Failure is rationalized and is not used as a foundation for new growth

Successful leaders are lifelong learners and **grow their own leadership competencies** consistently (this is known as self-change or transitional change) and they regularly **stimulate the growth and development of their team members**. Let’s study these two concepts: transitional change and growth and development of team members in more detail.

Transitional change/self-change

Descriptions of transitional change are founded on these departure points:

- Transitional change is an enabling process whereby a leader learns to know him/herself better and as a result of this self-awareness is able to steer his/ her own life better



- Transitional change is associated with a deepened sense of questioning my motives, purpose, my leadership orientations, values, capabilities, style etc. All of this coupled with the ability to adapt my communication, emotions and behaviour to enable this. These questions are best answered by the leader in creating a personal vision and mission, developing an own unique value system to reach this vision and to behave in accordance with his value system. This is often referred to as *authenticity* in the literature.

It also implies being able to recognise, manage and direct own emotions and to handle these emotions effectively. It includes the abilities and sensitivity to recognise one's own opinions as being opinions and not necessarily facts, to evaluate these opinions, attitudes and behaviour and being able to adapt or change these constructively.

The following characteristics play a crucial role in growing self-insight and self-knowledge and this transition:

Self-awareness: Feel and decode what is happening in yourself

Self-acceptance: Critically observe both your strengths and weaknesses and taking total responsibility and accountability for your decisions and actions

Self-confidence/self-belief: Self-confidence comes from knowing your strengths and abilities. As we take actions and develop skills, we become more confident and our belief in our own abilities grows.

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Self- efficacy translates to building and growing competencies based on **learning goals** such as:

- increasing my knowledge and insight to perform my leadership role more effectively and to exceed expectations;
- acquiring and improving transformational leadership skills such as creating team members commitment to a purpose and their alignment with a shared value system and creating a motivating work climate
- developing the emotional or social intelligence of team members.

Achieving learning goals by means of mentoring and coaching develop in these competencies – which are instrumental in improving performance. These actions have all to do with coaching and mentoring role of leaders - a crucial but often neglected responsibility of leaders.



Growing and developing team members

A focus on the performance of team members – as opposed to a focus on competencies - often blocks performance because performance is a result or outcome, while a focus on learning and growing people by means of mentoring and coaching (where appropriate) are instrumental in consistently improving performance.

There is still an over-emphasis on control and performance in many organisations – this means that the learning/growth and productivity dilemma is still not managed well. The emphasis on performance does not make performance happen. When the coaching and mentoring roles and the consequent learning and enjoyment are ignored, performance will suffer. Success is inextricably linked to employees' ability and commitment to learn and grow. Many leaders have discovered that it is very difficult to motivate employees to learn and grow and that a much better way is to create a climate and a culture which stimulates and encourages learning and growth and accepts coaching and mentoring as the primary means to achieve this.

To establish a learning and growing climate and culture require shifts in perceptions, thinking and orientations which could typically include shifting from....

- a fixed mindset **to** a learning and growth mindset
- performance **to** learning and enjoyment
- blaming and complaining **to** accepting responsibility and accountability
- entitlement and endowment **to** learning, developing and growing
- now (present) and past thinking **to** now (present) and future thinking
- one **or** the other thinking **to** systems thinking (both **and** thinking)
- managing by enforcing rules **to** leading by encouraging and the living of a value system
- a control **to** an empowerment orientation
- operational thinking **to** consequential and strategic thinking and planning

The essence of these shifts is a shift from a management orientation to a leadership orientation. This involves a significant role change requiring the ability to coach and mentor people. On the other hand, the values emphasized in the organisation must encourage employees and team members to respond with a willingness to learn, to grow as people and team members and to prioritise and accept responsibility for their own growth.

When you take time to think about the overriding importance of self-growth as a leader and the development and growth of team members, start by contemplating the following quote from Wayne W Dyer: ***“Never underestimate your power to change yourself. Never overestimate your power to change others”.***

Successful self-growth (transition) and enabling the growth of others are of the most challenging tasks a leader faces, but being successful in these respects are probably two of the best indicators of leadership ability.



Growth assignments and reflection

Group forum discussion:

1. How do you prioritise your own growth in your busy schedule? What practical tips can you share?
2. Why do you think it is important for leaders to continuously grow and develop?

Self-reflection (not for sharing)

Rate your own attention to your growth as a leader in the last 5 years on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is paying very little attention to five making use of many opportunities to grow and develop

Another useful instrument to identify which transition factors you as a leader should focus on is a simple self-assessment included below.

A second instrument is designed to get feedback from your team members

Growth – leader self-assessment [exercise 1]

For determining some of the transition factors you have to focus on as a leader complete the following **self-assessment**.

TRANSITION FACTORS	SCALE: 1 LOW: a weakness 5 HIGH: a strength				
Self-awareness: I often feel and decode what is happening in myself	1	2	3	4	5
Self-acceptance: I know what both my strengths and weaknesses are and I take total responsibility and accountability for my decisions and actions	1	2	3	4	5
Self-confidence/self-belief: I am a confident leader; I have a strong belief in my own abilities	1	2	3	4	5
Self-efficacy: I trust myself to react emotionally correct and behave adequately towards other people and in all situations	1	2	3	4	5



Growth - team member assessment of leader [exercise 2]

For determining your focus on developing a climate and mindsets conducive of learning and growth in your team, **ask all your team members** (or a representative sample) **to rate you on the following.**

Instruction: Please look at the two examples and then rate me, based on your experience of me as your leader on the 10 pairs of options which you feel I, am more in favour of and/or which I emphasize and promote more strongly

Example 1

Playing it safe

Take risks

		✓							
--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Example 2

Order

Chaos

								✓	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--

Performance

Learning and enjoyment

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Blaming and complaining

Accepting responsibility and accountability

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Entitlement

Developing and growing

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Present and past thinking

Present and future thinking

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

One **or** the other thinking

Both **and** thinking

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Managing by enforcing rules

Leading by encouraging and the living of a value system

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A control orientation

An empowerment orientation

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Operational thinking

Consequential and strategic thinking

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A fixed mindset

A growth mindset

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

A management orientation

A leadership coaching and mentoring orientation

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



My self-reflection on the results:

Based on my self-evaluation [Exercise 1] and the rating of my team members [Exercise 2]

What actions can I take to

1. capitalise on your strengths, and
2. grow and develop the weaknesses



Everyone wins when we enjoy our work

By Leon Coetsee

Here is a challenge consisting of 3 parts: Think about the following concepts: *satisfaction, enjoyment and happiness*;

3. What do you think are the differences between these concepts?
4. What is the relationship between these concepts?
5. Are satisfied workers, managers and leaders more productive than those dissatisfied with their work and the organisations? Motivate your answer in a short paragraph

After writing down your answers to these questions, compare your thinking to the explanation which follows.

As leaders we should be concerned, not only about our own enjoyment of our work, the happiness we experience and satisfaction derived from working, but especially about the happiness and satisfaction of our team members and employees. The reason for this relates to the answer to the 3rd of the three questions above, which will properly surprise you:

Job satisfaction has been shown to have a weak/insignificant relationship with performance. The established relationship is the opposite; productive and performing workers tend to be more satisfied than less productive workers

To understand the answers to the 3 questions, it is necessary to gain insight into the concept's *satisfaction, enjoyment and happiness* (Questions 1 and 2. In the cause of explaining these concepts, the motivation to the answer of question 3 will be explained.

Satisfaction: has all to do with the -fulfilment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this.

Synonyms of satisfaction are: appeased, gratified, pacified, pleased

Job satisfaction is the attitude one has towards one's job; the feelings (including emotions) experienced as a result the rewards and recognition we perceive to receive and our perception of what we should receive.

These descriptions show that satisfaction, including job satisfaction, is the **result** of the extent to which an individual's wishes and expectations of their job are fulfilled or met compared to the real outcomes (e.g. rewards and recognition) they actually experience. The deduction one can make is that satisfaction is a "*cluster concept*", i.e. a collection of a number of different but related concepts.



Although some causal relationships have been found between job satisfaction and staff turnover and absenteeism, the vast majority of published research shows that being productive, performing well and as a result receiving equitable rewards and recognition (being treated fairly, justly) causes satisfaction. This explains why leaders should pursue creating an environment conducive of stimulating job satisfaction.

