Developing NextGen Leaders: Voicing Values and Getting Results

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If we could give a gift to the next generation, it would be to provide a safe place for them to give voice to their values at work. And it would be to celebrate the causes they care about so deeply, especially those causes that are genuinely greater than themselves. We've all seen the data: "Millennials have the highest expectations for brands to take a stand on values. Nearly seven in 10 US millennials actively consider company values when making a purchase, compared to 52% of US online adults."[i] But here's the heartfelt meaning behind the data: millennials are less willing to separate life from work. Interestingly, their ideals are impacting the rest of us.

m-2float: right;https://www.youtube.com/embed/NR94f_yAj3k?list=PLZ3khUxaJ_ug-ipJLHuFBk2QGzEmqkUmk400225 This megatrend is impacting the way we develop the next generation of leaders. Effective leaders in the future will not only drive amazing and innovative results, but they will do so by integrating and facilitating the values of their followers in productive and insightful ways. This means that our leadership development methods need to integrate these new values as well. We need to find a way to engage more people, more often in the genuine and fundamental acts of leadership throughout our organizations.

Research on leadership development suggests that all people, regardless of the level of their professional title, have trouble staying in "the leadership zone." At times we are "in the zone" and at other times we are not. Staying in this fundamental state of leadership means staying in an emotionally and psychologically elevated state where we are flourishing personally and providing positive influence to those around us.

It doesn't matter if you are the CEO or a front-line employee, we all can have meaningful influence and provide impactful leadership. There are certain times when we all risen to the occasion in exceptional or unexpected ways. We can look back and think of times when we were at our best or when we may have been in a "moment of greatness."[ii] But the question is, "Why do some leaders stay in the leadership zone more often, create more value, have more impact, and inspire better results?"

Given the values-driven focus that seems to be embedded in the next generation of leaders, the answer will increasingly lie in finding ways to productively encourage giving voice to a diversity of people throughout the organization, overcoming the polarization that can accompany discussions of values, uniting the passions that generate and underlie those values, and utilizing all of this toward getting results.

In his research[iii], Robert E. Quinn, University of Michigan professor, suggests there are four questions that influential people ask themselves to enter the "fundamental state of leadership" and stay there more often:

1. What result do I want to create?
2. Am I internally directed?
3. Am I externally open?
4. Am I other focused?

Asking these four questions can help anyone in an organization move from a typical or normal psychological state into an elevated state of leadership. "In the normal state people tend to stay within their comfort zones and allow external forces to direct their behaviors and decisions. They lose moral influence and often rely on rational argument and the exercise of authority to bring about change…the result is usually unimaginative and incremental – and largely produces what already exists. To elevate the performance of others, we must elevate ourselves into the fundamental state of leadership."[iv]

In this installment of "Linking Theory + Practice," we will utilize these four questions as a framework for looking at balancing values-based and results-based theories on leadership development. We then provide an overview of the what's and how's for developing the next generation of leaders.

Special appreciation is given to G. James Lemoine, Chad A. Hartnell and Hannes Leroy for their recently published review of moral approaches to leadership[v], and to Mary C. Gentile for providing insights on values-driven leadership development during a recent personal interview and in her article entitled, "Values-driven leadership development: Where we have been and where we could go."[vi]

Three Forms of Moral Leadership

In the past, many have been told to leave their personal values at home and even organizational scholars have argued that the moral side of leadership should not be brought into the professional setting. But given the scandals that continue to discredit CEOs, financial managers, celebrities, politicians and other leaders, it is now widely understood that there is an important ethical component that impacts effective leadership overall. James Lemoine and his colleagues argue that "the moral nature of leaders is now seen by many as not only necessary for the good of society but also essential for sustainable organizational success."[vii]

Lemoine, et al., recently published a study summarizing what we have learned from the past several decades of research on moral leadership. In their review of over 300 articles, they found three distinctive streams of research regarding moral leadership: ethical leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership.

These findings have important implications for leadership development programs. AOM Insights[viii] offers the following summary of the differences between the three forms of moral leadership:

"*Ethical Leadership (A focus on Compliance with Normative Standards).* Ethical leaders model prevailing norms and standards of their organization and culture and enforce compliance with these standards among employees. Ethical leaders act as moral role models and suppress corrupt acts, such as accepting bribes and selling confidential information. 'Of the three, this is the one that's most strongly getting people to do what they're supposed to, not embarrassing the organization, avoiding scandals, lawsuits, and negative publicity,' Lemoine said. 'I'd expect it to have the strongest relationship with preventing harassment and doing things the right way.'"

