

“Credibility”

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Preface: The heroic leadership myth has been shattered, and cynicism has taken its place. They want leaders who will put principles ahead of politics *xvii* Time and again, people called for leaders who were honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. *xx*

Becoming a manager has much to do with learning the metaphors; becoming a good manager has much to do with using the metaphors; and becoming a leader has much to do with changing the metaphors (5) They are more than just followers of someone else’s vision and values. They are participants in creating them. (7) Serving and supporting unleashes much more energy, talent, and commitment than commanding and controlling. (8) Especially for senior executives, being forward-looking is the most essential of the leadership attributes. Yet it is not enough for leaders to have dreams of the future. They must be able to communicate these in ways that encourage us to sign on for the duration and to work hard toward the objective. (16) Both the quality of being forward-looking and that of being inspiring have increased in their importance. More people want their leaders to provide future direction and show enthusiasm than in years past. These times of transition require leaders with the vision and the energy to sustain hope. (18) “Does he have the enthusiasm to keep people excited along the difficult road to the future?” “Does she inspire others to make the sacrifices necessary to make it to the end?” (23) So the credibility check can reliably be simplified to just one question: “Do I trust this person?” (24)

We know from our research that being forward looking is the quality that distinguishes leaders from other credible people. (25) You can’t follow someone who isn’t credible, who doesn’t truly believe in what they’re doing—and how they’re doing it. -Gayle Hamilton, Pacific Gas and Electric (27) “You don’t love someone because of who they are; you love them because of the way they make you feel. we will work harder and more effectively for people we like. And we will like them in direct proportion to how they make us feel. (30) Every case was about a leader who uplifted the spirit. They set people’s spirits free and enable them to become more than they might have thought possible. (31) But threat, power, position, and money do not earn commitment; they earn compliance. (32) Leaders who are inaccessible cannot possibly expect to be trusted just because they have a title. (46) When managers resort to the use of power and position, to compliance and command to get things done, they are not leading. They are dictating. (48)

Credibility, respect, and loyalty are earned primarily when leaders demonstrate by their actions that they believe in the inherent self-worth of others. From our analysis of common themes in the cases we collected, we derived six practices, which we have come to call the six disciplines of credibility. These are 1. Discovering your self 2. Appreciating constituents 3. Affirming shared values 4. Developing capacity 5. Serving a purpose 6. Sustaining hope (51) To be a credible leader, you must have character, whose essential ingredients are credo, competence, and confidence. (52) Credible leaders are not afraid to liberate the leader in everyone. (54) We have found that the response to the item “My manager is genuine” is crucial to whether constituents rate a manager as high or low on credibility. (69) To lead, not mislead, you must have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to consistently exemplify the values you profess. (70) Mastery does not come in small doses. It cannot come from the usual two days of training and on to the next task. It requires ongoing training and practice. (77) Volunteer for an assignment to work with someone who excels in the skills you need.

practice the leadership basics—being challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging—daily, just as a musician practices the scales. (86) For long-term success, we need to attract and retain the best people in the industry. To do that, we must create a company in which everyone can contribute his or her best, in which everyone is valued, regardless of differences. —Andrea Zintz, Ortho Biotech. In our programs on leadership, we make the point that leadership requires a pioneering spirit—that leaders are adventurers who actively seek out opportunities to change the way things are. They test their skills and abilities, experimenting with innovative approaches (88) a *Time/CNN* poll finds that more than 66 percent of us would like to “slow down and live a more relaxed life,” in contrast to only 19 percent who say they would like to “live a more exciting, faster-paced life.” (93) Great leaders are great learners and keep their minds open about what people can contribute to an enterprise. (101) Another way leaders remain open and appreciative is by basing their self-respect not on what they already know, but on how well they are capable of learning. (102) Leaders promote a range of opinion by actively stirring up disagreement and by legitimizing the articulation of differences. (106) In organizations in which mutual trust does not exist, people are cautious, less open, less satisfied, less influential, more distant, and more inclined to leave at the first available opportunity. (111)

