

Quality Education News

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Dear Supporter of Quality Education

Are you a good leader?

If you've just been appointed to a promotion post ... congratulations! May your new post bring much professional achievement and success. Yet it's a mistake to believe that only 'officially' appointed leaders are leaders.

The first-year teacher is using leadership skills that in some ways are similar to those used by the principal of a school. Often, it's only the size of those listening to the leader that's different. An observer might – on occasion – note that the young enthusiastic teacher might even be showing better leadership skills than the silver-haired principal slowly sipping a cappuccino in a plush office!

A reality in South African education since 1994 is the explosion in the number of private schools. Where there were about 500 private schools two decades ago, there are thousands today. Private schools seem to be mushrooming everywhere. Parents are making the financial sacrifices to send their children to such schools. There are public schools where the teachers themselves crave a teaching post at a private school. Why is this happening?



There are those outstanding public schools that have created pleasant working environments resulting in them being able to retain their staff. Yet there aren't enough of such schools. If there were, there wouldn't be the continual move of teachers away from public into private schools. Then, of course, there are the 'ditchers'. They are the teachers who've endured such appalling work conditions in private and public schools that they've understandably ditched the teaching profession forever.

Many things characterise what a good leader does but a crucially important starting point is the creation of a pleasant work environment. An excellent class or subject teacher makes sure that the classroom is invitational and stimulating for the child. It's neat and tidy; interesting wall and table displays are there to entice the learners to want to know more. Such a teacher has created a welcoming and 'let's-learn-and-teach-together' organisational climate.

Likewise, the principal has also created a similar pleasant working environment not only for the children but for every staff member too. Physical security is a top priority; no unwanted visitor enters the property. Everyone feels safe. Buildings, gardens and grounds are well-maintained. The staffroom is a comfortable 'chill-out' zone in which the teacher can relax in before stepping once more back into the hurly-burly of school life. Light refreshments are available in the staffroom throughout the school day.

What else can schools do to keep teachers in the profession? I think that we can benefit by benchmarking ourselves about what other professions are doing. What are successful businesses doing to keep the work-force happy and working productively?

In South Africa, Woolworths is rated as one of the top work-place businesses in the country. If you walk into one of their stores, you can soon sense why. It's not over-crowded; nothing is broken or looks shabby. All their stores have air-conditioning to make it easier to work without staff having to freeze on a cold day or sweat when the temperature is sizzling. Only a fraction of schools can afford air-conditioning but fans and heaters are simple sensible steps towards dealing with cold snaps and heat waves.

Obviously, there's far more to being to being a good leader than simply ensuring a physically pleasant working environment for everyone. David Rachidi, Universum's marketing manager for Africa, reported on employee happiness and satisfaction level with this observation:

Factors such as work-life balance, remuneration and career development opportunities are key contributors to the level of satisfaction and happiness amongst professionals.

A good leader – especially at school senior management, district, regional and national level – should strive to ensure that teachers have the time to have a meaningful life outside of school. These leaders could ask themselves these sort of questions and take action to make sure it happens in their areas of influence:

- What is a fair daily work load for a teacher?
- What is a fair remuneration package for the position held by the teacher?
- What steps are in place to ensure fair career development opportunities and to stop corrupt, teacher union-manipulated, unprofessional appointments?

Good leadership entails being professionally competent, inspiring and visionary. Yet it also includes using one's skills to create a happy work place which brings out the best in everyone. It's value-driven too. It's a place where the leader daily demonstrates those timeless values of care, compassion and kindness.

Sincerely

Richard Hayward



This newsletter is edited by SAQI and distributed to those schools benefiting from their participation in the MySchool programme. MySchool acts as a conduit which raises and delivers essential funding for education and social development on a sustainable basis. This enables members of the community to participate in the future development of our nation.



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EVERY SWIPE COUNTS

Does your leadership style develop others?

Does your leadership style bring out the best in others?

