

Leadership Part 2

Bonnie A. Osif

The quality of a leader is reflected in the standards they set for themselves.

—Ray Kroc

A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit.

—Arnold H. Glasgow

In the last column we began with an example of leadership not to follow in the dysfunctional television show *House*. An earlier column used the toxic leadership of Michael Scott from *The Office*. How many examples of good, never mind excellent, leadership are evident in the media? Are poor, toxic, or ineffectual leaders more entertaining? Like the shows or not, the self-centeredness of *30 Rock*'s Jack Donaghy and the chaotic Liz Lemon, the quirkiness of the *Closer*'s Brenda Lee Johnson, and Detective Adrian Monk are the characters we remember and laugh at. All are leaders in some sense, but what kind? Maybe a classic comparison of styles are the captains on *Star Trek*—Kirk (emotional, rule book tossed out when convenient), Picard (calm, rigid), Janeway (self-assured), Sisko (complex, caring), and Archer (blazing new frontiers and developing leadership on the fly). Or should we use the leadership styles of *The Lord of the Rings*—Gandalf, Aragorn, Theoden, Denethor, Frodo, or Sam? We are bombarded with examples in books, television, movies, and real life. What do they say to us? How do they compare to leadership research? While the media has a great deal of influence on modern life, research provides some interesting and more useful insights and suggestions on this subject.



Bonnie A. Osif (bao2@psu.edu) is Assistant Engineering Librarian at Pennsylvania State University in University Park.

Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.

Roger Martin, dean of the University of Toronto School of Management found after numerous interviews that successful leaders had “the predisposition and capacity to hold two diametrically opposing ideas in their heads. And then, without panicking or simply settling for one alternative or the other, they’re able to produce a synthesis that is superior to either opposing idea. *Integrative thinking* is my term for this process—that is the hallmark of exceptional businesses and the people who run them.”¹ He further defines integrative thinking as “the ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas that is superior to each.”² The book develops his concept of integrative thinking and how it can be learned. Well-referenced and very readable, his ideas are definitely worth a look for a different but interesting perspective on ways of thinking and leadership.

Eight writers look at persuasion’s role in leadership in *Harvard Business Review on the Persuasive Leader*, an anthology of previously published articles. Conger writes that “persuasion consists of four essential elements: establishing credibility, framing to find common ground, providing vivid evidence and connecting emotionally.”³ Control by decree leadership is gone and the new generation of workers demands more of their leaders. This book may help as it discusses reasons for and means to accomplish change. Especially recommended is William and Miller’s “Change the Way You Persuade” chapter⁴—valuable, interesting, and worthwhile reading, as is typical of Harvard Business Review books.

Wallace and Gravells state in *Leadership and Leading Teams* that the purpose of their book is to help leaders develop and enhance their skills and to be able to analyze these as they pertain to leadership.⁵ To accomplish this,

they have created a fictional college to use as an example throughout the book. Chapters begin with objectives that will help the reader determine how much time they want to devote to individual chapters on the basis of their personal needs. While built around British standards, everyone can gain something from this innovative book.

“Change” is a word we hear all of the time but often without any substantive information about the why or the how. Schabracq addresses these issues with an emphasis on the how. The reader is lead through the process in the first part of *Changing Organizational Culture: The Change Agent’s Guidebook* with chapters that discuss the assessment of an organization as it really is (attitudes, work environment, and responsibility) and then reviews the tools needed to accomplish the necessary changes. There are about thirty pages of exercises to develop social skills that are “valuable to anyone who wants to make the most of their life, they are crucial for change agents, as well as to anyone who wants to be a productive participant in a dialogue”⁶ There is also a fascinating chapter on nonverbal behavior, admittedly from a Western European perspective. In the introduction, he writes the “book is about changing organizational cultures.”⁷ The book does this very well and is interesting and useful reading.

Richard L. Morrill writes in *Leadership: Integrating Strategy and Leadership in Colleges and Universities* that he defines strategic leadership as “the use of the strategy process as a systematic method of decision making that integrates reciprocal leadership into its concepts and practices.”⁸ Both strategic planning and leadership are at the forefront of concern at universities, and this well-referenced, scholarly book is a must read. The book covers the foundations of strategic leadership, preparation for and practice of strategic leadership, and concludes with an analysis of problems and issues and a summary of the book. The audience is meant to be broad.

