



Five Leadership Qualities Requiring Attention

The responsibility of leadership as such has always been demanding. And the 21st century corporate world confronts us with a few special, challenging add-ons.

Now is the time to cultivate five special leadership qualities and attitudes.

Tom Lauda

Here are five leadership qualities and attitudes that will require our special attention as this intriguing time unfolds:

1. Co-Effectiveness

Organizations depend on more than just its CEOs' leadership. C-level circles need to capably coordinate their efforts to lead in effective unison. In additional layers of executives excellent interaction is a similar must.

Interestingly, there's often a stunning contrast between the effectiveness of an individual leader when heading his or her own turf vs. when required to bring their skills together with other leaders. Unfortunately, many still believe in the old maxim, "Leadership teams largely consist of A-type individuals and among such it's 'natural' to not get along too well."

Yet as best practice executive boards prove, the humans are able to take a strong lead and stance in their own turf (business unit) and still interact highly productively with fellow leaders and their turfs.

With organizations' hi-tech financial, IT, marketing etc. tools getting ever more sophisticated, it's also high time for human leaders to evolve into new dimensions of co-intelligence. After all, it can generate billions of revenue – or missed opportunities and outright losses. "Human technology" or methods exist. Leading edge HR executives know how to discern which methods and providers work vs. don't.

The most common roadblock to practicing co-effectiveness? Colleagues experienced as "difficult individuals". Yes, dealing with such comrades can be a real work out. But what helps is activating our innate freedom to reinvent relationships (after all, victimhood and blaming don't lead anywhere). It's wise to consider how we may ourselves add to the "difficultness" through our own. Especially given there's often great pressure on all sides. And realizing we will inevitably continue to meet challenging individuals for the rest of our careers can give us

a kick to a search for innovative behavioral "technologies" and attitudes in ourselves. E.g. seeing difficult individuals as special "teachers" who we owe an important training that readies us for future, broader responsibilities.

2. Cherishing Individuals

Cherish? Yes cherish. What and who else to cherish than those in charge of delivering the crucial bottom line performance for your results as a leader... Individuals? Yes, they're individuals, not just anonymous "people".

Arguably, today's (especially younger) talent is more demanding of decent leadership than any past generation, and wants to be seen more as the individuals they actually are.

That's excellent for the very evolution of leadership. What can hinder leaders to actually see and value (unique) individuals?

■ **Challenge 1:** when responsibility grows, so does self-glorification – an anciently negative human habit. The very nature of self-inflation clogs up the eyes, ears and attention for the efforts and contribution of others. It promotes obesity of ego – call it Egobesity – which traps organizations' intelligence. Far superior and conducive to leadership responsibility is a winning mix of brilliance and humbleness.

■ **Challenge 2:** as 21st century leaders we need to de-cherish our instinctive liking or disliking of others. Whether we have known them for a long time, have similar backgrounds or beliefs is not very relevant. It's all about our objective curiosity in discovering the specific value of "strangers".

3. Advanced Authenticity

Numerous misunderstandings, unfortunately quite common, cloud the clarity of what "authenticity" really is. E.g., merely saying what one thinks doesn't make a leader authentic. Also, frequently heard self-defenses like, "I'm just

the person I am – take it or leave it" usually hint more at a stuck evolution as a leader than at being genuine.

As our global civilization is screaming for responsible leaders apt to come across genuinely, the following features of authenticity will be decisive:

■ **Rigorous self-honesty:** the game of authenticity clearly begins in our intimate inner dialog. When missing there, how can we begin to be genuine outwardly, let alone build authentic relationships?

■ **Decent, diligent reflection:** or genuinely admitting one hasn't done one's homework.

■ **Thorough emotional realism:** genuineness in what we think – needs to be complemented by the often equally important reality of what we sense/feel about a business situation.

■ **Considerate and digestible:** just being stingingly honest, blunt, or outright brutal doesn't make for an authentic leader. Welcome to good old caring for business relationships.

■ **In "blizzards and hailstorms":** a leader's genuineness displayed only when the weather is warm and the skies are blue is weak.

