

THE PREMISE OF LEADERSHIP: THE TRUE SELF

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To leaders, life is to learn how to be aware of the separation from the false self every day by renouncing the stake of the petty survival and valorising the true self as the love of one's self and the love of the others, without which the notion of leadership would make no sense.

Key words: *perception; leadership; idorganization; consciousness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The difference between a leader and a common person lies in one's application to self-improve starting from the identification of the true self, materialized in such aspects as:

- the deep search of his/her own desires;
- the awareness of the desires that yield enthusiasm, starting from the possibilities that life offers;
- the guidance/support of one's own effort to change one's own non-productive habits by appealing to the force of the ideal self.

The growth of the self materializes in:

- the identification with one's own aspirations;
- the identification with the ideal self, respectively with what we want to be in our personal life and in our work;
- the capitalization of one's own potential;
- the manifestation of the capacity to resonate by conveying positive emotions (enthusiasm/ joy/bliss/ inspiration) to our fellowmen.

The development of the self is an important task, as it consists of becoming aware of what we truly are in our capacity of members of this species (our needs/impulses/feelings/pleasures/sorrows) from the perspective of our:

- biological construction,
- character (active/non-active; emotional/non-emotional; primary/secondary),
- constitution.

The leadership equals one's discovery of what is general and universal, as well as one's discovery of what is impersonal/trans-personal/trans-humane and it presupposes the attempt to change our thinking/acting habits by pretending: the overthrow of decades of learning that has been practiced/fixed repeatedly in the neural circuits, the renunciation to the practice of the habits of thinking and acting in some ways that were pre-established through the education received in the family/at school/in the organization; the deep commitment towards a future vision of what we want to be (Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee, 2005). The leaders' authenticity is the true self, i.e. the courage to constantly stay focused on the ideal self (Abraham Maslow, 2009), by:

- practising the capacity to find connections between the immediate goals they set and their long-term dreams/expectations in life (AUDACITY);
- holding the ebullient energy and enthusiasm by maintaining the contact with their own ideal self at every moment in life; (ELATIVE VISION – choosing to aim high even when the odds are against them

rather than aim low for the certainty of winning).

- facing the fear of not meeting the expectations of the others or even the rejection of their peers when the self that has been imposed on them is contrary to their ideal self; (CAPACITY TO LEAVE THE COMFORT ZONE)

- emotional involvement in their own development by focusing on what is truly important for them and for the humankind as well; (CAPACITY AND WILL TO CONSUME THEMSELVES THROUGH PHYSICAL/MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFORT)

2. THE TRUE SELF VS. THE FALSE SELF

Parents, partners, bosses and teachers keep telling us what we should be like, in fact offering us their vision of our ideal self. The imposed self is our educators' version of what our ideal self is supposed to be. The superposition of the imposed self over the person that we believe we must become is sometimes possible (the disciples are those who choose their mentors). When the imposed self differs from the ideal self, the person feels trapped in some sort of cage; as a matter of fact, that is how the subject perceives the enchainment of his/her free will. While speaking about the life situation in which the imposed self differs from the true self, Max Weber uses the phrase "our iron cage" in which we move and hit against imaginary walls. The premises of the construction of the imposed self in organisations, in opposition with the ideal self, are the following: the idea that promotion can only be done vertically in a hierarchy and compelling the people to define their personal success by gaining access to a higher hierarchical level (in reality,

promotions can not only be done hierarchically, but also diagonally and horizontally, in accordance with the ideals/values/dreams about success that can differ from one person to another) and the standardisation of success in an organisation (Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman, 2004).

When the discrepancy between a person's ideal self and the education-imposed self becomes obvious, the result is either apathy or sedition.

The challenge is to look towards a much farther horizon to answer the question of "What might we do from now until we pass away?" while accessing a much wider spectrum of possibilities. Naturally, a leader is able to enumerate at least 80% of the things s/he would like to do until the end of her/ his life, without any connection with her/his job/career. Leaders possess/use certain patterns (principles) that help them make their dreams/ambitions come true (Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee, 2005). Some examples of patterns (guiding principles) that are specific of authentic leaders are the following:

- they choose to be themselves, without making any effort to appear different than what they are, by politely saying what they think, even when that is likely to upset the others.

- they respect the rights of the others, thus inviting their peers to respect their rights (the right to expression, to make decisions, to get help and understanding) at their turn, without reacting aggressively if the others choose not to follow the example.

- they grow, while constantly turning into an improved version of their own person.

- they do not manipulate/cheat on anybody, even if that might be reason why they have something to lose.

- they forgive those who have done them harm (they give up revenge

and they give up considering those people responsible, while trying to understand what triggered that kind of behaviour)

- they rejoice what they have (without focusing on what they lack) and they are aware of the fact all the might happen in life depends on them above all.

