



The recent spate of scandals that have mired the corporate world speaks volumes about the inadequacy of business leadership and the direction in which it is taking our organisations and societies. Similarly, on the public front, one has to look no further than the growing divide between the elected and the electorate, the increase in legitimate protest and, more worryingly civil unrest increases, to have an idea at how awry the current idea of leadership in our public sector has gone. Sadly many, not all, leaders seem to have developed an instinctive paranoia of the moral contract to provide a positive contribution to society. It is as if the steady diet of half-truths and narrow paradigms fed to them over time, have wiped their greater consciousness of the wisdom that true and lasting happiness comes when you stop treating the world as if it is just a backdrop of your own journey of scarcity.

As intellectuals, private employees, public servants and citizens all more vocally begin to question the 'enduring truths' and 'normality' which have dominated our worldview for the last 400 years, they come to realise that the majority of people have outsourced their responsibility (and accountability) for the lives they lead to so-called leaders in business and in government. Such businesses and governments have sort to treat us as an otherwise undifferentiated mass, and so we feel victimised, feel trapped in states of dependency and generally feel disempowered. The result of which has led to the ingratitude of a hostile world; a morally-immature world which very few of us desire, culminating in the expert suppression of contradiction and dissonance by governments and businesses of those who won't toe the dogma-of-the-day and the atomising of people who appear different, who think differently, act differently, and believe differently from us. We are angry at them because there is no blueprint for the future, and there is not a single individual who can get us there – and so we fear the unpredictable.



Individuals appear tired and despondent because they continually expend their emotional energy in order to please other people, playing out roles in an attempt to please management and leadership, protecting themselves and seeking self-gratification while engaging in power struggles (overtly or covertly). This migration to narrow, and dangerous, Machiavellian and fatalist mentalities, of the end being the ultimate justification of the means and personal, short-term gain being repayment for past injustices, represents everything that is wrong with our contemporary lives. In the main, a syndrome of selfishness, concerned with the "smaller self" and "economic personhood", has taken hold of the psyches, minds, hearts, wills and behaviours of individuals, and therefore our private and public organisations – it has left us spiritless, uninspired and confused as to our own values.

The problem, I believe, lies in the differentiated distribution of wealth and its accompanying (and ongoing) structures of power; the lack of purpose on an individual level, the emptiness of individual- and societal spirit, as well as the shying away from self-leadership and personal accountability by individuals and communities alike. What is needed is questioning of the status quo and directions we know are leading to destruction. The moral albatross associated with not promoting social accountability and values-awareness should be sufficient to encourage us to take action, wherein we profoundly collaborate with others as equal participants in creating the futures we desire and want our children to occupy. We need to develop and fund the development of social innovation, and social entrepreneurs, who seek to solve many social, communal and environmental challenges, by following purposeful paths (couched in their value systems) along with financial performance and financial sustainability in their measurement of success.

The incentive for going in this direction, in addition to the moral factor, is the fact that addressing these social issues would ultimately translate into fundamental drivers of overall performance and living conditions that would be palatable for many more. However, the leadership of today's governments and organisations have consistently steered away from adopting positions that would consider the long-term impact of their activities on society and the person on the street, rather than solely on either the organisation's bottom-line, or the public's perception of their political party, and their smaller, economic individual selves.

Humans are not at conflict with themselves because that is their natural tendency or that the business of business is just business, but because those entrusted to serve as our leaders have woefully failed to responsibly carry the mantle of authority and have laboured pointlessly under the delusions of failed leadership concepts. There has to be something fundamentally wrong with the way we have always conducted, and are currently conducting, our affairs. Leadership, in its past and current forms, has failed us. There is a great need today to develop leaders who can meet the complex and multifaceted challenges of the 21st century, and this need is global and



covers all fields of endeavour, and at all levels of the society (primary school to the executive boardroom and parliament). What is needed is a reorientation towards dedicated lives and the seeking of excellence in all that we do in order to attract the willing followership and discretionary effort of the stakeholders we serve – such (real) leadership is not borne out of position, political affiliation, not popularity, nor authority and does not occur overnight – none of these make a (real) leader. Real leadership is about wanting to be the best for the world, not only the best in the world, and is premised on the very choices a leader makes to a peculiar dedication, over time, by being attentive to something other than one's own interests/concerns, and which ultimately sets that leader and that leader's character apart (a dedication that others, sometimes, do not even understand in the short-term).

Ultimately, humans are fundamentally hermeneutic creatures, seeking to understand the four fundamental terms of their condition: God/Being/The One (meaning); world (context); finitude (possibility); and individuation (wholeness). The moral prerogative for leaders in respect of the world, is to set the basis for such meaning for individuals; in respect of finitude it is to critically deconstruct the reasons, need and continuance of rampant instrumental reason; and with respect to individuation it is to regard moral choices carefully to ensure that they continuously safeguard individuals against the loss of freedom. In many ways, modernity has obscured for us the moral choices to be made. There are many reasons for leaders to continue forward paradigmatically locked in pathways of efficiency and expediency, following the bounds of instrumental reasoning without the complementarity that could be achieved with the addition of responsible, moral leadership.

In summary, individuals seek to critically reflect on the world, and want to be reflected meaningfully and favourably by it. Therein lie the opportunity for social innovators to demonstrate committed, purposeful leadership as the starting intent, not the guise of humanness post-instrumentality. Through meaningful, critical practice, extended-language, and expanding the spiritual and metacognitive awareness of individuals, such change leaders can assist individuals to sense-make their relationships with God, other people, other perspectives, other practices, other institutions, other landscapes. The by-product will be a more engaged society, in which people take responsibility for their futures (and not mull in their victimhood or entitlement orientations).