In a study this author and a colleague conducted it was found that the concept **happiness**: is experienced as an elusive feeling -one usually difficult to describe. It is related to and often used as a synonym for satisfaction. However, it is a stronger emotional feeling than satisfaction. It is a human condition divested of fear, worry or anxiety. Research demonstrates that we tend to think we know exactly what makes us happy, but that most people most often don't really know. When we say that we are happy about something we are in fact saying that this is a source of pleasurable feelings – that it has the potential to cause pleasure.

In his exceptionally thought-provoking book: *The happiness hypothesis*, Jonathan Haidt describes an ancient, but still absolutely valid happiness hypothesis:

“Happiness comes from within, and it cannot be found making the world conform to your desires” p. 87

Happiness has to do with accepting (being tolerant, making peace with) yourself, with other people, with things happening around you and, later in life, with your own mortality. This proves the old adage: *“I can change the quality of my life and satisfaction by changing my thinking”*.

This happiness attitude is beautifully captured by the so-called **Serenity prayer**:

“God, grant me the **serenity** to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference”.

Enjoyment is a state or process of taking pleasure/delight in something like enjoying a film, a soccer match, a good bottle of wine or good friendships.

Most of us find ourselves at varying levels between total despair and ecstasy while we are working and when contemplating **how we feel** about our organisations and jobs. The reasons for experiencing enjoyment or despair seems to be more strongly related to individual experiences than to the specific kinds of jobs performed. Here are some of the most popular (recurring) answers given by a variety of managers and MBA-students to two specific questions regarding enjoyment:

1. What contributes most to your **enjoyment** of your work?

“When I know that I am doing it well.”



“When I get recognition for my hard work.”

“When we work well together as a team.”

“When I do things, I am really interested in.”

“When I really know that I am making a contribution.”

“When we are trusted.”

“When I have a say in decisions”

2. What contributes most to you **not enjoying** your work?

“When my boss interferes – looks over my shoulder.”

“When I have too much to do in the time available.”

“When I can't see any sense in what I am doing.”

“When there is conflict in our team.”

“When I am bored by routine tasks.”

“When I am forced to do things, I don't believe in.”

These answers indicate that the factors contributing to enjoyment are mostly *intrinsic factors* – factors 'within' the person while mostly *extrinsic factors* – factors 'outside' the person i.e., manager style and behaviour, organisational characteristics, are associated with non-enjoyment. This leads us to the conclusion that enjoyment, as in the case of satisfaction, is a “*cluster concept*”, i.e. a collection of a number of different but related concepts.

The concepts **enjoyment** and **satisfaction** are related but differ. We enjoy our work when we “*take delight in it*” or “*experience it as pleasurable*” while satisfaction is the feeling of “*gratification, fulfilment or contentment*” we have **after something has been completed**. The level of satisfaction is thus an outcome or a **result of our work experience** while enjoyment has more to do with **pleasurable experiences while executing work**.

In summary of the discussion of these concepts a few conclusions can be offered. Firstly, that people who perceive and experience their work, interactions at work and the physical and psychological working conditions positively - people that enjoy their work and are happy - experience a positive “*quality of work-life*”. Secondly, that there is a reciprocal interaction between , *quality of work-life* and job satisfaction, and that job satisfaction is the most important determinant of “**quality of work-life**”. Thirdly there is an abundance of scientific evidence indicating that job satisfaction is related to physical and psychological well-being and a positive “**quality of life experience**”.



In situations where the potential realisation of employees is blocked, where they are threatened, over-controlled and pressurised, the following are typical results:

- stress levels increase, burnout and stress-related illnesses (depression, migraine, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks) increase;
- absenteeism increases;
- staff turnover is higher, and
- identification with and commitment to the organisation decreases.

Job satisfaction and job-dissatisfaction thus are not merely consequences or outputs of what people experience at work, but both also have **carry-over effects** to other domains – the so-called '**spill-over**'-effect which is explained in the following figure.

Job satisfaction/dissatisfaction spill-over

This figure indicates that how employees experience leadership is the most important determinant of experienced job satisfaction, that job satisfaction is the most important determinant of the quality of one's work-life and that quality of work-life is an important determinant of one's quality of life. The reverse situation is also indicated in the diagram above. The quality of life experienced 'spills over' into the quality of work-life, this again 'spills' over into the experienced job satisfaction. The diagram emphasises the important role of leadership – not only on job satisfaction, but even as an important determinant of the quality of life.



From this discussion, it is evident that job dissatisfaction can be very detrimental and should therefore be countered. **The creation of a motivating climate is probably the most effective way to increase job satisfaction.**

A characteristic of successful leaders is that they enjoy their work intrinsically and experience job satisfaction, and that they then can create an environment in which their team members are also able to experience job satisfaction, which influences their quality of work-life and quality of life.

To do this requires that managers and leaders change thinking about people working in organisations, from outdated, obsolete thinking paradigms associated with over-managing and controlling, to shift the focus to leadership and its associated thinking paradigms. The outdated paradigms include the feudal notion that employees (workers) are merely means of



production, i.e., 'human resources' or 'human capital' **owned** by the employer, which is no longer acceptable. Today there is a growing belief that people should (that they have the right to) enjoy their work and grow as human beings. This has contributed to replacing command and control and manipulating (motivating) by fear, as primary means of making decisions and being productive, with a systems approach catering for greater participation (involvement) and empowerment of employees in the making of decisions and executing their responsibilities. Modern employers and leaders realise that employees' competence, knowledge and enjoyment of their work and their job satisfaction are primary determinants of organisational success.

The values underlying enjoyment a positive quality of work-life and job satisfaction are related to the awareness that the assigned leader is responsible for the employee as a total human being; not only his/her mental abilities, manual skills or eye-hand co-ordination, but the total human being, as well as for the creation of an environment where employees are afforded the opportunity to experience enjoyment and satisfaction.

If leaders, no matter where they are in the hierarchy, are able to create a working environment to which employees look forward to be in each day – where they enjoy their interactions with colleagues and their seniors, and if it is an environment where the individual can fully live, develop and use his/her potential, can laugh and be productive, and especially feel that they make a significant contribution, then the leader has achieved something really significant!

REFLECTION AND ASSIGNMENTS

Factors contributing to my enjoyment of my work

- 1) Think about the following two questions and write down your answers. List at the least 3 things in answer to both questions:
 - a) What contributes most to **my enjoyment** of my work?
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)
 - v)
 - b) What contributes most to **me not enjoying** my work?
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)
 - v)



Compare your answers to the list based on the answers of M.B.A.-students and managers listed above.

Do you notice the same trends in your own list?

If not to what would you ascribe the differences?

- 2) What do you think could be done to increase the level of enjoyment in your organisation?
- 3) How have you contributed over the last 12 months to creating an enjoyable working environment for your colleagues? In practical terms, what have you done?



Empowering by giving power away

By Leon Coetsee

Many organizational theorists and practitioners regard employee empowerment as one of the most important and popular management concepts of our time. In spite of this, empowerment is one of the most misunderstood and abused concepts of modern management. "*Empowerment*", in management theory and practice, is often loosely referred to as a process of giving "*subordinates*" greater discretion and resources, thus distributing control in order to better serve both customers and the interests of employing organizations. However, practices and actions based on this orientation to empowerment very often did not lead to these expected outcomes. The most common obstacles encountered were firstly that a culture in which employees are seen as being "*sub-ordinate*", *i.e.*: *lesser, lower or inferior to ordinary*", goes hand in hand with a lack of trust in them. Coupled with this is the often-encountered resistance of managers to give up power and control or an inability to do so. **Power** in traditionally managed organizations is a highly treasured source of influence, authority, command and supremacy and not something people, motivated by power and cherishing their power base, will willingly relinquish. In other recorded cases empowerment was merely viewed as *to be allowed to make some decisions or to be given access to things*, thus being given some authority *without being held accountable for the consequences*. Where these concepts of empowerment were enforced, it often resulted in "*delegating and disappearing*".

To understand what empowerment really entails in a leadership context, both the concept and the reasons why it is applied must be understood.

