

THE INNER PATH OF LEADERSHIP

Knowing (past), Understanding (present), Visioning (future)



ACE *the*
CASE



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Document Date: June 09, 2022

Paper #1



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THE INNER PATH OF LEADERSHIP

KNOWING (PAST) - UNDERSTANDING
(PRESENT) - VISIONING (FUTURE)



THE SPEECH IS DELIVERED TO THE FINALIST TEAMS OF 2022 IMA EUROPE STUDENT CASE COMPETITION IN ATHENS, ON 9TH APRIL

Hello, my name is Elias Kalyvas and I am excited to be here speaking to you, to the finalist teams, in this special event of the 2022 IMA Europe student case competition.

Also, I want to express my gratitude to IMA members and to say thanks to Bernardin Generalao for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this event.

My job is to help individuals to overcome their professional challenges and to guide them to succeed their goals, through the mentoring program which I have designed. Mentoring is a field that I discovered after 21 years of work experience in the Army, in different managerial positions. At the level of my studies, I have a degree in Greek Civilization, master's in history of Art, MBA in International Business, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Political Sciences. I write articles about history and philosophy. And, currently, I am writing a book about the mentoring.

Introduction

Considering my studies in history, art history and political philosophy, I have the tendency to approach the topics which are in my interests in a synthetic way, starting with the big picture view and seeing the connections that are creating and how the interactions between them are shaped. In this context I approached the terms **Leader** and **Leadership** in parallel from my professional and life experience.

That's why my presentation is gonna be little different and I mean that I don't want to present you theories about the different types and styles of leadership, which are too many and still updated, after all everyone can find this information, and I think you already know the most of them.

I don't say that they are don't have value, we need these theories, we need this knowledge, but when we have to examine matters that has to do with human attitude and behavior we need to see beyond the theories, we must see the nature of it. And the nature of words Leader and Leadership are deeply human, and they concern not only the management studies, but also philosophy, history, psychology, and sociology.



Through this synthetic approach I want to show you what is the essence of Leader and Leadership, so to make you think a little different and to challenge your mindset. To raise you questions which you are going to give the answers.

A statement

From my perspective this topic can outline in the following statement:

“As nature keeps hidden the gems and the miners must dig to find them, so the interpersonal skills are hidden, and someone must dig inside himself to find them. The road in this search is difficult but is the road to become someone a Leader”.

SO, LET'S BEGIN OUR SEARCH!

Leadership, leader

Leadership, leader, we're looking for someone with leadership skills, we're looking ways to become a leader or to develop our leadership skills, the word "leader" and its related words are in our daily vocabulary... in so many ways. In the provided by Google service **Google Trends** you can see the high percentages that the word Leader has but also the increasing percentages of the searching terms Leader meaning and Leadership meaning.

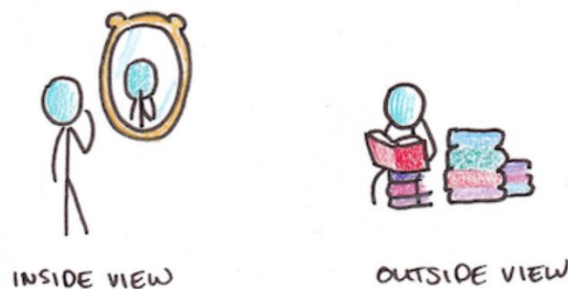
While the interest from the people is plenty and at the same time the information is widely open, almost unlimited I can say, and even the various offered training programs/or courses from organizations and universities on this topic we have the paradox of the leadership deficit. The lack of the leader is obvious not only in the world of business, is also a crystal-clear need in politics as well as in the most of our social systems.

AND I AM THINKING!

It is a buzz word? I believe yes, it is. But the thing is we don't need buzz words (trend words), we need to understand the meaning of the words. We need to take the no-buzzwords approach

Let me explain. And to say! This is a number list. Make sure you always check the Navigation Pane and Styles in a Word document for your better understanding of the template.

1. Leadership skills are important to every person, not only for the professional development but for the life itself.
2. These skills are not an educational knowledge (external knowledge) but are an inner knowledge (inner experience).
3. These skills are conquered in a continuous process. And that is because it is not given. As we live and grow up learn and see new things and meet new people, we discover again and again new elements about ourselves and the world.



The key point here is that the interpersonal skills is not like the kind of knowledge which someone can be taught. The receiving knowledge is divided in two categories:

- First is the external or objective knowledge, all the gained information from education and training.
- Second is the internal or subjective knowledge which someone acquires through studying its own self.

Of course, all the external knowledge can help to your search, but it is up to you to take the next step and start the journey to discover yourself, to understand the present time and control your position in it.

And one can ask. Why do I have to discover myself to become a leader?

