The Many Faces of Leadership

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So...just what IS leadership anyway?

- Getting the right things done
- Getting things done with & through others
- Telling others what to do
- Telling others what to do and how to do it
- Making decisions and directing action
- Motivating others to make decisions and take action on behalf of their own interests
- Taking primary responsibility for something

How we choose to practice leadership determines our effectiveness as a leader.

Lots of approaches to leadership

- Situational Leadership
- Power-based Leadership
- Transactional Leadership
- Transformational Leadership
- Servant Leadership
- Shared Leadership
- Laissez-faire Leadership
- Full-Range Leadership

Let's boil it down to two

- Directive Leadership: the leader provides primary direction for what gets done and perhaps even how. The focus of leadership is the leader, and the direction comes from the leader.
- Facilitative Leadership: the leader uses process to identify and get tasks done by involving and inviting others, incorporating their ideas, making decisions through consensus, and generally working with and through others and sharing power. The focus of leadership is distributed.

What kind(s) of leadership is likely to be *effective* given the leadership context?

- Strong, directive leadership?
- Collaborative, facilitative leadership?
- Certain types of leadership in certain types of situations?

What does the human environment call for?

- What are values or expectations of those you're being asked to lead? What kind of leadership are they used to or prefer? Is the sharing of leadership at some level an expectation?
- What has worked (and not worked) in the past, and why?
- What are the cultural/historical values, beliefs, and/or expectations around leadership within a neighborhood or organization? Lots of personal initiative, teamwork or collaboration, shared leadership, etc.
- What are the capabilities of those you're to lead? What do they need from you?

What's the nature of the leadership challenge?

- What tasks need to be done? Does the challenge require specialized knowledge and skills?
- What changes need to be made? Who will be affected, and how? (Note: this is a BIG issue!)
- Is there a lot of complexity involved?
- What are your strengths based upon the requirements of the leadership challenge?
- What are the strengths and capabilities of those you're being asked to lead?

What's the fit between who you are and the requirements of the leadership situation?

- Who am I, as a person and a leader?
- How flexible can I be as a leader, and where do I need to stretch?
- What do I need to get out of my investment as a leader?
- What relevant skills can I bring to the table?

A few insights and hard-earned lessons around the challenges of leadership.

• It isn't about you. In my experience, people generally don't want to be led (directed) as much as they want to be coached, supported, uplifted, and helped in ways that empower them and build their confidence and capability.

• They don't need you...you need them.
Leaders get their power from those they lead, not the other way around.

• Don't do it for the thanks you think people will or 'should' shower on you.

• Take a genuine interest in people, what their life/story is all about, what they're passionate about.

• Credit is infinitely divisible...there's enough for everybody.

• Effective leaders accumulate power by giving it away because there is considerable power in being trusted, asked, admired, and respected.

• Be straight and honest with people.

• Have, as an objective, the growth and development of others in the direction they want to go.

• Resolve conflicts and misunderstandings quickly and safely.

• Accomplishing things together empowers everyone and builds confidence.

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