Loving Your Students – A Faculty Model for Today's Classroom

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Abstract

This paper reviews research related to four recent business management models of charismatic and inspirational leadership. It goes on to select the key traits and behaviors of these leadership models for the workplace environment and use them as the foundation of a model for a loving faculty member. Like the business leader, the devoted, caring professor leads his engineering students in their quest for knowledge, growth and learning. Based upon peer-reviewed leadership research which reports the value and benefits of a caring, mentoring and loving leader in the business world, the loving professor will also be successful in meeting the learning needs of students in the 21st century classroom. As faculty transition from the ways of old - the authoritarian, dictator, Machiavellian ways of teaching - they must search within themselves and ask, "How should I act so as to achieve the rank of loving professor? Which behaviors, activities and actions will allow me to successfully lead my students and best promote their learning?"

Leaders, Leadership and The Rise of Civilization

Leadership has been a research topic since before recorded history. Understanding the behaviors, traits and personalities of leaders has spawned questions of what it means to lead, who will lead and how does one lead. The myths, legends and stereotypes associated with leadership (both good and bad) can be found in the old and new testaments, in Greek mythology, in Latin classics, in all the great literature of the world, in fiction, the movies and television.

The stories of leaders have played an important role in the development of civilizations, nations, ethnic societies, and almost every human group ever organized. In military settings, the characteristics which identified a good leader are documented in writings across the centuries and from around the world. Wren (1994, Chapter Two) provides a chronological framework of management leadership starting 22 centuries B.C. and ending with the start of the industrial revolution in Great Britain around 1750. Leaders such as Hammurabi, Sun Tzu, Confucius, Chanakya Kautilya, Moses, Plato, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Gutenberg, Francis Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo and Isaac Newton are widely recognized and studied for their abilities to lead and advance civilization.

The word 'leader' first appeared in the English language around 1300. Prior to that words like commander, chief, general, emperor and king were commonly used. As concepts of inherited roles, nobility and royal families were questioned, the word 'leadership' began to surface (around the middle 1700s in parallel with the rise of democracy). The word 'leader' was widely used to describe political influence and control within the British parliament. Thus, even though the study of leaders is old, scholarly research related to the meaning of leadership can be seen as a relatively recent field.

Leadership Research

Almost any type of leader of any type of group has been studied. Often, with varying levels of success, scholars attempt to extrapolate conclusions from a specific type of leader and group to leadership in general. Within groups, important decisions and their method of implementation center on the will of the leader. Krech and Crutchfield (1948) concluded "by virtue of his special position in the group, the leader serves as a primary agent for the determination of group structure, group atmosphere, group goals, group ideology and group activities." This author feels this observation is especially true within educational groups.

The bulk of Wren's (1994) book profiles leaders and leadership from the British industrial revolution up to the development of modern management practices as taught in many contemporary business schools. The text describes most of the popular, current models for leadership in business and education. The theories are derived by studying the ideas, methods and practices of 19th and 20th century leaders.

Applying the scientific method for researching leaders and leadership, the scholars have attempted to develop classifications. Burns (1979) provided a theory to describe the distinction which evolved from the classification work. Two major classifications for leaders resulted. The first is the transactional leader who concentrates on an exchange relationship of what he and his followers want. In politics, the transactional leader exchanges promises for votes or jobs for votes or subsidies for campaign contributions. This is opposed to the transformational leader who strives to arouse and satisfy the higher level needs of his followers and who is categorized as an intellectual leader, a leader of reform or revolution, as a hero.

An example of this distinction is demonstrated in President Lincoln (a transformational leader) and his predecessor President Buchanan (a transactional leader). Buchanan was content to allow disintegration of the Union and allow Southern succession to take place in trade for evading a civil war. Lincoln, on the other hand, was determined to hold the Union together and heal the wounds caused by economic, cultural and civil rights differences between the North and the South.