Because Leadership is a state of mind. Leadership is not a position; it is a mindset. Leadership development is a mindset development. Mindset development is not a science rooted in analysis or a profession rooted in training. On the contrary, it is a practice, rooted in experience. We attain experience only when life happenings get well digested. To digest them thoroughly one needs to deeply reflect on what has happened to him/her within a given context in order to understand the real meaning of it.

FOR EXAMPLE

One of the gems that you shall search for is the element or elements that will develop the active listening skill, which is a crucial ability for a leader, so to make a better decision, to solve a problem and to establish strong relationships.

Focusing on the speaker

Active listening is the highest level of effective communication. That is the ability to focus completely on a speaker, understand their message, comprehend the information, and respond thoughtfully. An effective listener can understand what the speaker doesn't say observing all the expressions. Maybe it sounds easy, but it is not. Especially in a difficult discussion.

Most people when they are in a conversation, they are thinking what they might say when the speaker is done. Usually, they reflect their thoughts, emotions, biases, experience to the other person and the interpretation is wrong. **To be someone able to understand the others presuppose to recognize its own self.**

Understanding the deeper meaning of ourselves and the world around us is the essence of leadership. Unless the meaning is understood, leadership is mindless. To become a mindful person, one needs to raise self-awareness of the reality of things, become better aware of one's body, mind, and feelings,



overcome some of the delusions and discard some of the outdated beliefs and even values.

For that reason, one needs to develop a reflective mindset by exploring own feelings, emotions, beliefs, and behaviors. Such reflections can bring forward a number of contradictions into what leaders are expected to do and what their potential (positive and negative) impact can/should be.

The process of self-exploring/self-recognition is at the same time a process of understanding the present, in what is happening and why is happening and how the environment affects the thought, the actions and the emotions. Understanding the present time, we can set our position in it.

The present time

As we are still at the present time what characteristics, we can find that is interacting with us in different levels and define us?

We live in a synthetic and dynamic era because we are on the threshold of a new age (digital age), where artificial intelligence (AI) dominates and change human's habits, the way of thinking and in a wide perspective their daily life. In this context of reality, speed, information, and alternation are the main elements.

The transformations that are taking place due to the development of digital technology change the nature of communication, relationship, knowledge, education, and work.

And,

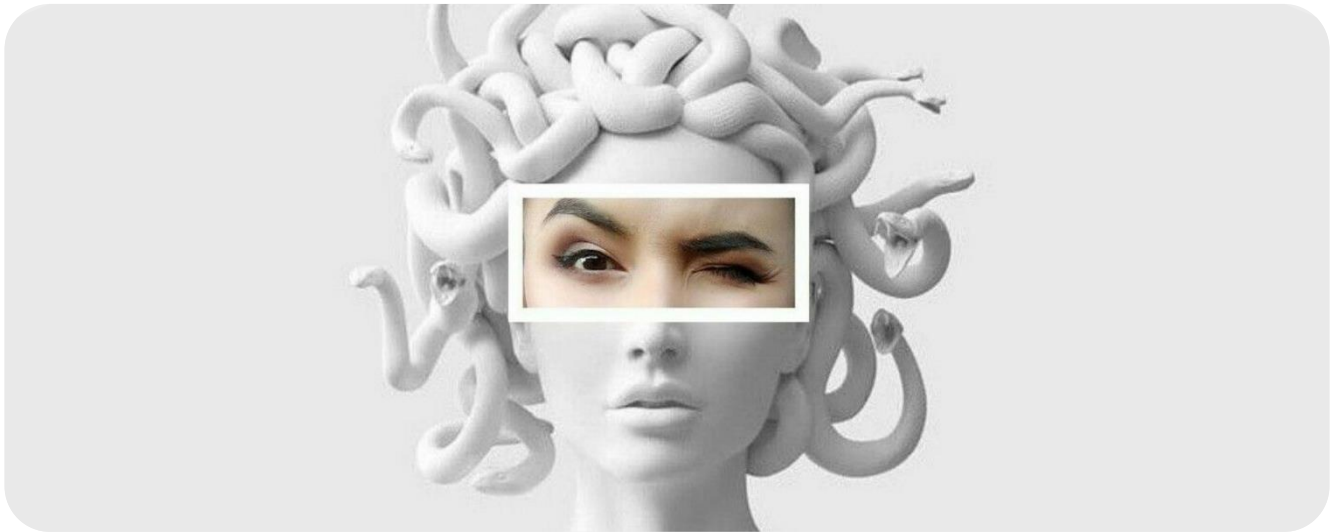
For the first time in history in today's world, an individual regardless of his origin, gender, social status and the level of the knowledge can have the chance to motivate thousands of people with only presenting his view, his own truth, or his story, through his digital life, digital existence.