The concept empowerment

Synonyms of empowerment include: allow, entitle, entrust, grant, permit as well as the all-important: capacitate/enable, transfer of ownership, and accountability.

These synonyms of empowerment illustrate the shortcomings of the approaches discussed above. In line with these descriptive synonyms of empowerment **the practice of empowerment** means: *participation in decisions, stimulating innovative ideas, self-evaluation, taking responsibility (for results), more self-determination and of crucial importance - constant further learning, development and growth of all involved in empowerment.*



Why empower people?

The most important reasons why empowerment is practiced is to improve a team's and the organization's effectiveness by unleashing the potential of individuals and building positive teams effective in meeting new demands and doing this by creating team and organisation cultures **built on trust and focused on creativity and innovative efforts**. This leads to the insight that empowerment is based on a set of values (principles) which is in contrast to the approaches described at the beginning of this article.

The most important of these values are:

- **trusting** people vs. controlling people
- **creativity and innovation** vs the maintenance of the status quo
- **empowerment of other** vs keeping power for own interests
- delegating responsibility vs maintaining it

The foundation of empowerment is trust

Trust is the core and an indispensable value of the set of shared values listed above. To empower people, it is necessary to trust them. On the other hand, team members must be **competent** and have **integrity** - the two corner stones of **being trustworthy** - before they can really be trusted to be empowered. The shared value of mutual trust is developed and grown in terms of this mindset and **creativity and innovation** is prioritized. The importance of creativity and innovation to improve the contributions of individuals and teams in enhancing organisational effectivity and performance, is widely accepted.

Empowerment is a reciprocal process

Seen in the context outlined above, empowerment is a reciprocal process – meaning both employees or team members and leaders are required to contribute to the process of empowerment. On the one hand the leader has to trust team members, she/he must enable them by helping team members to develop feelings of self-efficacy and having the confidence to take on the greater responsibilities. It also implies that they must be the suppliers of the necessary resources and that leaders must remove obstacles and restrictions thwarting empowerment.

Empowerment thus entails much more than merely '*giving people the power to decide and do*'. Managers must learn how to give up control and team members must start to "self-manage" and learn to take responsibility and accountability. The true meaning of empowerment then is to allow people **the freedom to decide** how to do things. When



leaders empower people, **they do not do anything to them, they do things for them.** The crucial underlying principle to do this is that mutual trust is a precondition to empowerment. This reminds one of what a great South African entrepreneur, Anton Rupert said about trust:

“Do you trust enough to be trusted”

True empowerment requires a meaningful role change of leaders and team members

Empowerment necessitates an important and significant role change of managers stepping into the realm of leadership. It requires them to develop the ability to **coach, mentor and grow people.**

An important aspect of this new leadership role is ensuring that employees acquire the **necessary orientation and competencies.** It is important to ensure that the individual employee or team member does not only have the skills to deal with the newly allocated responsibilities, but also has the correct orientation (mindset) for empowerment to work. This mindset is one of not only accepting responsibility for the quality of the work they are doing (their outputs), but also responsibility for improving the methods and ways - the processes - they employ in executing their work, including being creative and innovative. In addition, team members must respond by being willing to learn, to grow, to innovate and eventually accept responsibility and accountability for their work and performance. In these ways **ownership** and **commitment** are created.

Empowerment is then affected by the incremental suspension of control and putting employee in charge of what they do – allowing them the freedom to make choices about schedules, procedures, planning of work, solving work related problems and even creating an environment conducive of being creative and for implementing innovative ideas. But it goes further; leaders have to institute values supportive of empowerment and bring about orientations which stimulates the process of empowerment. In doing this they create a supportive climate which encourage people to develop goals, to take decisions themselves on how to execute the work and finally to take responsibility, to achieve results and for the quality of these results. The successful leader will continuously acknowledge performance and grant the required rewards and recognition, which are of paramount importance as it reinforces the required behaviour.



Empowerment Questions for self-reflection

1. Can you think of a time when you were empowered by someone?
 - What happened?
 - What was the impact of that empowerment process?
2. Who have you empowered during the past 12 months?
 - What were your most important considerations for doing this?
 - What was the end result of this empowerment process?
3. Visualise a situation occurring after you have completed this course, where you are required to empower a specific team. The purpose of this empowerment venture is to transfer the authority for planning and executing their work and the responsibility for the results achieved to this team.
 - What will your most important considerations be?
 - What steps are you going to include in your planning?
 - How will you practically execute this process?
4. If you did not do so in the last 12 months who would you like to empower in the coming months.
 - Why would you like to do so?
 - What result do you expect?
 - What steps are you going to take to empower this person? Be very specific.



Successful leaders generate energy to create alignment to visions.

By Leon Coetsee

The simplest definition of **energy** is "*the ability to do work actively*". However, this definition does not convey the essence of energetic behaviour, which is characterized by vigor, dynamism, vitality, drive, spirit, and in its strongest forms, by passion, zeal and zest.

Successful leaders radiate energy and determination, for example to realise a vision, and are therefore able to inspire other people to the extent that it becomes a shared vision. They do this by conveying the vision in a compelling way and they model their own commitment to the vision by their **energetic enthusiasm**. In this manner they activate the energies and powers of their followers and **create emotional alignment** to visions and goals.

Leaders live in glass houses. Everyone knows the extent to which leaders are honestly and passionately committed to the vision (goals and value systems) that they propagate. They must be **role models** and not only **communicate**, but also **demonstrate** their commitment. They have to '**walk the talk**', set the example. There should be no difference or a gap between the theories they espouse and what they do in practice.

Let us examine other ways to *generate* energy.

The following discussion of energy is to a large extent based on the very insightful and illuminating book: *The power of full engagement*, by Loehr and Schwartz (2003).³ They say that: "*Leaders are the stewards of organisational energy – in companies, organisations and even in families. They inspire or demoralize others first by how effectively they manage their own energy and the next by how well they mobilize, focus, invest and renew the collective energy of those they lead.*" Loehr and Schwartz (2003:5).

In order to be fully aligned and committed (Loehr and Schwartz use the concept "*full engagement*") leaders and their team members must be: **physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focussed and spiritually aligned** with a **purpose beyond their immediate self-interest**. Aligned commitment requires drawing on these four separate but related sources of energy.

³ Loehr, J. and Schwartz, T. (2003). *The power of full engagement*. New York: Free Press



Physical energy

Physical energy is our basic source of energy. It fuels our alertness and vitality and has a lot to do with our ability to manage our emotions, to sustain our concentration, to think creatively and to maintain our commitment to visions and/or goals.

Emotional energy

To perform well we need the fuel of positive emotions such as brought about by challenge, adventure and opportunities and which leads to enjoyment. Emotions caused by threats or deficits like anxiety, anger, sadness, fear or frustration are usually toxic of nature. The primary competencies and characteristics leading to positive emotions are also characteristics of emotional intelligence i.e. self-control and self-regulation, self-confidence, interpersonal (social) skills and empathy. Secondary supportive characteristics include patience, openness, trust and enjoyment.

Negative emotions such as low empathy, aggression and fear are usually associated with survival and affect performance negatively, because they are costly and energy tapping.

Mental energy

Mental energy is that what we use to organise our lives and focus our attention. The sources of mental energy include mental preparation, visualisation, positive intent and self-talk, reflection, effective time management and creativity.

Of these, realistic optimism, a positive mindset (seeing things as they are and working positively towards a result or solution), is the best driver of aligned commitment.

Numerous scientific studies have substantiated the belief that positive thinking and success are causally related.

Spiritual energy

Loehr and Schwartz (2003:110) do not define 'spiritual' in a religious sense but as: "... the connection to a deeply held set of values and to a purpose beyond our self-interest. It could thus include religious meanings."

These authors emphasize that spiritual energy is "the most powerful source of our motivation, perseverance and direction in all facets of our lives."

The sources that fuel spiritual energy include: character, the courage and firm belief to live – and thus to lead – by our values of, passion, commitment, honesty and integrity - even when it demands personal sacrifice.



We need all four of these forms of energy to do our work and to perform, but energy is an expendable resource. Following a period of activity where energy which is consumed, we need to replenish and recover our energy resources – get it back in balance. The balancing of activity (where physical, emotional, mental and/or spiritual energy has been consumed) with energy recovery, presents a dilemma which each of us must learn to manage effectively. Expending too much energy without sufficient recovery eventually results in burn-out and break-down – be it physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual or any combination of these - **“over-use it and lose it”**.