Most of us have been at the receiving end of different leadership styles. There's been the leader who brought out the best in us because of the way in which we were treated. We worked happily and well because there was mutual respect. Contrast that leader with the one for whom we worked solely because of their position of authority. That leader squeezed work out of us through coercion and their powerful position in the school. Work satisfaction level was low and sometimes even the quality of work too.

What leadership style brings out the best in others? Many aspects go towards creating the happiest and highest-achieving workplace relationship. One theory, based on much international research across four continents, refers to leaders who are either 'diminishers' or 'multipliers' (Wiseman & McKeown 2015: 104-109).

The 'diminisher' leader seems to have a 'know-it-all' mind frame who regards himself as the main source of all knowledge. If others are asked their opinion, their input is adapted to suit his own agenda. Diminishers do get results but usually in rigid, oppressive and suppressive ways. These leaders resent discussing tough issues with candid robust honesty; they resort to bullying through hurtful verbal and written comments. They're inclined to be unable to control their emotions by screaming and shouting.

Their emotions are fragile and people have to do verbal 'egg dances' around them when discussing sensitive issues. Even though followers make contributions to get results, too often the glory of achievement is narrowly focussed on the leader.

According to Wiseman and McKeown, the multiplier leader has a different approach to knowledge. The leader lays no claim to being the most knowledgeable person. In fact, they're willing to listen to everyone and are open to learning new insights. Their sense of self-worth isn't bruised if they're contradicted. Emotional maturity is high. Multiplier leaders bring out the best in others. They're quick to acknowledge the input of others when success has been achieved. If the spotlight should fall on the leader, they are quick to remind everyone that the success is because of 'We' and not because of 'I'.

The table below identifies the researchers' five core differences between the diminisher and the multiplier leader. They are:

1 Empire Builder vs Talent Magnet

The diminisher sees intelligence as being based on elitism and scarcity. It presumes that you won't find high levels of brainpower everywhere and with everyone. Not everyone has the capacity to make a meaningful contribution. The diminisher leader asks, "Is this person clever?" The answer to that question determines the

Five types of Multipliers and Diminishers

There are many ways that a teacher or senior management team member can stifle creativity and individuality. That's what a Diminisher does. A Multiplier does the opposite. The Multiplier encourages lateral, out-of-the-box thinking and the expression of the unique individuality of every child and colleague.

Diminishers

The Empire Builder

Hoards resources and under-utilises individual talent

The Tyrant

Creates a tense environment that suppresses people's thinking and capabilities

The Know-It-All

Gives directives that demonstrate how much he or she knows

The Decision Maker

Makes centralised, abrupt decisions that confuse the class or school

The Micromanager

Drives results through his or her personal involvement

Multipliers

The Talent Magnet

Attracts talented people and uses them to their highest potential

The Liberator

Creates an intense environment that requires people's best thinking and work

The Challenger

Defines an opportunity that causes people to stretch their thinking and behaviours

The Debate Maker

Drives sound decisions by cultivating rigorous debate among children and colleagues

The Investor

Gives others ownership of results and invests in their success

status accorded the person and also the level of respect given to their opinion.

Contrast that with the multiplier. The multiplier, rather than asking, "Is this person clever?" reframes the question. The question is, "In what ways is this person clever?" The multiplier doesn't make a judgement call on a person's intelligence level. Rather, the multiplier gives the person the opportunities to display their abilities and – as often happens – in areas where the leader might not be so strong. The multiplier encourages and allows the space for others to develop their skills. Personal ego doesn't get in the way of doing what is in the best interests of the organisation.

Another difference between the diminisher and the multiplier is often reflected in the composition of the team members. Think of the senior management team at a school. A culturally diverse team would suggest a multiplier mind set. Different and strongly but respectfully expressed viewpoints are likely to be expressed at meetings. New ways of growing and improving are encouraged. Things are happening for the better.



2 Tyrant vs Liberator

New recruits to the army are often given this bit of advice from the corporal when they report for training: "Don't think for yourself. We'll do that for you. All you have to do is obey instructions!" It's incredible but true how this attitude is even experienced by some unfortunate new members to the teaching profession. They soon realise that at their particular school or education office, no initiative is required. Don't ask questions. Simply do as you're told.