One of the premises of this book . . . is that leadership as a process occurs throughout organizations of higher education and is frequently a collaborative activity. As a consequence, strategic leadership is relevant to virtually any faculty member or administrator who makes recommendations or significant decisions about the future.⁹

This book is heavy reading, largely text with few of the charts or bulleted lists common in many leadership books, but it is highly recommended for those with a strong interest in the subject and the time to devote to a study of the book.

Many believe that success is predicated on several theories: hard work and risk taking are superior habits; all can be successful if you liberate your talents; big breaks at the right time; heredity and environment. Swartz and Thorpe present their keys of success.¹⁰ These are differentiate yourself, make the most of learning, envision great opportunities, choose high-leverage opportunities, find high meanings, cocreate with people eager for opportunity,

sell opportunity to cautious people, negotiate, design, plan, and execute. Each of these is developed in a self-titled chapter that uses a well-known illustrative example (Einstein, Curie, Alexander Hamilton, Pasteur), checklists, and self-evaluation exercises. An inspiring book that could address needs in your organization, it might be useful as a discussion starter at weekly informal group sessions or as a study for small groups.

A compilation of articles from the journal *Leader to Leader*, the book *Leader to Leader 2* addresses the skills of the effective leader: “ability to manage themselves well, communicate clearly, develop others, encourage full participation and teamwork, build relationships, spur innovation and creative thinking, foster high performance, align strategy and execution.”¹¹ The book has articles on all of these topics from some of the big names in the field (Peter Senge, Steven Covey, and more). Glance through the articles for those that are of special interest.

The foreword to Decosterd’s *Right Brain/Left Brain* states that the book gives “actionable tools, not tired dictums or repackaged common sense.”¹² She uses case studies of four leaders to advance her ideas, the basis of which is the scientific and psychological evidence for the ways we think and behave and how this effects our actions. She describes four leadership processes: visioning, operationalizing, implementing, and declaring (reflection and calling attention to results). She reviews the right brain (innovative, visionary, and emotional), the left brain (tactical and reasoning), and the need to develop strengths in both. There are charts, worksheets, and exercises, as well as the case studies, which help explain this model of leadership. Interesting reading.

Such emotions as compassion, empathy, and kindness are often dismissed as unquantifiable in their impact on organizations or are mistaken for weakness.

Leheney’s article is written from a government perspective but if you substitute the term library for government, the ideas are very pertinent. He states that “individuals moving into leadership are often expert at the technical skills required by their positions, but they neither make time nor possess the skills to make the necessary commitment to people. They operate on the premise that the people stuff is a messy, hard-to-define, unfortunate aspect of government life.”¹³ However, it is the commitment to people that is crucial to the organization. That is what helps people excel and give their best to the workplace. He provides four simple but “powerful, practical, and time-tested practices” to become more people oriented.¹⁴ These are learn to listen, share information, recognize successes and mistakes, and understand, accept, and work with other people’s uniqueness. He provides simple suggestions that can make a difference. In brief sections and sidebar examples he develops each of the four practices. He concludes, “Today our most important resource is our people—and the knowledge, skills, and talents they bring to bear on their work

... leaders who are committed to their people have a better chance of having them show up to work enthusiastic, ready to give their best, and better able to work with others to tackle the inevitable problems and challenges in any workplace.”¹⁵ It is a short but very good article.

From their own experiences, Ginsberg and Davies realized an important question was not being addressed: “How do leaders deal with the difficult emotional issues they confront?”¹⁶ Noting that “society’s main credentialing institution, the university, has no credential requirements for its department chairs, deans, vice presidents, provost, chancellors, and presidents, other than the advanced degree required to earn a teaching position in their academic discipline,”¹⁷ they decided to explore this uncharted subject. Leaders will face difficult decisions, uncomfortable situations, and emotional pain. How these are handled will affect both the leader and the organization. After a review of the literature, the authors use their findings from their study of leaders from schools through universities to find some common themes and propose some coping strategies. They close with a list of resources. While not your typical leadership book, it may well be the one you need to read.