Too much rest or other forms of recovery without sufficient activity causes atrophy and weakness - **“use it or lose it”**. Unfortunately, our need for recovering energy is often perceived as an indicator of weakness or fragility, rather than a basic human need and a prerequisite for sustained performance.

Managing this dilemma emotionally is complex but important for optimal performance and commitment.

Energy is the x-factor enabling us to unlock our potential and to perform at our best. To achieve we must accept the responsibility and accountability to manage our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energies ourselves.

Leaders can also activate their team members' energy by setting high or challenging visions and goals. They must have an **'internal locus of control'** and in turn encourage an internal locus of control in their followers. They do this by **accepting responsibility and accountability** for their behaviour and the consequences. They admit it when they err and take action to manage the results of their errors. They therefore insist that people also accept responsibility and accountability. This can be accomplished by means of the following approaches:

- cultivating a sense of **future directedness** (a proactive mind-set) instead of continuously reacting to the present (being reactive);
- making people realise that to be alive means making decisions and managing dilemmas effectively. Thus, decisions are continually taken, and eventually **our decisions and not our conditions** are of the greatest importance, and
- making people realise that they are allowed to make **new mistakes** because experiments, risks and new ideas renew energy and lead to innovation. This mind-set makes people realise that they can make a difference and that they must accept responsibility for both their successes and their failures.

A practical example: If you have taken a wrong decision and this has resulted in inadequate service to clients - do not shift the blame to conditions (drought, the consumer market, competitors, subordinates, suppliers, the previous or present government, or bad luck). This is not a good way to spend energy. Rather admit your error and ask yourself what you have learnt from this situation and what you should do in future to avoid this from happening again - apply your answers immediately!



It is evident from the above that the most successful manager-leaders know that: It is not what happens to one in life that is important in the long-term, but **how one reacts** to what happens.

A leader thus uses a **a vision** as a tool to generate team members' energy by creating opportunities to make meaningful and significant contributions and to **empower** his team members. The leader is therefore required to devote a great deal of time talking about and inspire people with the vision. By doing this, each individual must be able to see how he or she can contribute to the realisation of the vision and see the significance of this contribution. This is what fuels energy in a sustainable manner.

A key to energise people is to know that a rational approach (arguments based on facts) does not work well. Energy is generated by speaking to people's feelings, their emotions. In successful energizing efforts leaders find ways to influence others to see problems or solutions in ways that influence emotions and not only thoughts. You want them to feel energized, hopeful and creative which cannot be stimulated by rational arguments.

In conclusion I repeat the words of Loehr and Schwartz (2003:5) "Leaders are the stewards of organisational energy – in companies, organisations and even in families. They inspire or demoralize others first by how effectively they manage their **own energy** and the next by how well they **mobilize, focus, invest** and **renew** the **collective energy** of those they lead."

Self- reflection and assignments

Now that you have been reminded again that you are the custodian of your team's energy – what steps do you think you could take to preserve and increase the energy in your team?

or

If a situation arises where your team shows an alarming decrease in the energy level over a period of time, what will

- 1) your most important considerations be and
- 2) What sequential actions can you take to turn this situation around?



Effective leaders: Balancing a myriad of competencies

By Leon Coetsee

Sit back for a moment and think about the heading above, what competencies come to mind?

Over the last 30 years we have regularly done an exercise with leaders, managers, specialists, M.B.A. students, and participants of the annual African Nutrition Leadership Programme and asked the following question: *Think about the best leader you have encountered during your career, and then list 3 characteristics, which you think, are the most prominent of this particular person.*

Although a few similar characteristics were listed by participants, they also listed a considerable number of different and diverse characteristics. A number of “*theme analyses*” were done (a way to determine the most frequent mentioned characteristics) and time and again it led to perhaps an over-simplified, but I think a defensible, conclusion: that effective leaders are “**Though AND Fair**” – the competency of optimally balancing **being** tough AND **being** fair.

Should one conduct a literature study and do an analysis of all the leadership competencies which experts claim to be part and parcel of leadership characteristics – an immediate observation is that the list grows longer and longer with each study, to the extent that some lists became exhaustive. Early commentators labelled these descriptions “the *great man theory of leadership*” which eventually fell into disrepute. However, over the past twenty years or so, interest in the specific capabilities of successful leaders has renewed. The evidence supports an argument for summarising effective leaders’ competence as **being both “Though AND Fair”**. The reason for linking the two concepts with an “**AND**” and not a “**but**” will become clear shortly.

A historic look at the development of the disciplines of management and leadership lends further support for this conclusion. Two historic landmarks in this context are the industrial revolution and the so-called Hawthorne studies. The industrial revolution was characterised by a very strong focus on the production of outputs. The development and introduction of the assembly line in motor vehicle manufacturing plants by the industrialist Henry Ford, illustrate this focus. Some commentators describe this era as “**organisations without people**”.

This over focus on production/performance and the neglect of people responsible for production, came under the spotlight, due to the Hawthorne studies. The phenomenon is named after the location where the experiments took place, Western Electric’s Hawthorne Works”, just outside of Hawthorne, Illinois in the USA. In the most famous of the experiments, the purpose of the study was to determine if increasing or decreasing the amount of lighting that workers had in their workspace, would have an effect on how productive workers were during their shifts. In the original study, employee productivity



seemed to increase due to the changes in lighting but then decreased once the experiment was over. The researchers concluded that workers were responding to the **increased attention** from supervisors and not because of changes in the experimental variables, i.e., lighting.

The **conclusions** drawn by Elton Mayo based on the **Hawthorne studies**, established the beginnings of recognising the importance of management style as a **major** contributor to industrial productivity, of interpersonal skills as being as important as monetary incentives or target-setting, and of a more humanistic approach as a means of satisfying employee needs.

The results of the Hawthorne studies enhanced our understanding of what motivates individuals in the workplace. They indicate that in addition to the economic needs emphasized in the classical era, individual and social needs play an **important** role in influencing work-related attitudes and behaviours. This led to the emphasis shifting to what became known as the: *“The human side of the enterprise”* - an emphasis in instances so strong that some commentators refer to it as **“people without organizations”**.

Within a few years it was recognised that the overemphasis of workers and their needs led to the neglect of a focus on productivity and that this is as detrimental as an overemphasis on productivity and performance. Today we understand these issues much better, for example in terms of it being a core dilemma or polarity of leadership practise. A polarity consists of two poles (in this case a performance **and** an employee orientation) which are **interdependent** on one another. Typical features of polarities are that when there is an overemphasis on one of the two poles e.g., performance, not only is the human / employee pole neglected but this overemphasis also causes such an organization to experience the downside of this focus, i.e., it becomes dictatorial/autocratic due to this focus which demands strict controlling of human behaviour and creating a climate often experienced as threatening and demotivating.

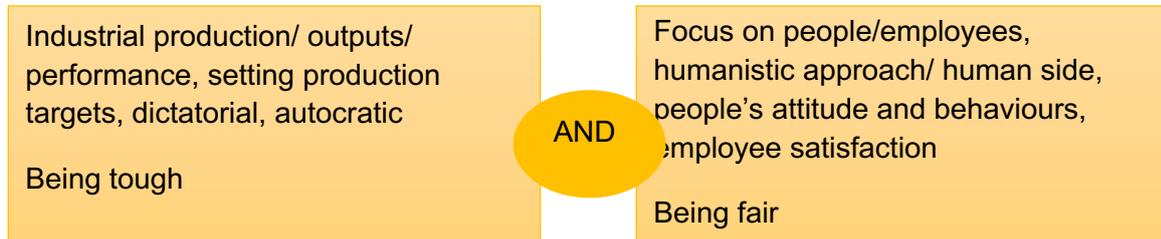
The realization grew that an optimal leadership style is an approach in which a focus on production **and** a focus on employees **must be balanced**; at times allowing a greater shorter-term emphasis on one of the poles, should particular external and internal issues an organization face, at a specific point in time, necessitate this.

