

THE DRUCKARIAN LEADER

It was an explosion of thoughts on this cold evening, as I sat at my study table, unable to pen down my ken. Perhaps, preventing a scenario whereby I express strong opinions based on little or no knowledge on this topic is a step towards critical thinking.

As I sat at the table, I began to Ponder on the words of Peter Straub concerning management and leadership, when he said:

“If the 20th century was called the century of management, then the 21st century should be proclaimed the century of Leadership.”¹

But as a newly enrolled student of Peter F. Drucker, it is imperative that I successfully engage us with his human-oriented approach to issues and decision making processes.

Drucker grew up in a Liberal Lutheran Protestant home, and whether or not this contributed to his in-depth views and critical thoughts on issues is hard to say, but born to a Doctor for a father, and a lawyer for a mother, in addition to being bred in an environment where Philosophers, Economists, Nobel prize winners, Jurists, Sociologists some of which would include- Joseph Alois Schumpeter, Hayek Friedrich, Ludwig von mises, Hans Kelsen, constantly met to deliberate on ideas sure had an effect on his views on human development and human management.²

An effective leader in my view is that individual whom when in crisis is able to effectively garner resources and address issues after thorough considerations .He is one who is able to lead diverse individuals successfully to achieve the required results. Regardless of the fact I did not get a chance to meet Drucker in person before I got I know who he was, he left me with a parting gift in the form of his in-depth views on the essence of an effective leader. Meaning despite his views on the importance of a manager in the operation of a business, he illuminated the place of Leader in this environment when he noted that _“Management is doing things right, but Leadership is doing the right things”_.³

THE DEFINITION

The leader is one who has acquired skills in diverse fields, a move which gives him an enablement to address issues from a different point of view. After attending a gymnasium, he (Drucker) went into cotton production, journalism, law, and even insurance, still he taught politics, philosophy and management,⁴ all of which I would want to believe, gave him an edge, helping him see things from a broader perspective when

addressing issues, and of course, it's a move considered in my part of the world as one which indicates lack of purpose. This makes me wonder about the concise definition of purpose in this light.

I live in an environment where little attention is being paid on the essence of leadership, still we use the word so much that it has become so much of a cliché .From community cooperative organizations, to religious sects, political structures, government parastatals and not to forget the various societies across the country going by different appellations, the word "Leader" has been restricted to a positional state rather than the responsibility it holds. This sole act initiates the lackadaisical attitude of the so called Leaders, and their drastic response to issues.

I will iterate my previous statement by saying that the leader is that individual whom when in crisis is able to effectively garner resources and address issues after thorough considerations and emphasize that the complete success of an entity is made possible by a determined leader.

THE DECISIONS

The 1977 takeover of Apple Inc. by Steve Jobs was a violent but much needed approach to resuscitate the almost crumbling corporation. Steve who was noted to have successfully lured John Sculley the then CEO of PepsiCo and initiator of the Pepsi challenge, a successful marketing strategy to compete for market shares with Coca-Cola to apply his marketing skills to the personal computer market,⁵ entered a power struggle with Sculley only later, which was triggered by the sales slump of the Macintosh by early 1985 and of effect led to Jobs leaving Apple, a company he helped found nine years ago.

With the exit of Job, several policies were successively put in place, all of which would explain the dire need of a leader and not a manager as Sculley was called to be. Apple was in desperate need of a visionary Leader and by the year 1977, Apple was not only a quarter to bankruptcy, but the status and reputation Apple had built over the years was sullied. With the return of Steve Jobs to the ailing company by 1976 and taking over the helm of affairs by the next year,⁶ Apple was immediately set on a path to redemption; one which made it become the world's first company to record a capitalization of \$1 trillion, and subsequently passed the \$1.3 trillion threshold in Dec. 2019.⁷

Now whether or not we would want to narrow down the influence of great leadership decisions to the business world, I would like to bring to our notice, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill's wartime speeches at a point where most distinguished leaders would have cowered .Taking over from Neville Chamberlain just a year into the second world war on the 10th of May 1940, Sir Churchill was a student of Plato, Adam Smith, Charles Darwin and Henry Hallam.⁸

During the war efforts, he was practically noted to be the right guy for the right time. He appointed persons into the cabinet, such of which he could trust.⁹ It was his extraordinary leadership in the Second World War that marked him out.¹⁰ He was able to

inspire a nervous and hesitant Britain at a point where all hopes seemed lost, that one of his speeches would be given before the famous battle of Britain:

“Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so hear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still stay”¹¹

A remarkable leader indeed in the person of Sir Winston Churchill. These were remarkable leaders of the twentieth century, but are we breeding the right kind of leaders this century really needs? That remains a question to be answered.

THE EXAMPLES

Critically speaking, a leader is not just one who takes responsibility of a set of persons, but one who set standards and values in a chosen field. A Plato (Philosophy), Socrates (Philosophy), Aristotle (Philosophy), Alexander the great (Military), Napoleon Bonaparte (Military), Leonardo da Vinci (Polymath), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Music), Pablo Picasso (Creative Arts), Marie Curie (Chemistry and Physics), Albert Einstein (Physics), Nikola Tesla (Physics), John. D. Rockefeller (Petroleum), Henry Ford the first (Automobiles), Winston Churchill (Politics), Steve Jobs (Computing), Bill Gates (Computing), Larry Page (Computing) and of course, Peter F. Drucker (Business Management).¹

These set of individuals were noted to be extraordinary in their line of work, wizards in their chosen fields. The Centuries in time past, have all been represented well and have produced results made possible by certain decisions only these men could have made. Decisions such of which are still the benchmark for success in their fields.