Finally, as extensively described by Bass and Stodgill (1990), leadership research has questioned the personal traits, values, interpersonal abilities, intellectual competence, and technical skills of leaders. It has questioned the relationship between leaders and those they lead. It has examined the competitive natures of leaders and their preference for taking risks. Questions concerning the power of leaders, their charisma and inspirational abilities have also been examined.

Thus, scholarly research into the topic of leadership and its definition has a solid foundation of prior work. Future research will undoubtedly give rise to new and improved theories for the definition of leadership in business, education and other sectors of human activity.

Educational Leadership and Behavioral Styles

Harding (1949) distinguished 21 types of educational leaders: the autocrat, cooperator, elder statesman, eager beaver, pontifical type, muddled person, loyal staff person, prophet, scientist, mystic, dogmatist, open-minded person, philosopher, business expert, benevolent despot, child,

protector, laissez-faire type, common-minded person, cynic, optimist and democrat.   Do you immediately see a type that fits your teaching style or the style of a teacher you know?

One could use this list in a parallel manner to describe behaviors and styles of business managers in the workplace. On the job, there are managers who exhibit behaviors and manage in a way which would categorize them into a similar taxonomy of 21 types. Based upon the premise that much can be learned through the understanding of these types, it is a small step to move from applying them to the study of classroom management to using them to classify business managers and their management practices.

It is because there are so many shared aspects between the management of a business organization and the management of a classroom of student learners that we can step back and forth between applying these research conclusions to both the workplace and the classroom. In making this step some of the relationships change but basically this author contends that one can examine recent business leadership research and its conclusions and then identify parallel situations applicable to educational leadership and the classroom environment. The assumption here is that the relationships and interactions between a faculty leader and the student followers is similar enough to that of the business manager and the subordinate workers (employee followers) that parallel outcomes result.

Charismatic, Caring Business Leadership Styles
In the publications and recent literature for research studies related to business managers and business leaders, Cavanagh (1999) noted there has been a trend toward the definition of a manager's model which is based upon a foundation of spirituality. The new interest of working people is measured by the growing number of professional presentations, journal articles, books and conferences containing themes of caring, supporting, nurturing and encouraging leaders. This trend is illustrated by the interest and activity associated with three recent models of charismatic and inspirational leadership promoted for business leaders. They are Autry's (1991) *Caring Leader*, Greenleaf's (1977) *Servant Leader* and Block's (1987) *Stewardship Leader*. When considered in conjunction with the Burns (1978) model of the transformational leader, the integrated, loving, devoted leadership style can transform the key traits and behaviors of followers in a business organization and produce a successful business operation.

The caring leader: "Good management is largely a matter of love" (Autry, 1991, p. 17). Autry's *caring leader* was modeled on religious beliefs and the thought that managers have a God-given responsibility for caring for those within their charge. In addition to the mandate to care for others, Autry believed a leader should treat others in a most positive manner. According to Autry, there was no room for punishment in the workplace – not even in times necessitating employee termination.
> *"...leaders must renounce the power to punish, for punishment does not bring out the best in those who are punished, nor in those who must punish: eliminate the notion of punishment… This leads, then, to liberating the managers from ever being in conflict with their own best values. There's just one way to fire someone: with love and support and deep, deep regret. (Autry, 1991, p. 56, p. 119)"*

This is reminiscent of the phrase many heard from their parents while growing up, "this is going to hurt me worse that it is going to hurt you."

The Servant Leader: The role of a servant leader is to care for other people by making sure they have what they need in order to survive and feel a sense of comfort. The servant leader's role is to focus on helping other people while working to maintain the mission of the organization and to manage resources in order for the mission to be fulfilled. The servant leader does that in a way that creates an open and honest relationship where members of the organization learn to appreciate and respect the leader for the person's willingness to get involved on many levels of meeting personal and organizational needs.