Baker and O’Malley’s *Leading with Kindness* has a business focus that delivers an important message to all leaders. It uses words like “inspire,” “rally,” and “persuade,” all integral to their approach to leadership. Baker writes, “As a child, I saw that my father was both frustrated by the indifference of his supervisors and puzzled why a man who wanted to give his heart and mind to the job was asked only to use his hands.”¹⁸ How many of the people in the library want to do more, give more, become more, if only given the opportunity? The authors base their findings on research, personal experience, and interviews with leaders in a wide range of fields, “but we believe our inquiry goes to the heart of what it means to be an effective leader and that our exploration of kindness is a refreshing antidote to the sterility of much leadership theory.”¹⁹

They state that we often mistake control for precision, and we mistake autocracy, vigilance, icy objectivity, and personal detachment for oversight. Some feel that leaders need to be calculative, aggressive, unyielding, and tough. However, there are benefits to being a kind leader: People work to maximum capabilities and continue to excel, capabilities develop over time, and there is both personal and collective growth.²⁰

There are boxed inspiration points throughout the book that say things like “kindness gives us focus” and “kind leaders facilitate growth.” Wise words include,

It is far easier to bring in people who subscribe to your belief system than to try to influence behavior after the fact. Thus, companies that truly understand the character of their employees to be a competitive advantage spend a lot of time getting to know candidates before they let them in. The recruitment and hiring processes are seen as being as fundamental as any other operating pro-

cedures, and they are well planned, thorough, and to be taken seriously by everyone involved.²¹

There is practical advice on the role of humor, gratitude, humbleness, honesty, and clarity of vision. Leadership principles include craft matters (know-how, tenacity, and discipline), leaders initiate and encourage, provide structure but don’t get in the way, be life-affirming, convey an organized message, and keep people engaged and excited.²² Bibliographies are included at the end of each chapter. A must read.

For a rather Zen view of leadership review “Searching for the Soul of Leadership” by leadership tutor Peter Danby. Noting the hectic nature of work for so many, he promotes developing the “whole being” of the leader. He states that a leader must have personal mastery, which “comes when we are aware of and understand the dimensions within us and can control and channel them through our words and actions with discipline and will.”²³ He then reviews the seven traditional chakras: instinct, intellect, intimacy, interconnectedness, I-expression (communication), intuition, and inspiration. He then describes “4th Space,” a stillness that can be used to “enhance the quality of our thinking and decision making. And it is in the deeper dimensions of ourselves that we find the source of charismatic power, wisdom, service and inspiration.”²⁴ Whatever your thoughts on his framework for leadership change and renewal, he makes a strong case for the role of some stillness and reflection. He concludes, “It can enable managers to find courage and clarity, energy and commitment. It can help managers to develop the ability to step back in the heat of the battle and choose the right word or action to meet the needs of their people and of the situation. It can be a path to great leadership.”²⁵

Kirkeby’s *The Virtue of Leadership* focuses on that topic with numerous references to philosophers.²⁶ These virtues are community service, autonomy, equity, practical wisdom, judgment, intelligent empathy, a sense of time and the ability to seize the moment, immediate insight, a sense of reality, articulateness, understanding organization, and the ability to make the spirit of the organization tangible. It is definitely not must reading for all nor is it directly applicable to the library, but it is intriguingly different and worth the effort for those interested.