"*Servant Leadership (A Focus on Multiple Stakeholders).* In contrast, servant lThreaders are very concerned with outcomes. They focus on how others are helped or harmed by their actions and try to lead organizations to better performance in the interest of the public good. 'Servant leaders put their employees first, but also look out for other stakeholders, such as customers, partners, vendors, and even their communities,' Lemoine said. 'Of the three, this is the only form of moral leadership that would be involved in volunteerism.' As examples of servant leaders, Lemoine cited Jimmy Carter; Herb Kelleher, former CEO of Southwest Airlines; and former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, known for offering employees stock ownership and free college."

Authentic Leadership (A Focus on Self-Awareness and Moral Self-Concordance). Authentic leaders are fundamentally fair, honest, and wise. They are highly self-aware, understanding their own strengths and weaknesses, and strive to develop their employees and help them understand themselves. They make decisions based on their own moral compass, rather than on other people's opinions of ethics. 'The authentic leader has the moral courage to do what he or she feels is right,' Lemoine said. 'They lead by example to encourage others to be the best that they can be.' Lemoine cited war hero and U.S. Senator John McCain as an example, "for his maverick mentality and willingness to buck the tradition of always standing with your party. Most of us can think of a similar leader who came into a company and changed everything, doing what they felt was right. Sometimes they did the unexpected, sometimes they broke the rules, and sometimes it may not have looked like they were doing the best thing for customers or employees in the short term. But they felt it was right."

Figure 1 - Three Forms of Moral Leadership[ix]
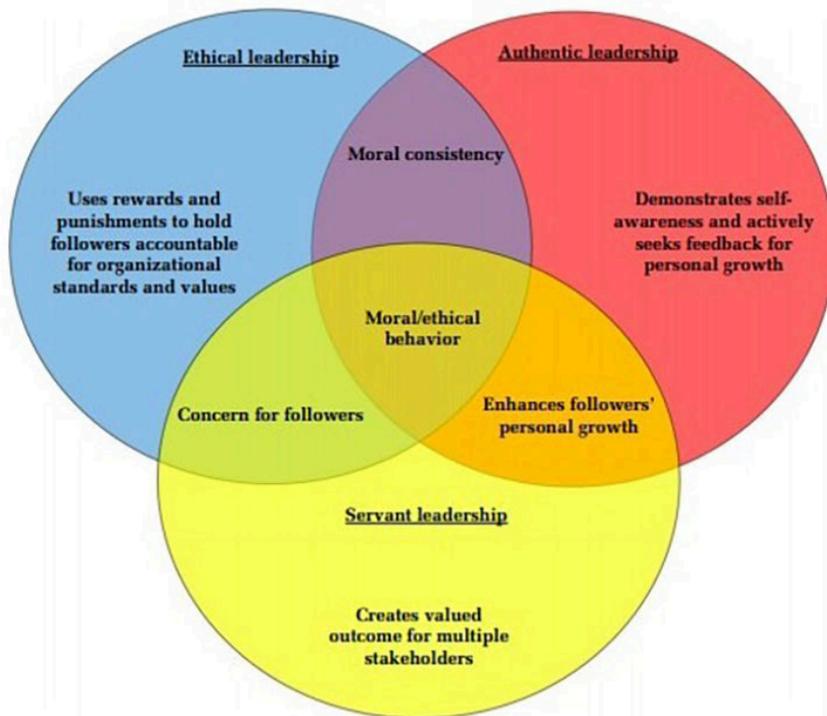
In summary, "Lemoine compared their differences to those of the main characters in the original *Star Trek* television series. 'Mr. Spock was the ethical leader, always referring to Starfleet norms and regulations, Bones [the ship's doctor] was the servant leader, trying to take care of people. Captain Kirk was the authentic leader. He would listen to everyone, but wouldn't necessarily do what the rules said, or what people expected, or even what would make the most people happy. He did what he felt in his gut was right.'"

Values-Driven Leadership Development

For those of us who have been involved in business ethics training, we likely encountered an instructor describing scenarios where good leaders went bad. The trainers would typically set up the situation where there was an ethical dilemma. They would then have class participants discuss various alternatives and finally show the slippery slope that led to the fall and eventual firing (and potential imprisonment) of a corporate leader.