Greenleaf is most often associated with the modern revelation of the servant leader model. However, an earlier published example of the servant leader was the story of Jesus Christ as told in the four books of the new testament.   Almost every biblical story told about events in Jesus' life relates to and demonstrates some aspect of servant leadership. Other than in Biblical references, not much was written about the traits of servant leaders until studies performed in 1977 by Greenleaf and related studies by Burns in 1978. Until the late 20th century, the United States business model of a leader was the authoritarian, dictator, and Machiavellian leaders. None of these models allowed for leadership traits through which a person could associate with followers in the way defined by the servant leader.   The model describes five attributes of the servant leader: authentic, vulnerable, accepting, present, and useful.

Servant leaders are willing to work in and among the people and there is an opportunity for leaders to teach and encourage leadership throughout their organizations as they provide examples to their followers. By their nature, servant leaders create an environment for leaderly learning (Banutu-Gomez, 2004).   Servant leaders also encourage an environment enabling others within their organizations to be good followers. This is also a separation from the caring leader who is not as concerned about the development of others as the leader is with doing the right thing from an organizational perspective. The servant leader has an advantage in helping to prevent chaos and to manage conflict as it arises within the organization. Because the servant leader walks among the people and is involved in their lives, as it relates to the organization, a deeper understanding develops within the work community of what is expected and how to do it. Conflict resolution becomes more of a byproduct of the developed supervisor-subordinate relationships and less a process in and of itself.

Because servant leadership traits include setting an example (Banutu-Gomez, 2004), it is only fitting that subordinates of servant leaders learn to be strong followers. That cannot be as automatic an outcome for the other three models studies. In essence, the traits of the servant leader are transferred onto subordinates. The traditional understanding of a good follower is someone who takes direction well without resisting the person giving the directions. In the case of followers in a servant led organization, the followers quickly learn from the leader to take initiative and pitch in when and where needed. Servant led followers also tend to be more creative, better problem solvers, and take ownership of team problems. As subordinates become better followers of the servant leader, they become leaderly and thus, they rise to leadership. What evolves is an organization of people who care about each other enough to pitch in when and where necessary to carry out the mission and goals of the organization: a productive team.

<u>Stewardship Leaders</u>:   Another model of leadership is known as the steward leader and was defined by Block (1993). The origin of the word 'steward' came from the title given to responsible servants in medieval England who did not own their own position or power. Instead, they held their positions in trust for rulers who were geographically displaced or who were not yet old enough to exercise their power (Harvey, 2001).

In the case of business leaders, Block said stewards are those leaders who took the position of leadership seriously, yet they realized their positions were only temporary. Just like stewards of old, stewardship leaders take on the temporary responsibility of caring for and nurturing their followers. There is no long-term commitment or loyalty of leadership. Block based his leadership model on the values of partnership instead of patriarchy, empowerment instead of dependency, service instead of self-interest, and absolute honesty in order to build relationships of equals – a structure where there were many more followers than leaders (Block, 1993). Block almost defines the environment of the stewardship leader as that of leading a leaderless group – a person who helps keep followers focused on the mission and vision and nothing more.

Because they see their role as temporary, there is no investment for the long haul. The steward leaders says, "I am not responsible for your career. I am not busy looking for opportunities for my people. These jobs were not created as career opportunities, they were created to impact the business. The best I will offer is to give you absolutely honest information and encourage you in creating your own future" (Block, 1993, p. 87). Even though this came across as harsh, there is still the strong commitment to encourage others towards a better future.

The Basis for the Loving Professor
Scholarly research has been conducted in both the classroom environment and in the workplace environment. Because there are so many shared relationships, interactions and behaviors present between the business manager and his followers and the classroom faculty member and his student learners that we can apply research outcomes, 'best practices' and research conclusions from either environment to the other environment. Leadership research as it applies to the workplace can also be applied to the classroom with equal success. In making this step some of the relationships change but basically this author contends that one can examine recent business leadership research and its conclusions and then identify parallel situations applicable to educational leadership and improvement of the classroom environment. The assumption here is that the relationships and interactions between a faculty leader and the student followers is similar enough to that of the business manager and the subordinate workers (employee followers) that parallel outcomes result.