There is a saying amongst psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, that people consult with them, or are referred to them, when they need some **“tightening up and/ or loosening down”**. The same goes for **being tough and fair**. In the work place it is regularly necessary to **tighten things up**, to metaphorically *‘pull up the brake’* and to focus and refocus team members on the vision, goals, the required outputs within timelines, to measure their performance and giving feedback on this, to discipline under-performing individuals and sections/departments and those in breach of the shared value system. When **‘loosening things down’ or ‘disengaging the brake’**, leaders focus on growing and empowering people, on creating a motivating climate which energise people and results in them enjoying their work and experiencing job satisfaction. The description of the optimal leadership style as being **“tough”** (production/performance focussed) **AND** **“fair”** (employee focus) should be clear by now.

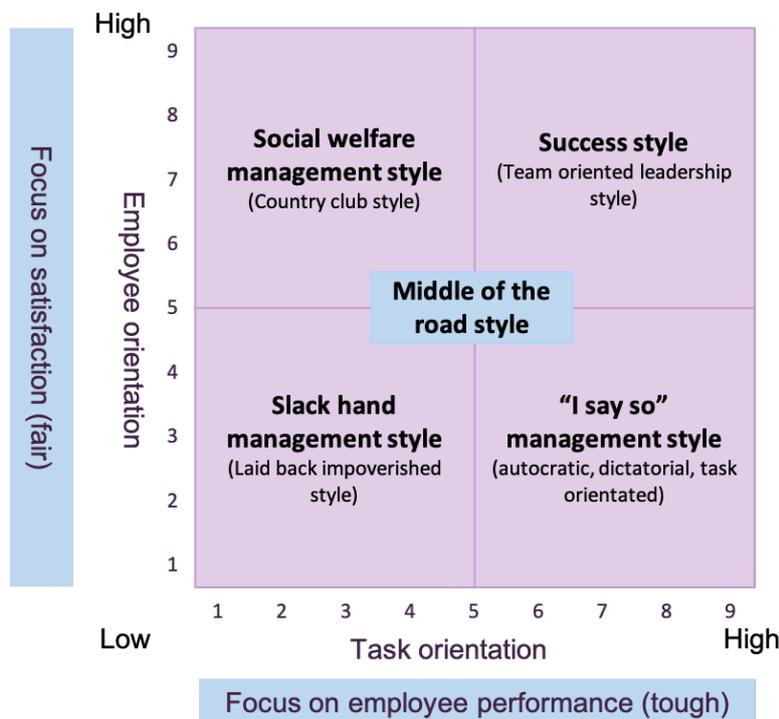


In spite of these insights, the obsolete notion that employees (workers) are merely a means of production, still persists in many orientations. Today the widely used terms referring to people in organisations as “*human resources*” and “*human capital*”, stand as proof of this.

In the discussion above various terms were used to refer to the two poles, at stake here,



A great number of management and leadership theorists developed models to illustrate varying emphasises on the two options/ poles, using labels above, to refer to the two poles or aspects of leadership style /orientations. In many of these models these relationships are illustrated using a graph, with for example, the horizontal axis depicting, (sometimes using a 9-point scale) the “Tough orientation” and on the vertical axis (also in cases on a 9-point scale) the “Fair orientation “. This is illustrated in the following figure:



This example also illustrates different leadership styles in terms of various combinations on the two axes, including the optimal style, i.e., the “*success style*”, also known as the 9’9 style (which refers to scoring high on both task and employee orientation). This model provides an excellent basis for identifying the specific capabilities and competencies effective leaders need, i.e., what competencies do they need to be both **tough AND fair**? These essential



competencies, of which many were derived from this model, have already been discussed in detail in this workshop, namely: The **Five characteristics** and **behaviour** typical of **successful leaders**:

- creating a motivating vision;
- generating the energy of team members by capitalising on four energy sources: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy;
- empowering team members;
- growing and developing yourself and team members, and
- enjoying work and enabling team members to do the same

These five characteristics are based on a value system incorporating values such as honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.

It speaks for itself that a leader needs some important **technical capabilities** directly linked to the discipline in which she operates. To be an effective leader in the various sub disciplines of nutrition requires in depth knowledge of nutrition, and in particular cases, a very specialised knowledge, of specific topics such as infant and young child nutrition, food systems, emergency nutrition etc. It speaks for itself that apart from certain competencies leaders also need to **know the business and business environment in which they operate** very well. This knowledge gives them an intuitive understanding of which decisions to make, to recognise opportunities and which ideas are sensible and worth pursuing for the organisation's survival and success.

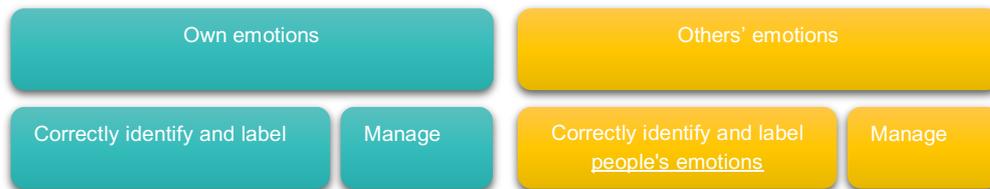
There are examples of individual leaders being effective in one discipline, say banking or agriculture, and then making a success in other fields like nutrition. In most cases it will require that the leader acquires specific technical knowledge and competencies related to this new field.

Apart from the above-mentioned competencies, those covered in this course and those of a technical nature (sometimes including academic study in a particular field), other competencies contribute significantly to leadership success such as strategic thinking, negotiation and influencing skills, problem solving and decision-making skills and emotional intelligence.

The last one listed, **Emotional Intelligence**, sometimes called *Social Intelligence*, seems to be the odd one out in the list above. However, an increasing number of experts argue that it represents a core capability of effective leaders. One perspective of Emotional Intelligence, also known as Emotional Quotient (EQ), holds that it is a function of a number of



capabilities: i.e., to correctly **identify** and **label**, and **manage** our **own emotions**, as well as to correctly **identify** and label, and **manage other people's emotions**.



These emotions are directly linked to the energy sources, and especially emotional energy described in your reading on Energy. Thus, it would be a good idea to reread these pages on energy sources and think about the links it has with emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence implies **a strong self-monitoring personality** because the leader must be very sensitive to **situational** and **emotional cues** from other people as well as his/her own. He/she needs to **readily adapt** his/her own behaviour appropriately to these cues. It thus requires the ability to **empathise** with others and the **social skills** necessary to build a rapport with others.

According to Daniel Goleman, the foremost and best-known scholar of emotional intelligence:

“Whether organisations withers or flourishes depends to a remarkable extent on the leaders’ effectiveness in this primal emotional dimension.”

Understanding and having insight into the powerful influence of their own and team members’ emotions in the workplace sets the best manager-leaders apart from the rest. These manager-leaders channel emotions in a constructive way and turn around, or at least curb, the influence of negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, distrust, sadness, anger and aggression.

The essence of this discussion of leadership style and the accompanying competencies, boils down to it requiring leaders to find the **optimum balance** between performance and achieving results AND employee or team member satisfaction and experiencing a high quality of work-life. This is achieved by leaders growing, realising and using the potential of their people by employing interpersonal competencies such as emotional intelligence.

Leadership is all about making your team members successful!

To acquire these leadership capabilities requires **a life-long growth mindset**, you “*never arrive*” because there is no ‘*finishing line*’; **discipline** to keep on learning and experimenting; remembering that you have to **focus on both self-development and the learning and development of team members** and that this always entails a very demanding **balancing act**.



Possible reflection and assignments

1. List all the leadership competencies referred to in this module. Categorize these in three the following 3 categories, and then develop action plans to strengthen the competencies in the first category, and acquire those in the second category
 - Competencies I already have
 - Competencies I need to grow as soon as possible
 - Competencies which are not priorities at the moment

My competencies	Action plans to /strengthen/Grow
Competencies I already have	
Competencies I need to grow as soon as possible	
Competencies which are not priorities at the moment	

2. Do you have specific technical knowledge that you need to acquire to make you more effective in your job? Can you think of specific technical knowledge gaps that you have that are critical for your performance in your work setting?
 - If so, what do you need to learn?
 - How do you think you will be able to acquire this knowledge? Do you have the opportunity to learn it?
 - What would you need to do to be able to prioritise this? Who would you need as allies in this process? How do you think you should approach them? [networking, advocacy]



Gaining the commitment of team members

By Leon Coetsee and Johann Jerling

We often hear leaders from all spheres of life, be it religion, business, government, civil society or education, describe their experiences of people as being just not interested; not willing to contribute; too pre-occupied with their own interests to support other causes; and avoiding or resisting becoming involved.