Friedman’s *Total Leadership* begins,

Total leadership is a novel synthesis of ideas that have emerged from two traditionally separate fields: the study of leadership and the study of how individuals can find harmony among the different parts of their lives. This book presents a fresh approach for developing leadership and it offers a new method for integrating work, home, community, and self.²⁷

Those two sentences summarize *Total Leadership* perfectly. A diagram visualizes the ideas that are the basis of the

book. Total leadership's core revolves around a leader who is real (acts with authenticity by clarifying what's important), whole (acts with integrity by respecting the whole person), and innovative (acts with creativity). The result will be someone who is purposeful, genuine, grounded, connected, supported, resilient, curious, engaged, and optimistic.²⁸

The intended audience for Boiko's *Laughing at the CIO* is not among the readers of the "Manager's Bookshelf." It would boggle the mind to imagine any library administrator, librarian, or staff person "say they care about information but aren't doing anything about it."²⁹ Realizing the intended audience is not the audience of this column, it would be easy to put this in the "don't include" pile of materials. However, maybe we all need a good laugh and a good "ha, that really isn't us" smugness once in a while. And you might pick up a few tips along the way. Humorous (ironic, really) cartoons, a case study that the author refers to as half parable, half case study, and practical advice about information and organizations. Take a look. It really might hook you!

Zakhem, Palmer, and Stoll's *Stakeholder Theory* is an anthology of articles with a business perspective that concerns the ethical management by leaders of a company (substitute "library") as it relates to its stakeholders ("employees") and stockholders ("patrons"). Stakeholders are either groups or individuals "on which the organization is dependent for its continued survival."³⁰ The book focuses on the group aspect of stakeholders. While it is a business perspective, it is no great stretch to consider ways it can be adapted to the library. Not necessary reading, but, for the very serious student of leadership, the essays are interesting and may provide some useful insights.

If you heard or thought yourself that little is really gained from workshops, staff development sessions, seminars, etc., Donaldson's *How Leaders Learn* may be what you are looking for.

You will discover in these pages that leaders learn to lead not by studying about leadership, not by attending classes, not by engaging in case studies, not by observing others leaders. Leaders learn through their own practice, by ATTEMPTING to lead. . . . Learning comes from experience only when accompanied by intentional, rigorous, fruitful reflection.³¹

Donaldson is a professor of education and brings that perspective to a practical, readable book. Based on real people, there are chapters providing actual examples of learning and leadership. The first part of the book details his model of the three knowledge domains: cognitive (instructional and organizational literacy), interpersonal (forming relationships and mobilizing others), and intrapersonal (self-awareness, self-management, self-assessment, and philosophy). The last three chapters are concerned

with the "conditions for nurturing leader learning and the nature of learning itself."³² If pressed for time, these are the three chapters to read. He concludes, "Schools are creative, generative, and responsive. Their leaders' work is to cultivate learning at every turn, starting with their own."³³ It would be no stretch to substitute the word "libraries" for "schools." The book is inspiring and practical.

Sucher's *The Moral Leader* is a book based on a course at the Harvard Business School. The course is based on the questions, What is the nature of a moral challenge? How do people reason morally? What do these look like when undertaken by leaders/individuals who make decisions with responsibility to others? and How are moral leaders different from other leaders? The course is segmented into three modules: moral challenge, moral reasoning, and moral leadership. The course includes an outside reading list for the class, a crucial part of this literature-based class because it can bring "the reader into contact with events or locations or persons or problems he or she has not otherwise met, but also, so to speak, vertically giving the reader experience that is deeper, sharper, and more precise than much of what takes place in life."³⁴ The book brings an amazing range of resources from movies, books, and history to the reader and includes class assignments. It is worthwhile reading for the individual or for a group to take a "class" on moral leadership.

Calling it a leadership biography, Western writes in *Leadership: A Critical Text* from the perspective of one who has

questioned the notion of leadership and tested my early utopian ideals of leaderless groups, I have been a leader, and experienced leadership in many forms. . . . I have experienced excellent leadership, mediocre leadership and leadership that has made me despair. However, I totally affirm that leadership is a necessity. . . . My work experience has further taught me that a critical approach is vital to reveal the hidden discourses of leadership to get beneath the surface of what is really going on.³⁵

The chapter "What is Leadership" is especially interesting. As a practicing Quaker, Western's faith is evident, especially in the latter chapters that address religious issues. It is thought provoking and insightful—review the chapters of interest.

No one achieves her life's ambitions without the steady, guiding hands of others.