3. DISCOVERING THE TRUE SELF

To discover one's true self is one's capacity of being aware of one's different perception, by learning to become aware of one's own relationship with the affective experiences that s/he perceives as threatening without allowing herself/himself to be defined by those experiences.

Deep inside, we are nothing more than a real form of capacity of conscious perception, but the experience of living this perception inside cannot be reduced to a single thing. What we call "I" is a sort of intrinsic mental construction that our mind automatically reduces to an unconscious stage. Are we the sum of our experiences? Are we our thoughts and experiences? Are we the sensations that we have about ourselves? Are we our body? The beginning of human misery is represented by an individual's identification with her/his own physical body, religion, nationality, profession, social status or parenthood. To live in complete ignorance about our true nature as conscious beings is to identify ourselves as creatures that belong to a certain category or as a sum of our feelings, convictions or roles. We need to get into the depth of the nature of this illusion to demonstrate these false identities and we have to learn to how to live in the elementary form of our true self (Richard Moss, 2009). Our body is a space filled with sensations, feelings and passions

in an endless process of change. A part of our perception of the self is „well-built“, it exists intrinsically in our bodies. We transcend our own bodies (we move and we feel, but that space of perception is not located in a particular part of our body or in a sensation existing in it). The suffering arises from our getting identified with "me/self" that does not exist. The idea is to find the state through which we remain present, without a single thought, and through which our body, as a space filled with sensations, becomes peaceful, our conscious self always accompanying us unaltered throughout this process. Our conscious self can have the sensation of disease or agony without being truly ill or dying. The same state of awareness is also present regardless of whether we are fearful, desperate or, on the contrary, we experience acceptance or the peace. The consciousness is also present when we are ill. Thus, the vivacity of the spirit is characterised by the same greatness when the person is ill. The transformation appears if we renounce the defence strategies in our most intimate relation with our pain, and that is called "conscious suffering" (Richard Moss, 2009).

As we are better and better trained to stay fully focused, without manifesting any sort of reaction (without going to pieces or allowing ourselves to drown in suffering), grief loosens its grip of our reality. Then we start to rest in a natural state, and life can flow from the deepest sources of the true self. The peace, the tranquillity, the plenitude and the gratitude appear even in our darkest moments, when we feel like stopping to fight. Gradually, as our capacity of resistance to distress increases, faith shall grow stronger as well. Even if we feel the fear, we shall discover that we are a lot freer in front of

our strongest fears or anxieties from the past. The clearly manifested intention to live in the present and to consciously face our sorrow allows us to get liberated organically, from the depth of our perception of the sorrow (the conscious perception). The transcendence of the survival mission (learning to renounce the perpetual self-protection of the ego or, to put it differently, the renunciation to the false self, the imposed self), starts from the conscious perception of one's fears (Richard Moss, 2009). From the perspective of the true self, the ego, as a set of ideas about the survival through acceptance/rejection/withdrawal, lacks real basis and is absolutely irrelevant

(several examples are presented in **Table 1** of different survival strategies, respectively combinations of the real unaware self and combinations of the false self that appears by way of compensation). In what concerns the false self, the open-mindedness towards the true self appears as an annihilation hazard.

Nevertheless, in the end, the image of the false self-disintegrates, which happens when one is ill or loses someone dear, or when one experiences sudden bankruptcy or after the divorce, as well as after some undeserved success that we sabotage ourselves unconsciously.

Table no. 1 Different survival strategies

Examples	The true self	The false self
Example no. 1	The person doesn't really know about him/herself that she is submissive and lacks will (his/her true self).	If the maternal psychology has left a mark, than the false self resides in being loyal to the maternal feelings and needs.
Example no. 2	In fact, the true self that s/he isn't aware of consists of never knowing her/his own feelings or needs very accurately because they originate in what s/he actually rejects/judges rather than in herself/himself.	If the strategy of survival is rejection, the false self consists of being combative and reactive, of manifesting a heroic intolerance to injustice, of manifesting cynicism in front of the authority in general, of considering oneself superior in terms of the capacity of understanding the world and its needs.
Example no. 3	The true self, which s/he isn't aware of, is the lack of condescendence towards the peers that s/he considers unworthy of a deeper involvement in the relationship with them.	If the adopted strategy of survival is to adapt for purposes of defence, then the false self relies on yielding to external stimuli, on the tendency to withdraw in an imaginary world, to spend more time alone in the world of fiction/computers, thus becoming closer to the inner side than one's fellowmen.

