



GIFTED LEADERS

Innovative Leadership • Inspired Workplaces

The Mindset Required for Gifted Leadership

There are three key differences that distinguish the mindset required for effective 21st century leadership: 1) a different definition of leadership, 2) a different view of the positional leader's role and 3) a different way of "being."

A Different Definition of Leadership

"Collective leadership is the process of many people working together and aligning their efforts to achieve greater impact." – The Leadership Learning Community

- **Leadership is a collective capacity that is widely distributed.**
It extends beyond the formal, positional leader or just a few members of the senior leadership team and is a shared, co-constructed function that encompasses vision and strategy as well as day-to-day policies and procedures. Collective leadership invites and embraces a diversity of perspectives and relies on the intelligence and wisdom of the group.
- **Leadership is about influence, not power or authority.**
It is relational and interdependent. It's a "together" process that is grounded in the collective and cumulative strengths of multiple partners. These partners build respectful relationships that allow them to both support and challenge each other, so that optimal learning occurs.
- **Everyone is a leader, regardless of position or title.**
Leadership is uniquely inherent in all individuals and is cultivated and co-developed in parallel with functional competence.

A Different View of the Leader's Role

"There are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish." – Warren Bennis

- **Positional leaders are stewards of the "why" – the vision, mission, values, and strategy.**
Work must carry with it a strong sense of purpose since most people want to do something of value – something meaningful. Leaders must also pay particular attention to the process work required in managing the paradox of unity (alignment around a compelling purpose) and diversity (appreciating individual differences).
- **Positional leaders have adopted an attitude of "give control and create leaders."**
Instead of trying to predict the future, take control and attract followers, leaders aim to sense and respond which means letting go of trying to control outcomes. By

moving authority to where the information resides, they create psychological ownership (i.e. commitment, group accountability).

- **The leader's primary role is to create a flourishing team culture.**
This involves 1) creating an emotionally safe environment where each person is respected and valued, 2) honoring each person's psychological need for autonomy, relatedness, and personal growth, 3) convening important conversations with all stakeholders to measure progress toward strategic and operational objectives, and 4) encouraging people to contribute to their fullest potential.

A Different Way of "Being"

"Leadership that embraces risk taking and openness and that commits to continuous learning is better able to adapt in an era of continual change and complexity."
- Deborah Meehan and Claire Reinelt

Gifted Leadership is characterized by ...

- **A sense of worthiness and self-acceptance.**
Leaders are internally vs. externally directed. They are vision- and values-driven – authentically living from deep principles and having the courage to take the initiative and stand up for what they believe. They practice listening deeply to others, honoring different perspectives, and being open, honest and transparent themselves.
- **Humility and being comfortable with not knowing.**
They check their egos at the door and have let go of the need to have all the answers. They practice mindfulness by 1) letting go of baggage from the past and expectations of the future and 2) being present "in the moment."
- **A strengths-based vs. a deficit-based orientation.**
They focus on "what's working?" and "what's possible?" vs. "what's wrong?" and "who's to blame?" They see the glass as half full, think more in terms of abundance vs. scarcity and demonstrate a spirit of generosity in interacting with other people.
- **Compassion and empathy for other people.**
They have the attitude of a servant leader, not a self-serving leader, and a focus on the greater good. They believe that other people are creative, resourceful, and whole.
- **A "Growth" vs. a "Fixed" mindset.**
Leaders demonstrate curiosity and a desire for continuous learning. They believe that intelligence is malleable, not static, and can be developed throughout their life. They readily embrace challenges, overcome obstacles, see effort as the path to mastery, and learn from criticism. They have abandoned the need to look good or smart.
- **Resilience and optimism in the face of adversity and unexpected circumstances.**
They practice gratitude in all circumstances (good or bad) and have the ability to reframe and see the big picture.