Over a dozen writers from the United Kingdom discuss leadership in higher education in Marshall's *Strategic Leadership of Change in Higher Education*. The first chapter, "Leadership and Managing Strategic Change," has an excellent description of new views of leadership—"No

longer is 'heroic' leadership deemed to be the 'panacea' that an organisation's board or appointing body seek. . . . Instead, the idea of dispersed leadership, or 'leadership at all levels' is seen as a more appropriate means of bringing about and sustaining transformational and lasting change."³⁶ She makes her case clearly, using graphs and bulleted points, concluding that leadership really matters and it "is only authentic leaders who are able to make the vision become a reality."³⁷ Other chapters of special note include Bob Munn's "Conversational, not Confrontational," an activity at the University of Manchester to gather information and gain trust by engaging in conversation. Munn notes in his conclusion that

good conversation develops when participants feel relaxed, at home and cared for. Conversations that help to develop trust, which cannot be asserted but must always be earned . . . a project like this must explicitly intend to learn from people in order to help shape the change and not merely to communication in order to see the change.³⁸

While specific to the universities of the various authors, many of the ideas of the book could be transferred to libraries.

In *Academic Librarians as Emotionally Intelligent Readers*, Herson, Giesecke, and Alire define leadership as being "about giving people confidence to meet organizational expectations and serve as change agents."³⁹ The book's focus is emotional intelligence, "a person's ability to manage his or her own emotions, to monitor the emotional state of others in the organization, and to influence the thinking and behaviour of others to accomplish a shared mission or vision."⁴⁰ Chapters are written by the editors and Cheryl Metoyer and discuss emotional intelligence in depth as well as specific aspects, such as diversity. The book concludes,

The changing landscape in which academic libraries function makes effective leadership all the more necessary to achieve a positive future . . . namely, ensuring that academic libraries remain in existence and, more importantly, play a dynamic role in helping their institutions meet their stated mission and in working toward the accomplishment of the institutional vision.⁴¹

Serious and well researched, this is not a book to be read in part but that merits careful, considered reading from cover to cover. While only 160 pages, it will take time to read and ponder, but it is well worth it—a must for the bookshelf.

Atwater and Waldman, in *Leadership, Feedback and the Open Communication Gap*, define open communication as "difficult information potentially communicated by people in leadership positions, rather than the more

positive or mundane information."⁴² Feedback is important, and "often delivery of negative feedback is delayed, handled inappropriately, or avoided altogether. Managers often report transmitting negative feedback to subordinates, as one of their most unpleasant and difficult tasks."⁴³ Cases, examples, and analysis illustrate the topic of negative feedback clearly. Another focus of the book is communication across the organization rather than one-on-one. One particularly interesting chapter is "The Mushroom Theory of Leadership," which begins with the quote, "Management treats me like a mushroom. They keep me in the dark and feed me a lot of manure—while thinking that I will be happy and grow."⁴⁴ An interesting discussion of two communications situations follow that is worth reading. This book is not essential for all, but if communication is an issue for your library, it is definitely worth a look.

After a description of a life-changing event in his career at the World Bank, Denning ends his preface summarizing his book *The Secret Language of Leadership* as "the nitty-gritty of transformational leadership," and "about the specifics of getting things done and inspiring other people to embrace new ideas and change."⁴⁵ At the core of the book, as in his career choice, is making the world a better place, "not for those who seek dominance or the ease of a wealthy, trouble-free existence but rather for those who aspire to a meaningful life. Rather than generating power *over* others, it shows how to create power *in* and *with* others."⁴⁶ In the introduction, Denning discusses the ten common leadership mistakes: unclear, uninspiring goals; a lack of commitment for change; incongruent body language; misreading the audience; a lack of narrative intelligence; not telling the truth; misdirected attention; an inability to elicit desire for change; having reasons backfire; and the death of a conversation. For an example, he contrasts the unsuccessful Gore presidential campaign of 2000 to Gore's successful, invigorated, and popular movie and speaking tour around *An Inconvenient Truth*. The difference was what Denning calls the language of leadership. The rest of this easy-to-read and intriguing book presents how to take the goal and tell it in a captivating, honest way. "For too long, we imagined that leadership and change were the work of a few exceptional people. We were mistaken. In fact, leadership and change are driven by ordinary people who speak and act in a different way. Once we learn the language of leadership, then we can drive change, if we want to."⁴⁷ Have a clear goal, communicate truthfully and enthusiastically, and you can lead to that goal. Highly recommended for all.