While doing some shopping at a computer shop a few days ago, I overheard a conversation between two employees who were discussing their jobs in the shop. The one was making a strong argument about something “*that is not in my job description*”. I started wondering how often I have heard this before. I have heard these, and words such as “*I don’t know, I only work here*” and similar expressions that demonstrate a lack of interest, of unwillingness to contribute a little more than is required, of not really being involved and, taking yourself and your **own interests** too seriously far too often. These mindsets and attitudes are sometimes the result of a lack of self-confidence or a belief that one does not have the abilities to make a contribution or to serve a cause, but mostly it is indicative of apathy. **Apathy** was once beautifully described by the cartoon character Dennis the Menace when he said: “*Who cares about being lost if you don’t worry about where you are going?*”, and illustrated by another commentator who remarked: “*Apathy is a major problem all over – but who cares?*”

People who do show interest in, support and who readily become involved in a cause, are often seen as leaders motivated by “*a service mindset*” – an orientation which is the essence of so-called and much-admired *servant-leaders* and of the practise of servant leadership.

Leaders (both formal and informal) play a crucial role, not only in their support of and involvement in processes such as creating and inspiring a new vision, or a value system or another new system, a changed structure or a new venture, but eventually through their commitment to the achievement of the pre-determined end result. The example that leaders set to all the other employees and other stakeholders, as well as their modelling behaviour, have been found to be critical success factors in organisations. Only when the leaders are really aligned with and committed to a purpose and demonstrate this by their own attitudes and behaviour, are they able to gain the involvement and commitment of the other stakeholders to a cause.

“*Engagement*” is a concept which has become very popular in descriptions of leadership and employee motivation in our new century. In their book: *The power of full engagement*, Loehr and Schwartz describes “*full engagement*” as follows: “*Full engagement begins with feeling eager to get to work in the morning, equally happy to return home in the evening and capable of setting clear boundaries between the two. It means being able to immerse yourself in the mission you are on...*”



To our mind engagement is a synonym for “*involvement*” and that commitment entails more than this. The difference between involvement and commitment could then be explained as '**taking part in**' (involvement) and '**being part of**' (commitment).

To understand the depth and force of commitment study the following figure:

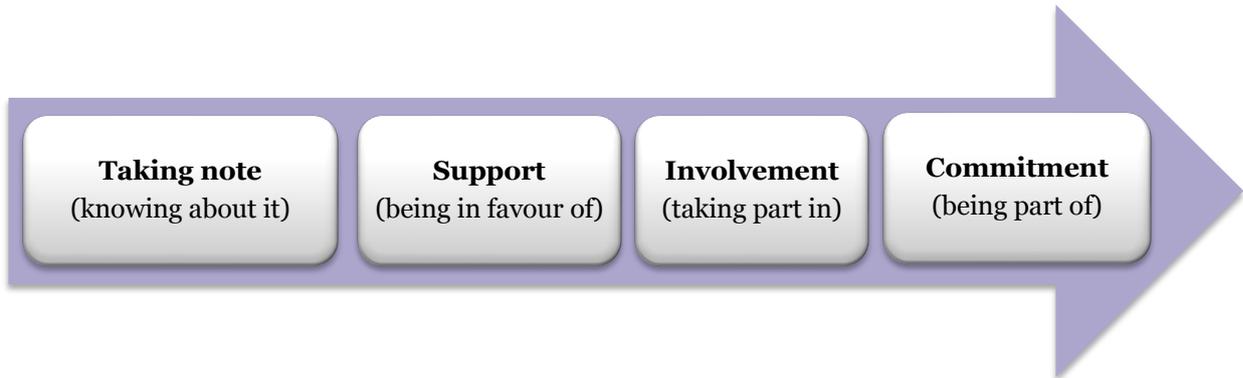


Figure 1: The levels of commitment

These levels of commitment can be explained as follows:

1. **Taking note:** Knowing about something does not mean that anything will be done about it. This is well illustrated by the often-used phrase during meetings: “*I propose that we take note of this matter*” – which is business talk for: “*We have now **heard** about this but have no intention of **doing** anything about it*”. The same probably applies when the receiver of an important e-mail responds with a single word: “*noted*”
2. **Support:** To support means to be **in favour of** something; that it is acceptable - that you ‘*will vote*’ for it. The problem with support, however, is that after we have ‘*voted in favour of it*’, that is after we expressed our positive attitude, we do not **do** much more about it. Support then indicates a **positive attitude**, but a positive attitude is not good enough - it must be followed by **positive behaviour**.
3. **Involvement:** When people are involved it is far better than merely having their support. It also indicates a positive attitude, but in addition, it implies participative behaviour. Involvement then means **participation** or **taking part**. It is excellent if a leader is able to create member involvement, because people participate in what is being done – they are then “*members of the **execution team***”.
4. **Commitment:** However, a good leader could even improve on involvement. You can be involved in something, but not **feel strongly** about it. You are then involved but not **committed** to take **ownership**. The classical example of beef sausage and eggs aptly illustrates this. The hens are involved in laying the eggs, but cattle are committed to supplying the meat for the sausage! PP34

If you are really committed to something - then you **KNOW** that it is going to happen, and you **BEHAVE** as if it is going to happen - that is the test of commitment.

Commitment is therefore **ownership** and **full identification**. It can also be described as '**being passionately committed**' to something. Commitment is associated with **emotions of passion** expressed in attitude and behaviour.



An unknown source very adequately described passion – and therefore commitment as follows:

Passion is the difference between:

- A job and a career.
- An actor and a star.
- A song and a symphony.
- A painting and a work of art.
- Intelligence and genius.
- Being alive and living
- Talking and doing

These differences become clearer if one links it to the **underlying emotions** involved in the above-mentioned transitions.

If we link **alignment** to commitment, then it (**aligned-commitment**) implies that all members of a work team or organization are *'in line'* in their commitment - they pull in the same direction towards a shared purpose!

The Oxford Complete Word Finder defines the concept **alignment** (to align) in two ways:

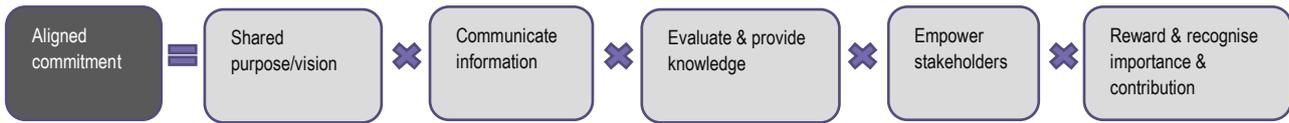
Firstly, “put in a straight line or bring into line”, and secondly to “bring (oneself, etc.) into agreement or alliance with a cause....”

We align the wheels of our motor cars to ensure that they move in exactly the same direction. This alignment prevents a car from being “*side-tracked*”- *veering off to the right or left*.

This explanation of the levels of commitment and how aligned-commitment differs from involvement illustrates the advantages of people being committed and why leaders must strive to obtain the aligned commitment of their team members to a purpose or process.

Aligned-commitment then means that everyone concerned is focused on the **same goal** and is **committed to achieve it**, like all the rowers in a boat rowing together in harmony and in the same direction to reach the winning line – their purpose.

True aligned-commitment also means that people do their work according to certain behavioural guidelines or **values in which they believe and to which they have a strong emotional attachment**. Work ethic is closely related to this. However, goals, values and work ethic do not fully explain aligned-commitment, although they are all elements of aligned-commitment. Aligned-commitment incorporates five elements which can be explained in the form of an equation.



It is very important to note that the aligned-commitment equation is a **multiplicative {x}** equation and not an additional **{+}** equation which means that if one element (e.g., information) is not present, the product will be zero. **All five elements must be present.** This multiplication effect also denotes a snowball effect.