When we decide to choose the true self, this process of development presupposes the confrontation of the „uncontrolled” emotions (the sensation of hopelessness and angst), the approach of these emotions without any reaction of resistance. At times like this we may plunge in such despair or irrational anger and hatred for ourselves that we could feel broken and could come to release a true “inner Armageddon” (a battle between our false self and our true self). At times like this we must learn to train our force of perception through the reluctance-free attention to everything that surrounds us and through an unlimited understanding of our own suffering. The journey of awaking to the full awareness, kindred with the dark night of the soul, might be perceived as a loss of the self (due to the long time during which we mistook our survivor’s personality for ourselves). The self-transcendence and innate healing power goes through a fundamental idorganization crisis. The confrontation and our deliverance finally help us become aware of our ego’s fear of nothingness.

4. CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT OF SURVIVAL OF HUMANKIND IS LOVE AS THE CORE OF REALITY

Humankind’s collective project of survival is governed by the ego’s fear of nothingness. The society and culture that the society has built represent an imposed collective false self, a collective survivor’s personality that is based on affective experiences that we neither cope with, nor control. The aim of survival that so much redounds upon our lifestyles will continue to be the burden of a possible threat to our future, our fear giving birth to even more fear individually and collectively. As the fear disappears, love appears. Love is

the backbone of reality. It represents the continuous relationship among all things. There is nothing beyond it. There is nothing in life that does not belong to the domain of love, not even fear. Love is an organization within us all and it is superior in terms of size to any form of manifestation of fear. Fear is our first trainer in survival techniques. The acolytes of fear are power, control, strictness, jealousy, greed, blame, hatred and revenge. Fear gives us hope and imposes us submission. Love requires the stability of conscious relationships; it requires togetherness and the awareness of the immediacy of each and every moment. The purpose of love is to discover and express the entirety of our being.

The process of self-identification starts by understanding “who we are”, so that the survival should consist of becoming what we think that we are. Therefore, in order to return to the true self, one must start from not knowing (Richard Moss, 2009). The process of getting to know is not the same as ignorance, but it is a state of receptivity that labels our sensations while creating a space of our knowledge in which we can present ourselves as more authentic. In this process of incognizance we shall start by simplifying the nature of our experiences in 3 categories of consciousness:

- Reasoning (ideas, memories, fantasies, speculations);
- Feeling (the use of senses through the mind and body altogether);
- Action (voluntary forms of action that exist in our behaviour);
- The conscious perception (I - am).

Our psychological balance is related to manner in which these 3 categories of the consciousness are linked to one another (Richard Moss, 2009). The most well-balanced states of perception presuppose that the individual perceives her/his

thoughts, feelings and behavioural manifestations while keeping a certain distance, and this ineffable space allows her/him to stay anchored in the present. The fluency of the consciousness is synonymous to a higher level of consciousness and it consists of a clear delimitation of the thoughts/sensations/actions/perception. The connection to the present turns us into conscious creatures. When the delimitation from the feelings is notable, we have a larger space for the apprehension of the positive traits and of the limitations, and we become more comprehensive and more tolerant.

Getting identified with any of the 3 categories of consciousness (reasoning, feeling, action) leads to the creation of certain forms of idorganization (survivor's personalities called false self, in which we either believe that we are what we think (psychopaths, sociopaths), or we believe that we are what we feel (schizoid, paranoid, or histrionic personality), or we believe that we are what we do (narcissist, obsessive personality). When a certain idorganization replaces the root of our conscious personality (I-Am), the consciousness diminishes and we use our intellect as a tool meant to defend the needs/objectives of this idorganization.

A distinction has to be made between the roles and the identities that we assume. The role is the totality of thoughts, knowledge, behaviours required to fulfil a certain function (manager, parent, physician, professor etc.). We either prepare ourselves for these roles, or receive the needed models of action from others and learn to imitate them to play the role better. The roles are intelligent because they allow us to function at the highest level in a specific domain (they are conscious).

As opposed to the roles, the identities are not conscious aspects and they can exist in the structure of our roles in ways that diminish their efficiency and by sabotaging us. Idorganization works to protect the ego from the threats that it senses. It can be assumed rapidly, based on the characteristics of that particular situation.

The borderline between the roles and the identities is uncertain when our role becomes our idorganization as well. For example, if I get identified with the mother's role, I might see my offspring's marriage as a devastating loss of the self. If we are aware of our identities, we are also able to transcend them. The transcendence of the self is not what we are/feel/do. Everything that we can put in words, everything that we can imagine or express about ourselves does not represent the person that we are in reality. Going towards a superior level of functioning will start with the efficiency of our becoming aware that we are neither who we are, nor who others are, and this has to do with our open-mindedness, with our being anchored in the present, with our compassion, forgiveness, love and nothing to do with productivity and efficiency.

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