The purpose of the training was to expose students and employees to the typical ethical pitfalls that they may encounter during their career in hopes that those same mistakes could be avoided. In addition, this type of training would typically involve various philosophical reasoning models. These models would then be used to help students analyze the situation and hopefully make the right choices. In sum, we have historically been trying to develop ethical leaders by teaching awareness and analysis. Unfortunately, we've found that awareness and analysis may be necessary, but are not sufficient.

In her groundbreaking work on values-driven leadership development, Mary C. Gentile has flipped this kind of training upside down during her work at the Harvard Business School. The sad truth is, even though many business schools and MBA programs added ethics courses to the curriculum in the wake of the Enron scandals and the great recession, there is little evidence that these types of courses have had meaningful impacts.

Dr. Gentile noticed that students in MBA programs tended to fall under a bell curve, where a minority of students were either on the "ethical idealist" tail or the "opportunist" tail. Our ethical training had been focused on those few people who we assumed needed help in distinguishing right from wrong in an organizational setting. But she concluded that the vast majority (for example most MBA students under the bell curve) were honest pragmatists. These pragmatists had less

of a problem knowing right from wrong, than they did implementing or putting into action what they felt was right in the somewhat messy, real world of business.

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To make the point she states, "In my experience working with faculty over the past 20-plus years, one of the sometimes stated and sometimes unstated assumptions is that when it comes to ethics and values, business school students are a tough audience. Their 'meter is running,' so to speak, and they are an action-oriented group whose members are not drawn to the idea of 'thou shalt not.' They want to build things—careers, enterprises, markets—and are not likely to appreciate a lot of attention to topics that seem to be all about constraints on action, especially when often they do not see those constraints operating effectively in the so-called real world of business."[x]

Dr. Gentile proposes that we flip the question in value-based leadership development from, "What is right?" to "How do we get the right thing done?" The assumption is not that we need to help develop leaders' moral compasses, the assumption is that we need to help leaders *implement* their values even when the pressures of business or the prevailing culture may counter getting the right thing done. Her leadership development methodology includes thought experiments and rehearsals to help leaders find ways to give voice to their values in the work environment. This development methodology is what she calls "Giving Voice to Values" or GVV.

Giving Voice to Values is particularly apropos given the values-based ideals of the next generation of leaders. Dr. Gentile states, "These are folks to whom we can say that GVV's focus upon action will provide the skills, tools, insights, and, importantly, the practice ("rehearsal") to better prepare them for effectiveness and success in their effort to be who they already want to be, at their best. In other words, GVV does not take a persuasive or a preaching stance, but an enabling one. The intent is to work with their best impulses…, rather than to work against their worst."[xi] Table 1 summarizes the key elements of values-driven leadership development under the flipped assumptions of GVV.

Table 1 - GVV Values-Driven Leadership Development[xii]

Reframing	Traditional Approach	GVV Approach
Different question	What is the right thing to do in a particular situation?	Once we know what we think is right, how can we get it done?
Different problem focus	It's the "gray" issues where it's just not clear what the right thing to do may be.	It's the so-called "black and white" issues where we know what we think is right but don't know how to get it done.
The "thought experiment"	Persuasion and preaching (thou shalt not)	Asking "what if" you wanted to act on your values; issuing an invitation to create an effective ethical action plan
The importance of rehearsal	Intellectual exercise of analysis only (learn to act)	Voicing those scripts and action plans, out loud, in front of peers (act to learn)
Different type of case study	Long description focusing on senior manager or CEO; conclude with question of what is the right thing to do	Briefer with protagonist at all levels; conclude with question of how to get the right thing done
Prescripting and implementation	Focus on analysis for decision making	Focus on scripting a workable alternative

Reframing	Traditional Approach	GVV Approach
Different use of research	Knowledge of heuristics and biases to help you recognize them and hopefully avoid them	Knowledge of heuristics and biases enables you to name them and appeal to them, in order to help people view the "ethical" position as more feasible and attractive
Role play flip	Argue for an "ethical" position in the face of resistance from another—the "adversarial role play"	Work as a team, to create the most feasible, credible script and action plan (peer coaching exercise)—the "collaborative peer-coaching role play"

The 4 Fundamentals of NextGen Leadership

How does a leader get the right thing done? And how do we structure our leadership development programs to create leaders who can effectively get the right things done in the world of work? These questions inherently focus on two important components: giving voice to values and getting things done.

