

Leading tomorrow- The leadership training programme

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Abstract

“Leadership is a challenge to be something more than average”. The common perception that formal leadership courses are for people with technical or managerial backgrounds was the norm and academic leadership was unheard of (at least for me and many of the participants).

If we want to succeed in leading any enterprise or pursue a meaningful goal we need to take others along with us in the journey and then we need to transform ourselves into leaders, from manager of emotions to generator of emotions, from a follower of standards to a setter of standards, from a realist to a dreamer and for this transition to occur we need to develop ourselves, understand ourselves and understand others, to go beyond the routine and develop personalities which would make us become “Change Agents”!!.

Thus leadership is actually about self-development through self-understanding, self-realisation, self-motivation and conflict management.

Keywords: MET (Medical education technology), Forming, Norming, Change agents.

Since times immemorial there is an innate need for all animals including humans to be lead and just as there is a strong desire to lead. We see it in a pride of lions, a pack of wild dogs, a pod of whales, a group of Hyenas, Wolves and the list can go on. And it is naturally understood that as a team or group, the results are better than any individual effort. It is the leader who sets the tone, moves ahead with conviction, is motivated and provides the motivation and the fuel to go after achieving what has been set out to be achieved.

History is witness and full of examples to learn from - Lord Krishna, Duryodhan, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Josep Stalin, Winston Churchill, A P J Abdul Kalam, Nelson Mandela, Narendra Modi, Donald Trump, Kim Jo Sun, so many from the business world, Dhirubhai Ambani, Ratan Tata, Bill Gates and the list can go on, we know so much about them, their achievements, their triumphs and failures. But have we tried looked beyond this to see what was it that they could motivate, persuade, submit, transform thoughts, invoke commitment so strong that men have died for them? They are all leaders different types, different styles with different objectives.

“Leadership is a challenge to be something more than average”. The common perception that formal leadership courses are for people with technical or managerial backgrounds was the norm and academic leadership was unheard of (at least for me and many of the participants). It was sometime in the month of February that my departmental clerk showed me a circular from the MET cell (if I recollect correctly) and it was about a leadership course in the hospital. And I was quite eager to take it up. In fact I signed up immediately. I was always interested in different courses that actually develop personalities and the

person as a whole. I had earlier, about 2 years back applied for a commonwealth fellowship on leadership called the “chevening fellowship” that focuses on creating leaders in different fields. I however could not qualify for that course and when this came up, I was keen to do it.

Before the actual course took off we were divided into groups of 5 participants each and asked to do Forming, Norming, Storming, Performing session with our group (with colleagues from the dental and physiotherapy colleges) – where people who don't know each other too well get into a group and form a team and then are expected to perform together synergistically. This was an important lesson in team building.

We were also introduced to the concept of personality styles and how it influences how we behave and react, that was really interesting and a mirror to look at who we actually are. Then during the first contact session we were asked about how people look at us and what are the positive traits we ourselves think we have. We also had to fill out a form called the ‘Wellness Quotient’.

So finally the course started on the 24th of July as the first contact session in the Inspire hall.

Following this we had 2 more contact sessions and a series of interesting on line discussions. One of the important learning lessons was the different styles of leadership and truthfully it was only after this online session that a lot of us understood that there can be different styles and how each one was operationally different from the other.

We learned how leaders think differently, how they act differently and how they react differently. The course took us on a journey that was exciting and enriching was well. We had online courses and this I

feel was necessary as it encouraged us to read from different sources regarding the online assignments and thereby increased our knowledge base. The online discussions were fun as they gave the flexibility of time and one could interact regularly and opine on others thought processes. We were given some real life scenarios and asked to think and reflect on how we would handle similar issues. We learned about different leadership styles and how they impact outcomes in varied situations.

There were case scenario with discussions about conflict management and coping with change. The ways directed to solve conflicts were so real to match with the situation that it could have really resolved this imaginary problem. Different types of conflicts were discussed and the leadership qualities to solve such an issues were also discussed.

- First session: Leadership qualities.
- Second: Leadership styles.
- Third: How to write and conceive Vision, Mission and set goals.
- Fourth: Motivation, delegation, decision makin
- Fifth: Conflict management and Change Management

One of the most interesting and challenging part of the course was "Identifying a sticky issue" - something that is going on either in the department, your home, family and you feel very strongly that it is wrong or needs to be changed. We all had to identify one such sticky issue in our everyday environment and then analyse it, see the roadblocks and then effect a change. We all brought out our sticky issues, discussed within our groups and developed a plan to deal with it effectively making sure that all stakeholders were going to benefit from the change.

Dr Suresh Chari (lead resource person) and along Dr Shubhada Gade, Dr Kalpana Date, Dr Anne Wilkinson, Dr Saeesh Deshpande, and Dr Tapasya Karemore were the resource persons for this course. The resource persons brought emotion to the centre stage of leadership training and emphasised that the complexity of higher order decision making not only requires the power of analysis but also the understanding of emotions.

If we want to succeed in leading any enterprise or pursue a meaningful goal we need to take others along with us in the journey and then we need to transform ourselves into leaders, from manager of emotions to generator of emotions, from a follower of standards to a setter of standards, from a realist to a dreamer and for this transition to occur we need to develop ourselves, understand ourselves and understand others, to go beyond the routine and develop personalities which would make us become "Change Agents"!!!

I understood that organisations cannot built leaders but what they should do is to be able to understand that

they need to identify people who have the potential to become change agents and help them develop and bring about a positive and desirable change. Thus leadership is actually about self-development through self-understanding, self-realisation, self-motivation and conflict management. I end with this quote:

Those who change after change- Survive
 Those who change with change- Succeed
 Those who bring about change- Lead

I am sure this course will add value to the good work that the MET department is already doing and I hope many more will come forward to become change agents to make this world a better place.

Best wishes
 Dr. Devashis Barick