

LEADERS ARE BEACONS OF HOPE

by:

Ferdianne Antonie B. Bermudo
Teacher II, Limay Senior High School

A leader is a dealer of hope.

This was the first sentence that caught my attention when I was watching Dr. Alan Miller in one of his talks about future leadership in the fourth industrial revolution. It was not because a great leader like Napoleon Bonaparte said it, but because it made me think deeply about my perception of how and what a leader should be. Before, I would always think of a leader as someone strong and courageous, intelligent, visionary. Someone who is always in front to lead the group, decisive and disciplined, and lastly one who has the power to make anyone do something.

I've always thought that a leader should have those characteristics for them to lead others, but when I saw this quotation, it made me rethink my viewpoint on how a leader should be, how I view my leaders, and how and what kind of a leader I want to be in the future as I also aspire to be one. It made me realize that yes, a leader, aside from the qualities and characteristics that I mentioned, should also be a dealer of hope, a leader who inspires others to hope for a good future, make meaningful contributions by uplifting others, and believing in their potential and capacity by putting efforts and sacrifices into reality. And a person that gives people reasons to trust and hope again even though the situation is not good it will get better.

Dr. Miller also quoted that leadership is a social phenomenon and is not only about management as he explained the difference between management and leadership. That management and leadership should have both the factors of workflow and thought flow that are considered important for the success of the organization. Management is all about

the system whether it's on budget projection or the operating system. These are vital for our quest in becoming future school administrators as we will not only be handling people, but also the operations inside the organization. On the other hand, leadership is the thought flow ,that is, how people inside the organization behave think and work.

Both management and leadership require knowledge, culture, and behavior as both corporates have culture and behavior. He further explained that the third industrial revolution has come to an end. Those management practices associated were starting to be less relevant and that it is a question of how we will be able to adapt for the future, or how it will soon perish, and that change is inevitable and with this, an organization or a person that does not evolve will not last. He also presented a diagram that shows the organizational structure of a group, their behavior, and that social structure is complex. No matter how small the group they have differences in each other and can only be united if they trust each other and share a common goal or vision.

Everyone whether it's a person or a group has its own culture, and it is a must that we understand that for us to lead people with different backgrounds. We must also create a culture that may bind each other as collaboration is one of the most important traits inside the organization. This is very challenging in the sense that handling different individuals with different cultures will test anyone's management and leadership skills.

He mentioned the four big disruptors hitting the global economy and as I listened to what he was saying I was starting to understand how the world drastically changed as he explained each disruption informatively. The industrialization and urbanization in an emerging economy where he mentioned that more and more people are working in cities as opportunities, work, and progress were concentrated in cities. There is also a fact that we are now having the crisis of an aging world where there are still potentials for our elderly that should be discussed, and to do that ageism has to stop. According to the Theory of Relational Ageism: A discourse analysis of the 2015 White House Conference on Aging (Gendron et al, 2018) to combat ageism, we must look at how individuals who

are directly involved in promoting older adults' rights and implementing policies for them—those who work in the aging services network—use ageist terminology and attitudes. Ageism is a well-known, pervasive phenomenon in which animosity toward the elderly and older people is manifested both overtly and covertly through attitudes, behaviors, and values (Nelson, 2004). And as leaders, we should be in the front row of getting rid of these ideas and exploring more opportunities as they are a huge number of the demography that should not be wasted.

Additionally, the state of workplace mental health may worsen to the point where it dominates all other leadership issues in the future. This is very alarming as the numbers continuously rise especially during the pandemic time. Luckily, the culture in the Philippines is progressively evolving as we are now more open on the issue of mental health unlike before. We should have a more proactive approach on this matter for I believe that mental health is as important as physical health itself. Giving importance to the well-being of a person should never be an afterthought. It should be a priority and we must look for ways to address it as much as possible.

The Fourth industrial revolution is a mixture of the succeeding revolution in the past, from the digital world mixing with the physical world and all the systems, that we must form new and unique business, government, leadership, and management models. And I believe that when he mentioned that the biggest problem for people is the fight against being made irrelevant, that if you're not doing something good or cannot compete with others you will be irrelevant. Another is that life is changing so much faster than what we have today, so we really must adapt to changes more quickly and be strong and resilient to survive. Technologies, practices, principles, and ideas come and go, what may be relevant and useful today may not be relevant in the future.

In the 21st century, being conservative in a certain idea may not work as changes continuously happen so when you hold on to a certain ideology or things, it will be very hard to cope with the fast-paced society that we have today. As leaders, we should be

progressive, open-minded, realistic, and pragmatic. This idea is supported by the Pragmatic Theory of Truth that emphasizes the important role the concept of truth plays in a variety of fields and discourses, including ethical, legal, and political speech in addition to the scientific and fact-stating discourse. (Peirce, 1878).

I also believe that building trust is essential in an organization to work more collaboratively with others and to lead the group as efficient leaders, and it is a major factor in making sure that the team is working as one with one goal and one mission. When there is low trust, there is a higher chance for failure that is why trust is a contributing factor to the success of a project or an organization. Trust makes people efficient, dynamic, and resilient; and is essential for collaboration, innovation, and a must at the heart of any future organizational culture. I could not agree more as it is one of my guiding principles that I want my fellow teachers and others to think of me. I want to think of myself as a leader that they can trust, a leader they can rely on and a leader they can follow. I want them to be inspired by a leader who is a dealer of hope. An organization built in trust will prosper and when you trust your leader and vice versa there is a culture of faith and trust in your potentials and capabilities. Peter F. Drucker once said, Leadership is an achievement of trust and beacons of hope.

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