Diminishers create an environment where independent thinking is discouraged. Thinkers are side-lined and marginalised from the group. Fall in line ... or else! Promotion opportunities within the school are usually greatly reduced for free-thinkers. A tyranny of closed, rigid thinking reigns.

Multipliers liberate thinking. Followers are encouraged to think for themselves. Within reason, people are encouraged to think independently and given the freedom to follow their plans to fruition.

3 Know-It-All vs Challenger

The Know-It-All wants it to be known that they know a great deal. They flaunt their knowledge in discussions and meetings. They might even like to be regarded as the 'ultimate authority' by others. The huge problem with this mind-set is that it can close thinking to possibly better ways of dealing with issues. All around such diminishers are others who would willingly help ... but they're discouraged from doing so.

Multipliers are conscious of how little they know. They want others to help them do what has to be done in the best possible way. They challenge their followers to think and grow. Multipliers focus on finding people who know more than they know and they (Wiseman: 106):

...acknowledge people's 'native genius' – not just the things people do exceptionally well but the things they do naturally, often without being asked and sometimes without being paid. Multipliers also take the time to understand the capabilities of each individual so that they can connect ... with the right people opportunities – thereby building a virtuous cycle of attraction, growth and opportunity.

4 Decision Maker vs Debate Maker

Life can be easier timewise for the leader if decisions can be made quickly and with an immediate move to decisive action. Leaders can be inclined – especially the diminisher types – to rush things along. This leader believes that he should make the decisions and that if he were to allow others to make input, time would be wasted. This type of instant centralised action can cause conflict. There will be those who feel that their viewpoints and concerns haven't been heard. Hasty action can result in poor long-term results.

The multiplier welcomes input from others before taking a decision. Therefore, he invites comment so that he has a greater grasp of the issues. Questions are asked and welcomed to help him get to a true understanding of the situation. When action takes place, it's the end step after much debate. The level of 'buy-in' and understanding from everyone of what needs to be done, is that much higher.

5 Micromanager vs Investor (Macromanager)

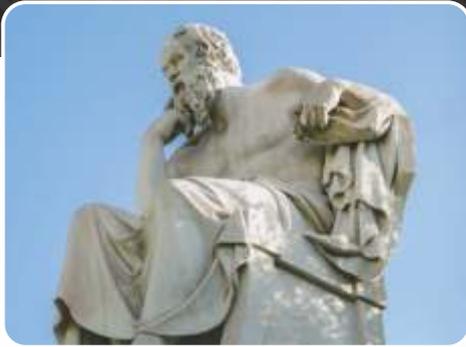
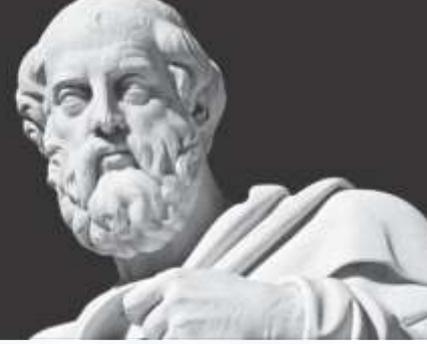
The diminisher is obsessed with the way that every step of a project is carried out. People aren't allowed to simply get on with what has to be done and use their initiative if there are hiccups. The diminisher is centre-stage micromanaging the whole process. There's a lack of commitment by the followers as they simply unquestioningly obey instructions. Such a leader can be compared to the captain on the bridge of an oil tanker. All commands given by the captain are instantly and unquestioningly obeyed. That approach might be right in port-congested Durban harbour when an oil tanker berths but not so in the day-to-day life of a school.

Our multiplier leader leaves people alone to do a project. He has the macro (big) picture of what should be happening. If the project is on course, he stays away. Should problems occur, followers can turn to him for advice and help. When the task has been done, it's the achievement of all the team and not simply that of the leader. His role is similar to the yachtsman with the hand lightly on the tiller. On occasion, he might gently need to nudge the tiller if the yacht is veering off course.

