



Impoverished Leadership:

Recognition and Restitution

IMPOVERISHED LEADERSHIP: RECOGNITION AND RESTITUTION

GOALS

1. Differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate leadership behaviors.
2. Recognize impoverished leadership behaviors.
3. Differentiate behaviors that potentially can result in legal proceedings.
4. Identify selective communication as a possible act of discrimination.
5. Incorporate a positive attitude, commitment tenacity, and leadership predictability into personal leadership behaviors.

KEY CONCEPTS FOR APPLICATION

1. Leadership Impoverishment
2. Evidence of Leadership Impoverishment
3. Role of Attitude in Impoverishment
4. Role of Tenacity in Impoverishment
5. Role of Predictability in Impoverishment Reversal
6. Discrimination and Impoverishment

WHAT IS IMPOVERISHED LEADERSHIP?

The general meaning of impoverishment is to be poor in *quality and productivity*. Therefore, as a leader to **not** respond in a manner that is in keeping with an adequate and appropriate response to an employee's needs or concerns puts the leader within the realm of impoverishment. The failure to act upon an employee's request and/or information can become the undoing of a leader. Thus, is the evidence of the lack of quality and productivity. Impoverishment is another word, also, for incompetent!

Competency and skilled leadership is researched to be acquired by the time a person is a young adult.

EVIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP IMPOVERISHMENT

Where many times leaders do respond and reward employees and customers in a positive way, there have been times when *negative* behavior and attitude is evident, including (but not limited to):

1. Incoming phone calls are not transferred
2. Some phone calls are never answered or returned
3. Behavior is curt, rude, and sounding angry

4. Schedules are changed at the last minute to accommodate only company needs
5. Untimely response to a consumer's needs, concerns, suggestions, or requests
6. Environment is not conducive to employee or consumer comfort
7. Inability and unwillingness to answer appropriate questions
8. Insensitivity to employees and consumer's feelings and requests
9. Negative attitudes that tell others that we choose not to listen or respond
10. Employment termination without consideration of helpful direction, warning and/or due process

Archie Manning (previous AFL quarterback and current outstanding leader) stated on March 20, 2014 in Billings, Montana at a well-attended function: "No obstacle is so tough that it can't be overcome by good leadership." All leaders can overcome these obstacles with no impoverishment.

This document reinforces the fact that to know a "good leader and good leadership" you first must recognize "good" as well as "bad" leadership. That is the dichotomy of critical thinking!

ATTITUDE AND ITS ROLE IN IMPOVERISHMENT

An attitude (negative or positive) offers the possibility of an exchange with an employee or a consumer. The term "attitude" means nothing unless it is clarified whether that attitude is negative or positive. A positive attitude moves a person toward a positive outcome. It provides a happy and productive environment. Sure—all employees will have negative behaviors and feelings, at times. However, that does not mean those negative feelings or behaviors should be imposed on others. A leader recognizes positive attitudes and rewards those positive attitudes accordingly. Impoverished attitudes are evidenced in leaders that are passively aggressive, therefore, do nothing to improve a negative situation.

Charles R. Swindoll reminds us that we are human beings and often have negative attitudes, however,

"The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes."

Walter D. Wintle reinforced attitudes in his comments:

"If you think you are beaten, you are. If you think you dare not, you don't. If you think you'll lose, you're lost. For out in the world we find, success is all in the state of mind. If you think you're outclassed, you are. You've got to think high to rise. You've got to be sure of yourself before you can ever win a prize. Life's battles don't always go to

the stronger or faster person, but sooner or later the one who wins is the one who thinks he can.”

The leader faces personal attitudinal adversities—it is true! The question is: How will you respond to such adversities and challenges? Better still, the question is not what you will do when you have these adversities, but will you be bitter, or will you be *better*? This is a challenging test for all leaders as they attempt to maintain an excellent attitude for the purpose of getting jobs done. Impoverishment is when bitterness is present. Being *better in attitude* requires leadership strength, however, it is the hallmark of great leadership!

TENACITY—RESTITUTION FOR IMPOVERISHED LEADERSHIP

The word “tenacity” means keeping a firm hold on something. This term represents conviction and a belief in something that is a part of your world. Restitution is an attempt to make right what could be evidence of impoverishment. It is known that positive tenacity can help make a positive move toward leadership improvement. Tenacity is a positive effort in personal behavior that shows a belief in oneself and the conviction to perform accordingly.

In 1930, there was a lady who was positively tenacious. She argued with her husband frequently. He was a railroad man—the engineer on a train on a rail line at the upper part of Montana known as the “highline.” At times, she would have a heated argument with him. She was always determined to win to make things better! Her failure to win a heated argument with her husband resulted in the following.

In her determined (tenacious) way, she would go to each crossing along his route and shout her views and shake her fist at him when the engine of the train passed. He would just lean out the window, smile, and wave. On and on she would go for miles, stopping at each crossing in an effort to get his attention and to be heard.

