**Leadership - Stories, Illustrations, and Funnies**

**A C-suite clash of the sexes: Are women better managers than men? asked The Economist. Some management scholars think so. Two widely cited McKinsey studies found that women show several important leadership behaviors more often than their male counterparts do, including people development, setting expectations and rewards, and participative decision making. Women are also claimed to be better at "androgynous" management, a style that combines supposedly male and female characteristics. American companies with women CEOs lay off significantly fewer workers than those run by men, and donate more to charity. Dig deeper, though, and the picture isn't so simple. First, lumping all female bosses together obscures their individual differences. Second, both men and women are able to adapt their leadership styles to different circumstances. A 2013 study in Norway, a leader in female-friendly corporate policies, found no difference in leadership styles between the sexes. Finally, further research has cast doubt on claims that women leaders improve a business's performance. Those arguing the superiority of female leadership "may have the best intentions," but it's "politically correct hokum." We need to pick leaders solely on individual merit. "Anything else is just prejudice in disguise." *(The Week magazine, June 19, 2015)***

**The man says to Blondie: “I’m going to go to a seminar on corporate leadership. The featured speaker is leading a discussion on how to create a relaxed atmosphere in the workplace – but I’m going anyway.” (*Dean Young, in Blondie comic strip)***

**People in positions of authority have to find fault with their associates from time to time. It’s part of the job of leadership to help people recognize how they can improve. But much as the job needs doing, it’s also important to know how to do it correctly. The reason is obvious. Most of us resent being told that our work may need improving – especially if the person who does the criticizing is direct, tactless, and forceful. Harsh criticism can hurt morale, damage egos, and sometimes create lasting resentment. How, then, should you go about it? In the first place, be sure of your facts. Be certain that you’re not making a mountain out of a molehill. If the mistake is important and has upset you, cool off first. Let things settle down a bit so you don’t say things you’ll be sorry for later. Pick your time carefully. It can be very upsetting to a person to be censured just before tackling an important piece of work. And, of course, always discuss the situation in private. No one likes to be criticized in front of others, especially fellow workers. Ask questions first – don’t accuse. Be sure people have a chance to state their side of the case first before you blame anyone. If they know they’re at fault, they may admit it willingly. That makes the situation easier all the way around. Before you criticize, let people know you appreciate some of the good things they’ve done. They will accept your criticism much more gracefully if you do. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Effective leaders know that they get the best efforts out of people by working with them . . . by helping them to do their best . . . by showing them how to be more productive. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**General Eisenhower used to demonstrate the art of leadership with a simple piece of string. He’d put it on a table and say: Pull it and it’ll follow wherever you wish. Push it and it will go nowhere at all. It’s just that way when it comes to leading people. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Only 13 percent of top executives at big companies say that strong ethical values are the most important leadership trait for CEOs, down from 20 percent in 2003. *(BusinessWeek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 16, 2005)***

**For many people, the word “failure” carries with it a sense of finality. But for the successful leader, failure is a beginning, the springboard to renewed efforts. Leaders simply don’t think about failure. This became clear to us after we had interviewed and studied 90 successful men and women – executives, Senators, coaches and others – for our book on leadership. Indeed, those who lead don’t even use the word, relying on such synonyms as “mistake,” “false start” and “setback.” *(Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus, in Reader’s Digest)***

**In a study of 90 leaders in business, politics, sports and the arts, many spoke of “false starts" but never of “failure." Disappointments spur greater resolve, growth or change. *(Charles A. Garfield, in Reader's Digest)***

**There go the people. I must follow them. I am their leader. *(Alexandre Ledru Rollin)***

**Ordinary leaders believe governing is about meetings, conferences, phone calls, rules and decisions. Extraordinary leaders know it is about a higher calling to the people. *(Ken Adelman, Tribune Media Services)***

**Do jerks make better leaders? In business today, it often pays to be a jerk, said Geoffrey Nunberg. The success of Michael Eisner, Larry Ellison, and Martha Stewart – not to mention Donald Trump – suggests that “a swollen ego and indifference to the feelings of others” can work wonders in the C-suite. Some bosses rationalize their bad behavior by insisting that their “underlings can’t appreciate their vision.” That template was cast by Gen. George S. Patton, who has inspired countless books on leadership. A brilliant tactician widely known as “an abusive jerk,” Patton insulted subordinates out of the firm belief that it was “for their own good.” Steve Jobs displayed a similar “capacity for abusiveness and petulance,” maintaining that cruel criticism inspires employees to live up to their potential. In reality, being a jerk is not an essential quality of the modern business titan: “The leadership shelves are brimming with wisdom drawn” from nice guys like Gandhi. But in an age when “people acting like jerks to one another has become a reliable business model for reality TV, talk radio, and cable “news,” abusive types inevitably become the leaders “whose names we’re most likely to know.” *(The Week magazine, September 21, 2012)***

**How far would Moses have gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he had taken a poll in the land of Israel? What would have happened to the Reformation if Martin Luther had taken a poll? It isn’t polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong and leadership. *(Harry S Truman)***

**James Autrey, in his book For Love and Profit, credits one of his staff members with teaching him a key leadership principle: the presumption of goodwill. He states that he watched her bring calm to warring parties and develop creative solutions to problems between people by opening her meetings with this sentence: “Now, let’s presume that everyone here has goodwill toward each other, and proceed from there.” *(Laurie Beth Jones, in Jesus, CEO, p. 268)***

**“Leadership, it turns out, is a team sport,” said Stefan Stern in the Financial Times. Investors and business analysts tend to attribute every corporate triumph or setback to the skills or incompetence of a single leader. But “there is new evidence that it is top teams rather than top bosses that matter most.” A study from British management consultant Cognosis found that while CEOs may formulate strategy, putting that strategy into operation depends on “what senior executives succeed in conveying to the rest of the organization.” That makes it imperative for CEOs to assemble a top team that can get the message out to the troops and energize them. The best teams, Cognosis found, combine the talents of four distinct personality types – “those who are predominately creative, collaborative, rational, or practical.” But in the real world, few CEOs actually manage to yoke those disparate types together. More often, teams consist of “people who have got on in their careers by trying to be as much like the boss as possible.” Such teams may gratify the boss’ ego, but they might not get the job done. *(The Week magazine, June 13, 2008)***

**Stop calling women "bossy": "Call it the other B-word," said Sheryl Sandberg and Anna Marie Chavez. Despite growing up with vastly different backgrounds, we both heard the same put-down as kids: "You're bossy." And whether it is said directly or simply implied, girls today get the same message: "Keep your voices down. Don't raise your hand too much. Don't lead." Words have meaning, and even subtle messages can have an immense impact on childhood aspirations. Studies have shown that by middle school, girls have less interest in leadership roles than boys do. In the catalog of priorities presented to girls, being seen as "competent" and "independent" just doesn't stack up against being "popular." And terms like bossy are just the beginning. "As girls mature, the words may change, but their meaning and impact remain the same." Bossy becomes "aggressive," "angry," "shrill," and "overly ambitious." This kind of gendered speech -- and the stereotypes that come with it -- "become self-fulfilling prophecies," undermining girls' ability to see themselves as leaders and discouraging the very traits that are meant to level the playing field. That's ironic, seeing that "so-called bossy women make great leaders." So let's ban "She's bossy." Instead, let's try, "She has executive leadership skills." *(The Week magazine, March 21, 2014)***

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