The Model of The Loving Professor
Just like the business leader who practices steward, servant or caring leadership, the loving professor accepts responsibility for the success of his students. By his actions and conduct in the classroom, the loving professor accepts the fact that he is responsible for the learning of those in his charge.   The loving professor is always aware of the intended learning outcomes he directs and conducts activities to promote positive learning outcomes.

The loving professor must be sure to provide all available resources for students to learn. He does this by being intimately involved in the students' learning processes. Today's technology makes this highly possible. The selection a high quality textbook with support material on compact disk (CD) and links to relevant web sites are at the top of the list of resources to be provided. Making himself, his knowledge and his experience easily available to students is important and possible using technologies such as email, instant messenger, web sites and other such technology communications channels. Selection of assignments which challenge the students to learn technical content is yet another resource that the loving professor takes the time and effort to develop. Providing timely and detailed feedback to students is yet another important behavior of the loving professor.

The loving professor realizes that his position of leadership and his involvement with student learning is temporary and therefore he is aware of the need to maintain focus on the learning. Keeping vigil over student activities and measuring student progress are important aspects of staying on schedule.

The role of the loving faculty member is not so much to direct but to inspire through example; not so much to exert the power of his knowledge but to work side-by-side with students in a non-threatening, encouraging and positive manner. In this faculty model, there is no room for punishment. The negative aspects of student interactions are not present even in cases of students failure. This eliminates any conflict between faculty and student.

Faculty have always had to walk a tightrope while performing their job. They are in the precarious position of achieving student success while maintaining the quality standards of the University. The model of a loving faculty member, as presented in this paper, achieves student learning in a manner which emphasizes a caring and nurturing attitude while still allowing the faculty member to remain true to the principles of academic rigor. The loving faculty member must truly adopt an attitude of concern for and devotion to successful student learning not just in the classroom but in all aspects of his life in order to avoid any conflict. Simultaneously, the loving professor must focus on helping his students while working to attain the mission of the University. The loving faculty member promotes an open and honest relationship with students thus allowing them to appreciate and respect the faculty member's willingness to get involved with their needs and those of the University. By the generous, caring example of the loving professor, students quickly learn to take initiative and pitch in when and where needed. Through team assignments and peer learning, students of the loving faculty member can learn to be more creative, better problem solvers, and take ownership of team problems. The loving professor must promote the concept that we all learn from each other. In essence, the traits of a loving faculty are transferred onto his students as everyone in the class assumes responsibility of each and every other member.

Transformational Aspects of the Loving Professor
There is a transformational nature to these behaviors which define the model of the loving professor. The loving faculty seeks to alter and elevate the motives, values and goals of students by ensuring students have what they need to achieve success and that students have a sense of comfort. The caring faculty sets a good example for his students and thus encourages students to become strong learners. The loving faculty member is committed to the success of his students.

In the process of showing the students the final goal, what is in it for them and how to attain the goal, the loving faculty elevates students to stay with the program – he builds student expectation for the future. Relating his own career experiences is one approach to transforming student thinking.

Conclusion

As faculty transition from the ways of old - the authoritarian, dictator, Machiavellian ways of teaching - they must search within themselves and ask, "How should I act so as to achieve the rank of loving professor? Which behaviors, activities and actions will allow me to successfully lead my students and best promote their learning?" The model of the loving professor may be the answer to these questions.

A loving professor seeks to alter and elevate the motives, values and goals of students by

1. accepting responsibility for student success
2. always keeping in mind intended learning outcomes
3. promoting positive learning outcomes in all he does
4. providing resources needed for students to succeed in learning
5. being intimately involved in students' learning
6. challenging students to learn and achieve
7. keeping vigil over student activities
8. measuring and rewarding student progress
9. helping students to appreciate the importance of schedules
10. working side-by-side with students in a non-threatening and positive manner
11. providing honest, timely and detailed feedback to students
12. inspiring through example and resisting the urge to direct student actions
13. remaining true to the principles of academic rigor
14. setting an example which encourages students to become ethical leaders
15. showing students the final goal and building student expectations for the future

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