

### Does the Character of the Leader's Purposes Make a Difference in His Effectiveness?

It is next worth while to consider whether the character and quality of the leader's objectives make any difference in his success. From the creative point of view it seems to me that the answer must be that a great deal is determined by the character of the objects sought by the leader. I am prepared to offer for further testing the tentative principle that *those purposes and objects will find most ready reception at the hands of those led which can most readily be seen by them to square with their own desires or with desires which they can quite readily and naturally take up as their own.*

I believe that we will find in relation to corporate purposes in industry, for example, that leadership to be permanently effective must have objectives which the workers can, without too much difficulty, come to see as those which they themselves want to achieve. Creative leadership seems to me much more possible, much more likely of success, in plants like Dennison's, the Columbia Conserve Company and Leeds and Northrup—to name only a few that might be mentioned—than it will be in corporations where the old style military and feudal organization and spirit still prevail. For companies like the ones above named are willing to conceive of their corporate objectives in terms which include those which the workers can readily embrace. And more than that, such companies pass the supreme test of trying to provide arrangements of one sort or another which definitely, contractually and structurally assure fulfillment of their workers' desire for a sense of partnership, security, participation in knowledge and in earnings. This test is not one, we should recognize, which more than a small minority of companies can now meet. The inability of the others to meet it will, while it continues, constitute, I believe, an insuperable barrier against the exercise of the best creative leadership.

In other words, the view for which I seek serious consideration is that *creative leadership can best manifest itself only under those corporate conditions where in a consistent way and in terms of practical working devices, and not merely in verbalisms, the corporation is demonstrating clearly to its workers that it desires to consider them as partners in a group enterprise and not merely as agents for the piling up of excessive profits for absentee owners.*

Inevitably, some will say that my discussion at this point is not scientific and psychological but personal and opinionated. I want to meet this certain objection by saying that everyone of us has only to look into his own experience and employ legitimately a little introspective psychology to check my point. Let anyone ask himself how long he is willing to be led into following purposes (1) which he did not have a hand in making, (2) which he is more or less enforced to accept if he wants to get the wherewithal of life, (3) in the results from the realizing of which he has no stake, (4) the real meaning of which he does not understand, and (5) the process of fulfilling which he finds a bore. It is in much this situation that typical manual and clerical workers in the general run of companies find themselves today, if only they and we had the psychological acumen to see their negative and unliberating motivation. No; it is not unscientific to call attention to the kind of purposes that many corporations today espouse. It is the essence of the problem. For leadership in its best sense can never appear in industry until the kind of objectives to which it summons devotion are those which are capable of being embraced by people as a part of their search for self-fulfillment.

The slogan for the successful leader is: Get right with your purposes! This means he must have wit enough to know, when he sees them, purposes which are likely to gain popular favor, which catch on because they catch in as integral to the yearnings of those led.

### The Qualifications For Leadership

Sooner or later some agreement will be reached as to the outstanding elements in personality required to make leadership a fact. But now we are at a stage where only the most tentative and introductory statements can be made. The room for research is enormous.

There is probably a good deal of difference in the qualities required for different types of leadership. A leader of the face-to-face type will perhaps require certain characteristics that are unnecessary in the intellectual leader who supplies ideas for a new movement. The qualifications differ also with the levels of intelligence and culture of the group to be led. Differences are also to be noted depending upon the character of the group, on the

race, the generation and the place in which the leadership is exercised. For our immediate purposes we are concerned primarily with the qualifications for face-to-face leadership of people in corporate organizations.

Certainly, among the first in importance is the possession of *physical and nervous energy* by the leader. There is a subtle sense in which strength goes out from the leader, in which power is imparted by the contagion of his own physical and nervous drive. This quality as much as any other seems a factor always present.

Related to it is that combination of physical and psychical qualities spoken of as *enthusiasm*. Here again is a factor seemingly a constant in leaders. Of course, every enthusiast is not a leader, but every leader has a generous endowment of enthusiasm.

Adequate command—even though not perfect command—of the *technical knowledge* or skill as to the project in question is also important.

*Intelligence* is apparently essential in the psychologist's special use of that word to mean mental alertness. We will probably eventually be able to prove that there is a positive correlation between this quality and effectiveness in leadership.

*Imagination* is required—namely, that ability to work with the data of past experience in newly conceived combinations. A lively curiosity and sense of excitement in new ideas usually contribute to the finest flowering of imagination.

*Knowledge of human nature*—whether it be what is called intuitive or however it be acquired—is important. This ability to understand the probable reactions of people and to judge of individual differences is an indispensable quality.

In addition, I think that we are going to find that there is required that something which is meant by the phrase "*having faith in people.*" An essential aspect of the conception of creative leadership is a belief in the spontaneous and self-generating powers of individuals in groups if they are given a chance to exercise them. The fact that people respond to confidence imposed in them is a familiar truth which the leader must apprehend.

Other characteristics which can be identified are courage, persistence, initiative, tact, patience, self-confidence, sense of humor and purposiveness. This last is of great importance. The leader is distinguished as one who believes in his purposes

hard enough to work unremittingly for them. To be too continually reflective about the wisdom of the purposes in hand is to be a philosopher rather than a leader.

Over and under and through all these characteristics, I cannot but feel that the thing that distinguishes leaders is the special quality of *their attitude toward those whom they lead.* They are interested in people; they are sympathetic with people; they like people. I suggest tentatively that to be successful they must have positive affection for people, especially for those whom they are leading. I believe I am not unscientific when I say that the creative leader in the industrial environment is a warm-hearted individual—warm-hearted while still remaining, of course, cool-headed.

Where, then, comes in the attribute spoken of as "personality"? This word has so many connotations that it is hard to appropriate it for scientific use. In connection with leadership it probably means personal charm, winsomeness, a certain magnetic attractiveness. I confess to being baffled by this attribute which if a real attribute and if needed at all is chiefly necessary in the face-to-face kind of leadership. We need more psychological analysis before we can develop this point.

### Are These Qualifications Innate?

Even this brief outline of leadership characteristics is enough to guide our thinking as we ask whether these qualifications are inborn or may be acquired. If you agree at all with my statement of them you will surely agree that many of them may indeed be acquired. Mental alertness can seemingly not be acquired, but most of the others can probably be more or less learned or developed as separate characteristics. The only serious question is as to whether the subtle alchemy which will consciously mix them together to make a successful leader can be learned. I confess to grave doubts. The kind of magnetic personalities usually spoken of as born leaders are and always will be strictly limited. There will never be enough to go around. That is one reason why the practical problem seems to me to lie elsewhere. Every corporation continues to have need of a required quota of executives. *The practical aim of wise head executives will be to make their executives just as good leaders as possible.* This means determining