The next generation of leadership development programs will offer a sound training strategy that honors both "voicing values and getting results." Considering Quinn's four leadership questions, Lemoine's three types of moral leadership, and Gentile's values-driven leadership methodology, we recommend the following strategy for developing the next generation of leaders.

1. *Results-based Leadership.* Be clear about bottom-line results. Focus on the question, "What result do I want to create?" Bottom-line results need to include multiple factors such as people, place, profit, planet, prosperity, values. But ultimately, leaders create results by focusing on and being clear about the end goal. Specifically, what are you trying to create now and what is your vision long-term?
2. *Authentic Leadership.* Be clear about what you value. Focus on the question, "Am I internally directed?" The best leaders overcome their hierarchically-driven world and are intrinsically guided. They have a deeper understanding of themselves and have a well-developed awareness of their internal values. What is your passion and what are your strengths? In the end, what do you care most deeply about?
3. *Servant Leadership.* Be clear about those who you intend to serve. Focus on the question, "Am I other focused?" The most basic defining characteristic of leadership is that it inspires followership. Followers eventually figure out if you are mostly interested in aggrandizing yourself versus leading them toward a greater cause that will make a positive difference in the world. Check your motives. Think how you can block and tackle for those around you. Decide how you fundamentally want to serve and impact stakeholders in the long term.
4. *Adaptive Leadership.* Be clear about your strategy for reinventing yourself. Focus on the question, "Am I externally open?" Consider the following, "Being closed to external stimuli has the benefit of keeping us on task, but it also allows us to ignore signals that suggest a need for change…Asking ourselves whether we're externally open shifts our focus from controlling our environment to learning from it and helps us recognize the need for change."[xiii] How do you react to feedback? How do you adapt and learn when you sense that your world is changing?

In Conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?

The next generation is no longer willing to leave their personal values out of the work place. Recognizing this, effective leaders of the future will be great at getting results *and* they will be champions of helping others voice their values at work in productive ways.

Given the values-driven focus of the next generation of leaders, we need to find ways to productively encourage giving voice to a diversity of people throughout the organization, overcoming the polarization that can accompany discussions of values, uniting the passions that generate and underlie those values, and utilizing all of this toward getting results.

Developing the next generation of leaders will require us to rethink our LDPs in ways that better incorporate values-based leadership development. We will find a ways to engage more people, more often in the genuine and fundamental acts of leadership within our organizations.

The best leaders will lead by harnessing this moral influence. They will elevate the performance of others by elevating and adapting themselves through a focus on being authentic, bringing their whole selves (including their values) to work, and by genuinely focusing on causes that are greater than themselves. This is the strategy for getting long-term results in a world where the next generation is finding its voice and giving voice to values.

[i] Lai, A. (2018). Millennials Call for Values-Driven Companies. *Forbes*. May 23.

[ii] Quinn, R. E. (2005). Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*: June/July

[iii] Quinn, R. E. (2005). Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*: June/July

[iv] Quinn, R. E. (2005). Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*: June/July

[v] Lemoine, G.J., Hartnell C.A., Leroy H. (2019). Taking stock of moral approaches to leadership: An integrative review of ethical, authentic, and servant leadership. *Academy of Management Annals* (13) 1.

[vi] Gentile, M.C. (2012). Values-driven leadership development: Where we have been and where we could go. *Organization Management Journal* (9) 3.

[vii] Lemoine, G.J., Hartnell C.A., Leroy H. (2019). Taking stock of moral approaches to leadership: An integrative review of ethical, authentic, and servant leadership. *Academy of Management Annals* (13) 1.

[viii] https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/annals.2016.0121.summary

[ix] Lemoine, G.J., Hartnell C.A., Leroy H. (2019). Taking stock of moral approaches to leadership: An integrative review of ethical, authentic, and servant leadership. *Academy of Management Annals* (13) 1.

[x] Gentile, M.C. (2012). Values-driven leadership development: Where we have been and where we could go. *Organization Management Journal* (9) 3.

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[xiii] Quinn, R. E. (2005). Moments of Greatness: Entering the Fundamental State of Leadership. *Harvard Business Review*: June/July