And here we must deal with another paradox, that of the two realities existences, the digital and the real. My thought on this matter is that on the digital world the things are alternate in lighting fast mode without consequences and effort. Contrary in real life the alternation need time, effort and have consequences. As we keep trying to adjust our real life according to digital one the gap between **what we think we know and what we really know** is gonna grow.

Like the above example of active listening is very different to hear the words and to listen the story. Although you can see a hundred posts and opinions in different social platforms about the value of communication, very few people know how to communicate effectively.

“Here in Greece, we have the phrase “listen to see”. It is a common phrase which is using from the most Greeks in their conversations. Although everyone says it; when I talk with people and I ask them if they understand the meaning of it, they can't explain it, they don't know. And when I tell them that is very simple... because the meaning is: to see beyond of you... to understand... you must first listen. If you don't listen, you can't see. And usually the answer is: ah, I didn't ever think it in a such way. ”

Well, this cognitive gap in **what we think we know and what we really know**, as it is happening between the two existence realities, undermines our self-confidence, self-knowledge, confusing our emotions and disrupt us.



As I say: Welcome to the Post-modern world. This is the name of our time

According to sociologists David Jary & Julia Jary, post-modernity is seen as involving such features as a world of «flux, flow and fragmentation», without absolute values. Everything is in a continuous and dynamic move with a plurality of viewpoints. People don't believe in unique truths (scientific or historical), they don't see science and technology as the vehicles of human progress but as an instrument of established power. They don't accept grand narratives in social and political systems because the goal is to be connected to the here and now, and not planning for some long-term project.

In this environment of contradiction and sharp contrasts as the technology evolving the human more and more has the need to find his balance, his path, his orientation, his nature. And this need is obvious in every social system we act (in our families, communities, work). We are essentially looking for the highest level of the interpersonal abilities, the leadership skills. We need these skills in our daily life so to respond effectively in the complexity of our world and understand it.

Succeed your professional goals

Soon you are going to be on the job market, and I am sure you are already watching the changes and the requirements of today's business and the needs for the future. Besides of your knowledge in your field, your degrees, your master, and your certifications... to succeed your professional goals and to be valuable for your

companies you must have emotional intelligence, critical thinking, reasoning, creativity, innovation, and flexibility just to say the most significant.

So, it has been always so synthetic and demanding the world? The answer is no, it hasn't. In previous decades societies and business are focused on economic efficiency and productivity, guided by the rationalism and the pursuit of linear progress. For a young person this linear progress was to study, to get a good job with a good perspective and as the work had value itself would dedicate his life in the work. And this style of life was the accepted from society. People attained respectability through success at work. From the other side, the companies were focusing on the profit, controlling the performance, and rewarding the loyal and best employee.

But these values which don't exist anymore in postmodern days, are no longer useful. Because they cannot help understanding the world in which people live and the organizations in which people work. Now the companies must stay in connection with the societies and the physical environment through inclusive and diversity policies, having new HR processes and adopting in their strategies the CSR principles. The work environment is an ecosystem where all the members have value and participate in the company's development with an interactive way. The value now is the balance in the personal and work life.

In this context, leaders must develop the capability to understand the arising needs of societies and tailor their approach to human expectations. After all, anything that happens in society affects all its systems. So, they must use their authority to foster happiness through trust and caring. They must communicate the information effectively, be meaningful and give the opportunity to those around them to act and create. The leader now and in the future is a coach, serve a vision, a value. **Leadership is not an authority giving orders, is a responsibility which asks questions.**

Case study

Before I close my presentation, I would like to give you a case study to think further... as an outcome of this presentation. Without exams, really!

“Currently, while we are here, and we speak about the leader and leadership we have a crisis in Europe and a war. The reasons are many (political, economic, geostrategic) and affecting our lives, making our reality more agile and the future unsecure. But what can we observe in this situation regarding our topic? We can see the conflict of two different types and styles of leader and leadership, in the way of how these leaders understand the world, how they made and apply their decision, how they became leaders, how and if they express their feelings and thoughts, what is their using methods and many other things. I am not gonna compare and describe the features of their leaderships, but I just raising the leadership dimension in this situation which ultimately reflects in extremely degree the multiple challenges of our societies in this transitional period. The historian of the future by studying these two leaders will be able to interpret up to a point our time and will be able to draw conclusions. Well try to approach this matter in a synthetic way, from different viewpoints setting questions and after that look what your conclusions are. Maybe, you are going to have a different interpretation, from the one you have now”.



FOR THE END

My only suggestion to you is: try to find a mentor or a mentrix, from your University, your job, or from other systems that you are participate. Search for someone who can inspires you and has the experience to guide you in your life journey. It will be one of the most valuable experiences. I deeply believe that with mentoring you are going to discover a new world of potentials.

I wish you always have the strength to believe in yourselves and have vision!

Good luck.

Thank you for listening to me!!!

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For more information about my programs, public speeches and lectures contact with me.