A multiplier leader approach brings out the best in a team. The team is at the helm; it's being given the opportunities to guide the course of action and do what it thinks is best. When there are the inevitable rocks, shoals and storms to contend with during the voyage, all hands are enthusiastically on deck. There's more willingly-given mental and physical energy. Long-term success is achieved.

Wiseman, L & McKeown 2015. *Bringing out the best in your people. Harvard Business Review OnPoint*, Fall 2015, p 104-109.

Ancient Greeks leadership principles for the 21st century leaders



All true leaders have personal philosophies. When they have to make tough decisions, they can't always run to leadership and management

manuals to find the answers. The solutions are not in other places but rather in their own heads. It's their personal philosophies that guide them towards making decisions.

Two Greek professors, MA Soupius and Panos Mourdoukoutas, have written a book that makes a bold statement about leadership. They assert that the qualities and practices of outstanding leaders have remained constant since civilisation began. In the book their authors revisit Greek orators, philosophers and writers of more than 2000 years ago. The authors' starting point is a simple truism: True leadership begins with a philosophy of life.

As one reads the book, one realises that many 21st leadership development workshops and books touch on the same topics. However, one needs to remind oneself that the Ancient Greeks discussed in the book were the first ones to think of these principles. The book gives clear descriptions of the different philosophies and shows how relevant they are to the ethical leader of today.

The philosophy of leadership is codified in ten simple rules based on quotes from Greek antiquity. Here they are:

Rule 1 Know thyself (person who stated the rule: Thales)

Rule 2 Office shows the person (Pittacus)

Rule 3 Nurture community in the workplace (Plato)

Rule 4 Do not waste energy on things you cannot change (Aristophanes)

Rule 5 Always embrace the truth (Antisthenes)

Rule 6 Let competition reveal talent (Hesiod)

Rule 7 Live life by a higher code (Aristotle)

Rule 8 Always evaluate information with a critical eye (The Sceptics)

Rule 9 Never underestimate the power of personal integrity (Sophocles)

Rule 10 Character is destiny (Heraclitus)

Each rule is discussed in a separate short chapter and how it's applied in the 21st century workplace. Diagrams further explain how the philosophy is used in the work situation. Every chapter ends with a short Golden Leadership Grid that summarises the rule. This is the grid for Rule 1 (Know thyself):

- Explore your inner being.
- Understand who you are. Be ready to commit to an agenda that uncovers and dispels psychological deficiencies, personal insecurities and self-deceptions.
- Develop an accurate and unambiguous self-understanding that nourishes, informs and updates everything that you do.
- Be quietly confident without being vain or proud.

Most leaders get to their positions because of experience and skills. Yet even more is expected if one wants to be a true leader. A philosophy of life is needed too. The two insightful professors, in their simply written but imbued with deep classical-wisdom book, have shown the way.

Soupius, MA & Mourdoukoutas, P 2015. *The ten golden rules of leadership: classical wisdom for modern leaders*. Amacom: New York. (Exclusive Books: R 381)

For whom the learning bells toll



SACE

South African Council for Educators

Towards Excellence in Education

It's not only for the children that the learning bells toll. This year they toll for every teacher too. SACE has stated that from the start of 2016, all teachers need to start accumulating 360 Professional Development over a three-year cycle. (Teachers who are already in promotion posts were put on the programme in previous years.)

SAQI (South African Quality Institute) is a SACE-endorsed provider of Professional Development workshops. There are ten endorsed workshops and all have an immediate practical application to the school situation. Workshops focus on leadership and management challenges and issues common to schools. They are presented across South Africa and all earn Professional Development points.

Courses are facilitated by Dr Richard Hayward, a retired principal of two South African schools. If you'd like more details, please go to the SAQI website (www.saqi.co.za) and click on 'Quality Education'. Otherwise contact him directly on rdhayward@yahoo.com or 011 888 3262. Poor schools are sponsored.