■ **Four special situations – four special messages:** when relevant or due, authentic leaders have these statements firmly in their repertoire: 1. "I don't

know." 2. "I'm really sorry" (with profound sincerity). 3. "Thanks much..." for e.g. valuable help, contributions or advice (heartfelt is the key). 4. "Xyz situation has been (partly) my fault..." In inauthentic managers just thinking of applying those four causes blocks in their throats.

■ **Lastly, keen passion for self-evolution and an active curiosity** about one's ongoing growth potential as a 21st century leader should be steady companions.

4. Power & Ethical Intelligence

Since ancient days there have been leaders who used their power in very fruitful, intelligent and beneficial ways – for the best of the "collective". Needless to say history is heavy with examples of negative use of power, too.

In our corporate world, clearly, there's a huge array of possibilities to turn power into a most positive

force, contributing immense value to all stakeholders. But the more an individual in charge finds power in itself highly sexy for power's sake – the more likely he or she will not see the whole picture of responsibility and "rightness" of attitude, behavior and action.

Yes, power comes with a wonderful sense of "space" and "freedom" to get one's own ideas, style and preferences to a breakthrough. Plus, "the more power, the less hindrances and the more independence from others' power" – at least we think. Then, we all also know well how power generates heaps of responsibilities, including a prominent one: the ethics of power. Or the development of ethical intelligence which goes beyond just not being outright unethical. Here's a few relevant points:

■ **Remembering what we appreciated vs. didn't** when we were younger (it's amazing how many leaders forget).

■ **Stopping an ancient, "inherited" and quite dumb habit of humanity:** one generation looking down upon the next one's potential.

■ **Cultivating a true openness to all cultural backgrounds.**

■ **Keeping one's cool amid conflict** including the ethical cool – and refraining from dumping emotions (e.g. anger) on others – responsible for zero positive outcomes.

■ **Every time our power increases** a bell should ring at least five times a day, internally – reminding us of the power arithmetic's lighter vs. darker potential.

It is us, personally, who will, live with the echo of our actions. Clearly, in ourselves, negative ones regularly lead to contractions, negative conscience that deteriorates life's enjoyment, hinders positive, forward moving energies to arise, and render inner contentment an illusion. While actions of ethical intelligence tend to generate the contrary.

It is ridiculous to take over immense responsibilities, put great amounts of energy into them and then end up not being contented in the longer run. That's as unacceptable as a complex business bottom line always losing money. We definitely deserve to end up regularly fulfilled in our work – call it "profitable" on a personal-human level. And inner intelligence of ethics plays a prominent role.

5. All-Inclusive Vitality

Managing to join our intellectual vivacity with a clearly positive emotional drive is key for leaders today – and then having both deeply rooted in robust physical energy. Building such "Threefold Vitality" is essential for sustaining success in a demanding, complex and superfast moving world.

Now first, on a few necessary mental-intellectual skills or tools: ■ **The ability to swiftly switch** a mind turned negative (supposedly that can happen) into neutral gear, then back into a "yes" spirit toward key priorities (see athletes'

rigorous mental or "intention" training).

■ **The art of reinforcing** simplicity amid complexity.

■ **Not creating a problem** out of having a problem.

Now regarding intelligently managing the momentum of "business emotions":

■ **The ability to swiftly turn** around potentially harmful emotions (anger, frustration, disappointment) into a new forward movement.

■ **Actively training** productive emotions like job enthusiasm, genuine joy, celebration of success etc.

Lastly, on promoting a happy, agile and energized physical system that covers agility, endurance, joy of movement, energizing breath etc., and goes far beyond the training of muscle alone. The more rigorously we manage the interface among our mental, emotional, and physical reality, the more solid and potent will our overall work energy be.

As our corporate world increases its influence on this stunning, somewhat troubled planet, we need to bring forward highly capable leaders who have what it takes to guide us out of global issues no single country, no politicians or scientists among themselves, nor all religious leaders combined (should they ever evolve to reasonable, concerted action) – could possibly solve on their own.



ZUR PERSON



Der Jurist **Tom Lauda** ist international tätiger Executive Coach und Vortragender, hat an diversen Business-Schools gelehrt.

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