However, the AC equation above is still not complete. Commitment can only be really explained by linking it to **passion – passionate attitudes and behaviour**. This means that commitment has a **strong emotional content**. Thus, the focus on a purpose, gaining knowledge, the sharing of information, the empowerment of people and rewarding and recognising their efforts and outputs, are all conducted with a positive intent and wholehearted effort which are not possible without showing and experiencing the relevant emotions. The focus on purposes and value driven behaviour to achieve these purposes, are all characteristics of **passionate behaviour**.

To know if team members are **committed** to a vision (goals and a value system) and simultaneously discovering if a motivating climate and a value driven culture exist in a team or organisation, positive reactions to the following questions are required:

- Do employees **know** the values can they name them? (**Awareness**).
- Do employees **understand** the values, can they define them operationally? (**Understanding**)
- Do they apply the values in their day-to-day work behaviour? (**Support**)
- Do they **act** according to the values and accept the consequences habitually? (**Involvement**)
- Do they cherish the values? (Commitment)

Let us round of this discussion with an example of applying AC-formula to a leader's effort to empower a team:

- Leaders keep them continuously INFORMED regarding the matters that are affecting their work and the organisation. Leaders COMMUNICATE continuously and ensures that they UNDERSTAND the information and KNOW how to use it.
- Leaders empower people by creating opportunities for true PARTICIPATION and affords them the opportunities TO GIVE THEIR INPUTS, and not only to accept RESPONSIBILITY for the quality of the work they are doing (their outputs), but they also expect them to improve the methods and ways - the processes - they employ for executing their work. In this way OWNERSHIP is created and people are EMPOWERED.
- Leaders continuously ACKNOWLEDGE PERFORMANCE and grant the required REWARDS AND RECOGNITION. Rewards and recognition and remuneration are of paramount importance as it reinforces the required behaviour.



- During all the above actions, the manager-leader focuses his/her team members on THE VISION and/or goals and he/she emphasises WORK VALUES - i.e., '*how we do things here*'. To empower people, it is necessary to trust them. The SHARED VALUE OF MUTUAL TRUST is therefore indispensable. On the other hand, team members must BE COMPETENT and HAVE INTEGRITY (be trustworthy), before they can really be empowered.

Applying the aligned commitment equation as a diagnostic tool has been extremely useful to me. Whenever I encounter a situation where I believe commitment of a stakeholder or team member is in question, I apply this equation and I ask myself the following questions:

1. Does this person have all the necessary **information**? If not, what do I need to do to ensure that they have the necessary information? Have I communicated clearly and comprehensively enough?
2. Does this person have all the necessary **knowledge**? If not, what do I need to do to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge? Am I expecting too much?
3. Does this person feel **empowered**? If not, how do I need to adjust and improve that way I have empowered this person?
4. Does this person feel **recognised** or has this person been adequately **rewarded**? If not, what do I need to do differently to rectify the situation? Am I sensitive enough to the needs of this person in terms of recognition and rewards?
5. Does this person share in our **vision and purpose**? If not, I should ask myself if I have communicated it well enough. Maybe it is not inspiring to the person, maybe it does not energise, maybe it is perceived not to be creating new value.
6. Does this person **share the values** that are important to achieve the purpose? If not, I ask myself what I should do differently to embed these values.

It is easy to blame someone for not being committed (having an external locus of control) but there can be no positive outcome of such blaming behaviour – it simply leads to a situation where everyone has lost.

My experience has been that it is so much more constructive and positive to apply the equation and identify what I as leader can do to gain the aligned commitment that is critical to success.

Using the AC equation provides a valuable tool to diagnose the specific reason(s) for behaviour indicative of apathy, as explained at the beginning of this article, and it indicates what the leader should give special attention to in changing behaviour to gain aligned commitment.



Reflection and assignment

Think of someone whom you suspect is not being really committed to the cause of nutrition.

1. Use the aligned commitment formula to diagnose why that person might not be committed as you had hoped. What steps do you think you need to take to create that aligned commitment necessary?
2. Think of a time that you were not committed to something. What did you do? How could people see that you were not committed? When you apply the aligned commitment formula – which of those elements were missing that contributed to you not being committed?



The power of networking

By Ali Jafri and Johann Jerling

As individuals we are not good at everything. Some of us are dreamers and pragmatists, risk takers and planners, thinkers and doers. Each has their strengths and weaknesses, and each needs the other to build a functional group of people, a society. Given a choice, we usually surround ourselves with people who possess those skills and capabilities that we lack in order to achieve our objectives. Still, making those connections does not come naturally to many of us for various reasons.

Far too many articles sing the praises of networking and all the benefits it can have for one's career and effectiveness in the workplace. But, if it is so good why doesn't everyone do it?

A waste of time?

A colleague the other day remarked "*Why do you waste time networking? I get on with my job and do what needs to be done.*" Building and sustaining productive networks can be perceived as time-consuming, but should be viewed as a professional investment. Networks provide excellent opportunities for learning, access to knowledge, expertise and technology that you might not have access to. Networks may provide new career opportunities, be intellectually stimulating and help generate new ideas and synergies. Being intentional about your networking activities will help you focus them better and prevent them from being simple random interactions between people. Given the necessity and importance of collaborative work, an effective network has the potential to save a lot of time and other resources.

Networking for the greater good

We also often hear that "networking" is seen as a negative, selfish activity. Although it can be done in a very self-serving way it is important to focus intentionally on what you can offer AND what you can gain from networking. Make it clear during networking activities what you have to offer. Networking is most certainly not a one-way street and developing a mindset of abundance and sharing what you have will make your networking activities so much more productive. If it is a two-way street you can feel confident and comfortable requesting assistance the same way in which you are ready to provide it.

Ask yourself what you will be adding to someone else's network. Leaders are driven by a purpose that goes beyond self-interest and when we focus on this higher purpose networking gets a whole new character and it enables us to serve more effectively.

Challenging the comfort zone

Trust is probably the most important ingredient in relationships. Sometimes, social events can be tough, especially when we don't know anybody at a conference or a seminar and



we're tired of asking people what they do or what they're working on and we feel alone amongst our peers. What is fascinating is that when we meet those same people but in a different setting, a multi-sectoral agenda meeting for example with industry tycoons, NGO representatives, government officials, scientists, etc. We congregate with those who are more like ourselves, those who share our values, those who we can "trust". This is simply because we feel that those who are like us understand us better, know where we come from and are more likely to accept us. When last did you have a conversation with someone who holds opposite political views, religious views or someone with a completely different world view to that of your own?

Another colleague who is already very senior has taken the decision that she would meet someone new at every event she goes to. More importantly she said that she wanted to ensure that it was someone who was still in their early or mid-career phase. Her motivation has two sides - on the one hand she said she wanted to gain a better insight into what drives younger people and on the other hand she said she wanted her own expertise and experience to be valuable in someone else's network.

Making a positive first impression can affect the prospect of long-term relationships. It is not uncommon that we try to anticipate the other person's needs and promote ourselves. While it is understandable to try and do that in the prospect of a new job or a promotion, sometimes tailoring the conversation to the other person's needs can be counterproductive and even harmful because it increases anxiety and feels inauthentic. Being relaxed can go a long way toward leaving a good impression when networking, especially for introverts.

We often think networking is a mad dash to talk to as many people as is possible but the key is to start developing meaningful relationships that produce win-win results. I recall a recent speed-networking event where we had to talk to the other person for 30 seconds and then move on. I can honestly say that I don't remember anyone from that event and I know that I have to approach my networking activities differently

Tips for introverts

- Know your preferences and network in a way that suits those preferences
- Develop a growth mindset and thinking of networking as an act of discovering and learning
- Develop a sense of curiosity and real interest
- Learn how to keep conversations going by asking good questions
- PREPARE - network intentionally and with purpose
- Make peace with the awkwardness - you will learn
- Learn from interactions but do not overanalyse.



How to overcome the awkwardness

In her book “*The fine art of small talk*” Debra Fine gives a number of examples of questions one could use as icebreakers in a professional context. Questions such as:

- How did you come up with this idea?
- What got you started in this area of practice?
- What is it that you enjoy most about your profession/position/project?
- What do you see as the coming trends in nutrition in the next 5 years?
- What have you found to be most effective in promoting multisectoral collaboration?
- What significant changes have you seen in nutrition in the last 5 years?
- Do you know someone who can help me with.....?