Becoming a Resonant Leader was written by McKee, Boyatzis, and Johnston to be used by individuals for their personal growth as leaders, not as a textbook. However, like a textbook, it has a number of exercises that should be completed by the reader. They note, "As you read and reflect, you will have a chance to wrestle with profound aspects of yourself as a person and as a leader so that you can become more resonant, develop your emotional

intelligence, renew your relationships, and sustain your effectiveness.”⁴⁸ This is a very enjoyable book. While the style is not right for everyone, there is a great deal to gain from both the text and the self-analysis that will come from doing the exercises. Highly recommended.

A library-focused title, Evans and Ward’s *Library Basics for Librarians and Information Professionals* looks at the new challenges awaiting leaders. Based on both the authors’ personal experiences as well as research, surveys, and interviews, they state “this book will assist individuals moving into leadership positions, especially those working in medium-sized and smaller services where it is rare to find institutional staff development programs or outside training opportunities.”⁴⁹ Especially useful are the chapters “Developing Your Leadership Abilities,” “E-Leadership,” and “It Isn’t Always Easy,” which offer right-on-target information for libraries. It is well referenced, which is to be expected from a book for the profession. Put this on your must-read list.

Everyone has a leadership style they prefer. Most people can name the leader they most admire. While it is very evident that one leader or leadership style does not fit all people or all situations, there are general aspects that command more respect and more faithful followers and that inspire more, encourage more, and empower more than others will. Whether your style follows that of Captains Picard, Janeway, Kirk, Sisko, or Archer, or Denethor, Theoden, Gandalf, or Aragorn, or any other role model you might name, the truth of its worth is in the results. Leadership is a complex subject with many titles. The next column will complete the trilogy with a look at some individual leaders.

*Author’s Note: Epigraph quotes retrieved from <http://quotations.about.com> (accessed Feb. 4, 2009). Bold headings are from William F. Baker and Michael O’Malley’s *Leading with Kindness: How Good People Consistently Get Superior Results* (New York: AMACOM, 2008).*

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support it and the university libraries. At the same time, he says, "Don't over-plan. Do be flexible," for there is never any way of knowing when or in what form an opportunity might present itself.

And, of course, keep a sense of humor. Stevens notes that librarians are often overly sensitive and preoccupied with the image of their profession, to the point where they become the stereotypes that they reject. His advice, in this as in most other matters involving self-importance: "Lighten up!"

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- Provide appreciation with food treats for all callers and gifts for the top caller.
- Thank parent donors and provide occasional follow-up communication.

It is expected that a library will want to tailor its approach to best fit local circumstances. However, the general plan can work to significantly benefit any academic library.

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won't be a penalty from me for doing that. At least one team did stop and reflect, all for the better, but for the most part the confidences went no further than between the student and me. Regardless, the student's private realization of a problematic group dynamic was still important. I always coach each student--this is after all, his or her *What Now?* moment--to consider what they would do differently. What would they say? Some, I believe, did confront themselves and now resolve differences in a more open and satisfying manner.

P.S. For dog lovers and readers of this column, Bridger, the black lab is back! My daughter's National Guard unit is away for a year so B is here and teaching me new tricks:

communicating with one's tail; never forgetting to show appreciation for current, past, and future kindnesses; and finding the joy in doing your job, any job.

References and Notes

1. For a useful discussion of facilitation techniques see Michael A. Gass and Cheryl A. Stevens, "Facilitating the Adventure Process," in *Adventure Education: Theory and Applications*, ed. Richard G. Prouty, Jane Panicucci, and Rufus Colinson (Beverly, Mass.: Project Adventure, 2007) 101-23.
2. John Lubans Jr. "Thank God and Greyhound, She's Gone," (to a Workshop,) and Other T&D Matters," *On Managing, Library Administration & Management* 21, no. 1 (Winter 2007) 35-37.