During these centuries, technology as it were, was on a micro scale, still, there emerged an impressive set of leaders who made it a duty to Influence their generation, only positively. The question shouldn't even be if this generation was producing effective leaders, the bone of contention should be if it was really producing leaders in the first instance. In fact, to be fair on the upcoming generation, what really has it gotten to offer?

While in Junior High, I saw a very bold sign on the wall of the school library beaming clearly three striking words “READERS ARE LEADERS”, and that immediately set me on a new course to self-efficacy, thus leading me on a path of self-development. Little did I know that reading was not just the key to attaining success, the kind of information one read was.

INFORMATION

¹ See <https://www.biographyonline.net.100-people-who-changed-the-world>.

In a complex society as the one we live in, where the right information is hard to discern from a load of literary contents-cum-expressions, and an age where everyone wants to pen down their thoughts or ideas, or even write a book without proper research, the quality of information available to the breed of leaders of this generation is greatly diluted. And if the centuries before this were threatened by plagues, wars and tyranny, then I can boldly say that this century is greatly threatened by false information bred by an exponential and aggressive increase in the amount of Internet users, unchecked article placements, even age graded sites and not terrorism which is only a secondary effect. According to a new pew internet project, it is revealed that 93% of Teen ages (12-17) go online as do 93% of Young Adults ages (18-29).¹²

If you ask an average Nigerian Youth what dreams he/she made 10 years back, you will be amazed by the ambitious ideas you would hear. But looking at their present state compared to their intentions years back, one would but only conclude that little is done if not negligible in preparing the emerging leaders of this generation for the task ahead. Yet I would not want to disregard the fact that unlike the 20th century, there is a tremendous increase in the exposure of our youths, only that it is not channeled towards developing and maximizing certain leadership skills, that which this generation needs.

How then do we instill and cultivate these needed skills such of which would enable this crop of emerging leaders make certain decisions worthy of calling them effective?

WHAT DOES DRUCKER SAY?

In his book: *Managing One's Self*, Drucker reveals that the first secret of effectiveness is to understand the people you work with and depend on, so that you can make use of their strengths; their ways of working; and their values.¹³ Whether this line of thought seems business oriented should not be the case study, but that Drucker tells us that the Effective Individual, is one that integrates Reason in order to achieve critical and productive results.

Now, anyone with an influence, coupled with a substantial amount of followers, can claim to be a leader, but the efficiency and effectiveness of what he sells depends on the knowledge-based approach to every step he/she takes and decisions he makes.

THE EFFECTIVENESS IN ME

I am currently in charge of a group of persons(or a cell) on my school campus, who have to pass through several weeks of training and discipleship in order to be granted an opportunity to serve considerably in the fellowship; and also, currently a student of the Computer Engineering discipline, perfection and precision is a key part of my values, this is not to say that it is generic for every student of the discipline, but that it is an essential skill, and these skills have come to effect the decisions I make even in the roles I take.

For some days back, I had got to make certain decisions and of course, the results would later prove whether the decisions I made were effective or not. Training a group of persons is not just about giving the orders, following the book or rather doing it as your predecessor did, just as a manager would, but that you passionately understand everyone from their stand-point of view, taking coherent steps in knowing certain information such of which would include: Religion, Temperament, Ideologies, Behavioral break points; all of which combined with thorough thinking helps that leader make not just effective decisions, but results that are efficient in the long run .But whether or not I can claim this feat, that I do not know, but that which I can attest to is that I am currently on the right track.

It is often said that serious issues require serious approaches, and coming from a country where 69% of the population live below the poverty line,¹⁴ and a bulk of the youths remain unemployed, such of which are expected to captain the almost sinking ship called Nigeria, most writers see essay contests as another way to make ends meet; rather than addressing issues as they were, they give opinions such of which is discerned that the judges would like to hear, forgetting that these judges are also part of the system. This of course limits the average writer in his quest for Ideas. This perversive sense of thoughts combined with the very illogical and inapplicable contests topics, breed our very youths in an environment of falsehood and bad judgment.

Since serious issues require serious approaches, it is only but right to say that critical decisions require critical thinking, this and every critical skills needed to exercise good judgment are scarce abilities to be found in the emerging generation. These of course can only be introduced if critical issues are brought out to be addressed and the emerging generation is given the opportunity to engage this issues, this I believe Drucker would say, and like a teacher of mine would always iterate: Brainstorm on the problem, and the solution would appear more feasible than it seems.

THE CONCLUSION

A Hitler's and Churchill's view and the ideologies each stood for during second world war, each being leaders of various school of thoughts in their own right is a subject to muse on, and specifically shows that values, culture and beliefs influences the decisions made, effecting aggressive results as a consequence.

The world is critically growing rapidly, still it is described as a global village. This explaining that now more than ever, the ideas and ideologies of diverse cultures and systems will come to interact and integrate, creating an environment where cross-

pollination of ways of thinking will change the way every individual sees the other as well as how the human approaches or relates with others regardless of race, color or religion.

For instance, the leader of a project group consisting of French, British, German, Qatari, and Japanese citizens, would want to put into consideration: Religion, Culture and a host of other personal values and etiquettes, all of which would greatly affect the collective views of each group member, before taking decisions.

This is not to say that blending across cultures and systems is a walkover, but as a statement reveals:

“Those who think they are crazy enough to change this world, are those that actually do.”

- Steve Jobs¹⁵

And I completely concur at least history records of this set of individuals.

As I drop my pen, only to continue on my quest to self-discovery, letting Drucker help with setting the pieces to completing the puzzle, I leave us with his words nudging me stronger than ever:

“Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; Leadership is defined by results and not attributes.”¹⁶

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