The key to a lasting conversation is to ask open-ended questions - questions that cannot be answered by a simple yes or no. Depending on how a conversation develops one could also ask more personal questions. Not everyone might agree with the statement but it is also time that leaders focus more on their purpose and vision and let their behaviour be influenced by achieving those rather than societal convention, culture and protocol.

Fine also provides a list of ways to fuel a conversation and we share a few of them.

- Be the first to say hello
- Introduce yourself to others
- Remember your sense of humour
- Make an effort to remember people’s names
- Show curiosity
- Share information liberally
- Practice active listening
- Go out of your way to meet new people
- Make an effort to help when you can
- Let others play the expert
- Be friendly
- Prepare for networking opportunities

People with a fixed mindset find it much more difficult to develop networking skills than people with a growth and life-long learning mindset. The ability to network is a key



contributor to building and maintaining relationships which is a critical skill for effective leaders.

Reading:

Debra Fine. 2005. The fine art of small talk. Piatkus:London 199p.



Inviting feedback as a tool for improving self-awareness

Leon Coetsee, Johann Jerling, Christine Taljaard-Krugell

One of the most valuable contributions anyone can make to another person's development is constructive feedback. It indicates both that you care enough about them to spend your time considering their situation that their work is worthy of your attention.

Giving and receiving feedback is not easy but with practice it can be rewarding tool for self-awareness, personal growth and development

During this course we would like to create the opportunity for you to learn and experience how to receive feedback from a trusted source. The purpose of the feedback is to help you identify some blind spots that you might not be aware of. This technique can be adapted and used in a number of different scenarios. For the purpose of this course however, we are only focusing on inviting feedback to help us grow more effectively as leaders.

To make the process of receiving feedback effective, it is important that all parties comply with the number of ground rules. **The ground rules only work when those who give and those who receive feedback fully understand and stick to them.**

The first step in the process is for you to decide whether you would like to receive feedback to identify some blind spots that you might have. It is important that you, as the person wanting to receive feedback will initiate and be in charge of the process.

The next step is for you to identify exactly what you would like to receive feedback on. You might be interested in understanding how your children are experiencing you as a parent or how your spouse is experiencing you in your marriage. You could also be interested in learning from co-workers how they experience you as a team member or as a boss.

The first time that you invite feedback from somebody else can be quite an intense experience. As time goes by and you invite feedback from different people more regularly, it becomes a very useful tool to help you grow.

After you have decided what you would like to receive feedback on, you should identify a person whom you would like to ask to give you feedback. This person should know you well in the context of the topic that you are requested feedback of. You should also of course trust this person to give you the feedback that will help you learn and grow.

The next step in the process is to ensure that you and the person who you have asked to give you feedback fully understand the ground rules and can apply them effectively. This might require a little bit of effort from both parties and you may need to schedule a couple of meetings with the person from whom you are requesting feedback.



When is getting feedback useful?

- When good work, successful projects, and resourceful behavior deserve to be recognized.
- When the likelihood of improving your skills is high, because the opportunity to use those skills again is imminent.
- When you are already expecting feedback, either because a feedback session was scheduled in advance or because you know that someone observed a particular behavior.
- When a problem cannot be ignored, because your behavior is negatively affecting a colleague, the team, or the organization.

When feedback is not effective...

- When all the information about a given incident is not available or clear.
- When the only feedback can be offered concerns factors that the recipient cannot easily change or control.
- When the person who needs the feedback appears to be highly emotional or especially vulnerable immediately after a difficult event.
- When you do not have the time or the patience to deliver the feedback in a calm and thorough manner.
- When the feedback is based on your personal preference, not a need for more effective behavior.

How to go about it (part 1)....

The initial request for feedback could look something like follows [*this is simply to guide you through the process, and you have to adapt it to your own style and context*]: Good morning Reggie, we have been working closely together now for 2 years and I value your opinion and insights as a colleague. Over the last couple of months, I have become more aware of my own need to grow as a [*position e.g., team leader, surveyor, nutritionist, colleague, team member etc.*]. I was wondering if you would be prepared to give me some personal feedback on how I could do this more effectively. [*if person agrees then make appointment for discussing the ground rules*]. For the process to work well we would have to agree on some basic ground rules, and I would like to discuss and agree on those in the coming week. Can we schedule an appointment for such a meeting? [*important to fix a date*]. That would give us enough time to ensure that I really benefit from your insights.



Clarifying what you would like to have feedback on

It is critical that you are very clear about what you would like to have feedback on. e.g. how you experience me as a colleague, as a SUN Focal Point, as a parent, as someone who tries to be gender sensitive in the workplace, as someone who tries to be positive, as a team leader, as a hospital manager, etc.

Important general ground rules when giving feedback

When you are in the position of giving feedback

- Know exactly what the purpose of the feedback is – be positive and constructive.
- Be prepared and keep it short.
- Give feedback that you truly believe to be in the best interest of the person.
- Be honest but tactful and clear.
- Give feedback on things the other person can change.
- Make an appointment for giving feedback - give both parties time to prepare.
- Avoid generalization – be very specific.
- To clarify points, use real examples of behaviour you have observed.
- Sometimes feedback is given in groups. Use the phrases “you” and “I”, and not “he, she or they”.
- Look directly at the person when you are speaking to him/her and not at your feet or the roof.

Important general ground rules when receiving feedback

- Receiving feedback is an exercise in **listening** to feedback.
- Ensure that you understand clearly what the person is saying to you.
- Do not try to defend yourself in ANY way – it is not about being right or wrong or explaining – it is about what the other person observed. You will be very tempted to explain but when you do this it diverts your attention away from listening - discipline is required here.



- You can only ask questions for clarification and better understanding of what was said – no other reason.
- A very useful technique is to repeat out loud what was fed back to ensure your correct understanding of the feedback. It gives the opportunity for the person who is giving feedback to correct or clarify any misinterpretations.

How to go about it (part 2)....

The next meeting could look something like this:

Good morning Reggie thank you for making the time and being prepared to give me some personal feedback on how I could become more effective. For this process to work really well it is important that the two of us agree on a number of ground rules. The first thing that I need to communicate very clearly to you is what I would like to have feedback on. I have prepared a list that I will leave with you that clarifies my need better and summarises our ground rules. This will help guide our discussion in a constructive manner.

From my side I have to do a few things to ensure success – I have to understand that this is an exercise in listening to feedback and focus my attention to understand what you are saying to me. I should not try to defend myself in ANY way or try to explain anything – it is about listening! I might ask questions for clarification to ensure that I have correctly heard what you are saying but for no other reason. I might also repeat what you said in my own words to ensure that my understanding is as you have intended it to be. These are the rules that apply to me – have I communicated them clearly?

From your side the process works well when you are clear on the exact purpose of the feedback is. It is also useful when you are positive and constructive. I know it is asking a lot of you but it is critical that you prepare for the session. The shorter and more concise the feedback the more effective it is likely to be. Only give feedback that you truly believe to be in my best interest and only on things that I can change. It is most helpful when you use real examples of behaviour you have observed to illustrate your points. So these are the rules that apply to you – is there anything that I should clarify?

So I would like to ask you to give me feedback on your experience of me as a _____.

I would be most helpful if you could share with me what you thought I should keep on doing, start doing and stop doing to be a more effective _____.



Feedback sheet & ground rules

I would like to have feedback on how you experience me as a:

1. To be a better _____, what do you think I should keep doing ?
2. To be a better _____, what do you think I should start doing?
3. To be a better _____, what do you think I should stop doing?

Important ground rules when giving feedback

- Know exactly what the purpose of the feedback is – be positive.
- Be prepared and keep it short.
- Give feedback that you truly believe to be in my best interest.
- Give feedback on things that I can change.
- Where possible use real examples of behaviour you have observed to illustrate your points.

Important ground rules when receiving feedback

- I understand that this is an exercise in **listening** to feedback.
- I will focus my attention to try to understand what you are saying to me.
- I will not try to defend myself in ANY way or try to explain anything.
- I might ask questions for clarification to ensure that I have correctly heard what you are saying – no other reason.
- I might also repeat what was fed back to me to ensure that my understanding of the feedback is as you have intended it to be.