Now—there is a woman of with a tenacious heart! She was positively determined, even while being refuted again and again. She “stuck to her guns” (so to speak). She set an example of always trying and always risking for the betterment of being heard about what she believed to be important. Not only was she tenacious, she believed in her cause supported by a positive attitude.

Leaders should never give up on what is right and what they believe about the need for excellence. We should be willing to go to each crossing (as the story goes) to remind other “engineers/leaders” that we are always there for a worthy cause—that positive resolution of leader impoverishment is a worthwhile goal.

Tenacity is present when you dare to stand firm on commitments. Impoverishment is when weakness of commitment is present. Make firm commitments and be willing to uphold your rightful beliefs!

PREDICTABILITY—RESTITUTION FOR IMPOVERISHED LEADERSHIP

The term predictability means that you can tell or know something in advance. Different from intuition, which is independent of a reasoning process, predictability can be more literally linked through conscious and subconscious recognition of past observations and behaviors of another person—in this case, the leader. Restitution of impoverished leadership is an attempt to meet promises of leadership intentions. To be positively predictable increases trust. Confidence in the leadership is maximized when the future is predictable. Predictability in leadership is good only if there is *minimal* change in what is *known* to be predictable leadership behavior.

For employees experiencing a leader with predictable behavior, it can permit a sense of increased security. It provides a comfort zone of information and behavior. For the employee, there is less guessing about outcomes and there is no constant reprogramming of employee behavior to keep on an even keel with the leader's expectations. There is a feeling of more freedom by employees regarding their choice of acceptable behavior because they know expectations and limitations.

Facility/organizational policies help with acceptable limits of behavior. A leader with predictability offers a prevailing sense of security along with the policies of the facility/organization.

A true leader is known to be predictable and, therefore, not impoverished. The leader has already determined what works for him/her. There is accompanying personal pride, stability, comfort, and a sense of personal control and power exhibited by the leader. There has been a decision by the leader to act and think in a certain way-- even though the leader might be tempted to be pushed or pulled by emotion or another person's coercion. Through making a personal and conscious determination of exhibiting predictability, there is increased control of employees. It is interesting that predictability of *leaders* will promote positive predictability by *employees*. No confusion exists. Expectations are usually met. Everyone knows their predictable job. Everyone performs within their expectations. Talk about how to increase leadership power within a facility/organization! WOW!

To be a "great" leader, you *do not* need to be right, perfect, or even consistently predictable all of the time—just right, perfect, and predictable *most of the time*. Leaders are human! Even Einstein was known to make calculation mistakes 20% of the time—so they say!

NONDISCRIMINATION—RESTITUTION FOR IMPOVERISHED LEADERSHIP

To discriminate in the workplace means that you, as a leader, are making a distinction in favor of or against another person. This is often done inadvertently in our minds and sometimes seen in our behavior every day. Mainly, discrimination is a learned behavior. Nowadays, particularly, every leader must conscientiously be aware of these untoward and unacceptable thoughts, words, and behaviors in making leadership choices. It is imperative that all leaders understand the Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE) requirements. (Read document on introduction to the hiring process by this author.)

Nondiscriminatory conversation should be built on the ability to listen carefully. Respond to consumers on the telephone in a timely manner, regardless of the complaint or the reason for the telephone call. Make comments that represent a caring attitude. Such as, "It must be very difficult to-----!"

Try hard not to ask very many questions that can be answered by “yes” or “no.” Let the consumer talk—that is why he/she called. Pick up on key words and repeat those key words to help the consumer clarify what the exact problem might be. Behavior is the same—just watch what you see along with the voice inflexions and tone of the conversation. Do not discriminate by assuming a person is right or wrong in what they say or the accompanying body language. *In their mind they are right.*

Impoverished leadership dismisses language and behavior. Your assumption might be that the leader is always the one that is right---not so! Be powerful by putting the entire picture together and acknowledging what you hear and/or the combination of seeing and hearing. The ability to de-escalate another person’s frustration and anger is POWERFUL! (Read document on communication by this author.)

LAST THOUGHTS

To be an excellent leader, you must:

Think like a leader

Act like a leader

Be a leader

Teach all staff to be leaders

*Successful leaders see the opportunities in every *difficulty* rather than the difficulty in every opportunity.” (Reed Markham)

*It is difficult (I did not say impossible) to unlearn impoverished leadership behaviors as an adult. Powerful epiphany, I think!

*SHH—Now you know the powerful concept (impoverishment) that gives a reason for the unfortunate leadership happenings and outcomes.

*SHH—Now you have secrets of leadership power!

SUGGESTED READINGS (Wikipedia)

Manning, (Elisha Archibald Manning III) (1949) A former American football quarterback who played professionally for 13 seasons in the National Football League (NFL). *Overcoming with Good Leadership.*

Wintle, (late nineteenth century) Poem called, *Thinking.*

Swindall (1934) Poem about, *If You Think You Are Beaten, You Are!*

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