The fit between person-organization values has been shown to be a predictor of job satisfaction... (122) Developing shared values is thus more about asking people for their input than it is about telling them what is or is not important. (125) Leaders recognize that commitment to shared values must be reinforced through collective actions, most typically in everyday organizational policies, systems, and programs. (135) In the course of updating his book, *The 100 Best Companies to Work For in America*, Robert Levering noted that people were increasingly looking not just for jobs, but for workplaces whose cultures were in harmony with their personal values. (137) A Chinese proverb “Tell me, I may listen. Teach me, I may remember. Involve me, I will do it.” (146) Organizational effectiveness depends upon the sharing or distributing, not the hoarding, of leadership. What is often called empowerment is really just taking off the chains and letting people loose. Credible leaders in this sense are liberators. (157) Providing people with choice—discretion and latitude—liberates the leader within and contributes to greater productivity. (162)

The problem was thus not incompetent workers but a flawed system that failed to allow people sufficient individual discretion. Involving front-line employees in problem solving (163) Creating a climate where learning is stressed and people feel comfortable making mistakes is also critical. (167) ...a learning climate, characterized by trust and openness, is a critical precursor for any successful organizational change effort. We must place the emphasis on maximizing learning; too often for managers the concern is with minimizing errors. (168) Leaders encourage their constituents to question routines, challenge assumptions, and, with respect to appreciating diversity, continually look at what is going on from changing perspectives. (169) Having been involved in developing the plan, people are committed to it; their ownership is increased. (171) When leaders share information rather than guard it, people feel included and respected. (172) **Stop making decisions.** Rather than making decisions yourself, see to it that those responsible for implementing decisions make them. Even more importantly, make sure that they want to make the decisions, want to bear the consequences of them, have the necessary information to make good ones, and have the training to recognize good and bad decision criteria. This new role requires that you learn to ask questions more than give answers and be willing to give up responsibility and authority. (176) People need to know what the picture on the puzzle box looks like. (179)

You can best liberate the leader within your constituents by understanding how the contextual factors of their jobs may contribute to lower feelings of personal effectiveness and reduced motivation. The most common reasons are excessive bureaucracy, authoritarian supervisory styles, non-merit based reward systems, and job design. The latter area may be one you can have significant influence over. (180) Leaders are those people who are serving a purpose and are willing to act on what they believe. ...leaders are always searching, exploring, and discovering what lies just beyond the horizon. Their strength is first of all an inner strength, as we have described in earlier chapters; it comes from knowing who they are, what they stand for, and where they are trying to go. At the core of their inner strength is a fundamental belief that somehow “things” could be better than they are now. The leader’s clarity of purpose and ability to articulate both the vision and shared values give certainty and purpose to others... (186) Credible leaders take the time to listen and learn. Impressive listening skills have been identified as one common characteristic of credible leaders. (191) Leaders endeavor to create a meaning with sufficient emotional impact to make their constituents confident and excited about the endeavor. (196) The greatest challenges in maintaining people’s focus and commitment have to do with ensuring that the actions and decisions of leaders are consistent with what they say... (217)

When leaders act in ways that uplift our spirits and restore our belief in the future, they strengthen their own personal credibility. Leaders with a positive, confident, can-do approach to life and business are desperately needed. (218) She (Anita Roddick) writes: The principle forces which motivate a leader are an incredibly high need for personal achievement and a different vision of the world. ... You don’t really have to be charismatic, you just have to believe in what you are doing so strongly that it becomes a reality. A fundamental shortcoming in much of business today is that the leadership lacks vision and passion (223) Entrepreneurial success goes to the person with the energy and the strategic initiative. People are inspired by leaders who take initiative and who risk personal safety for the sake of a cause. (226)

Credible leaders are hopeful about the future—and yielding enough to heed words of caution. Seligman refers to such people as flexible optimists. (231) Compelling visions distinguish credible leaders from other credible individuals. It means staring out into the unknown and imagining the possibilities. (241) Act in ways that increase people’s beliefs that you are honest, competent, and inspiring, and people will be much more likely to want to follow your direction. (248) It is the responsibility of the leaders to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to express his or her opinion and to get a fair hearing. (250)

We have noted that people expect their leaders to be (254) forward-looking, to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization. People also expect leaders to be inspiring—to be energetic and positive about the future. Leaders must be able to communicate their visions in ways that uplift and encourage people to enlist. In combination, being forward-looking and inspiring make a leader visionary and dynamic. They make a person attractive to others. They point people in pioneering directions and give them energy and drive. They get people focused on and enthusiastic about building the organization of the future, putting today’s actions in a strategic context. Add to this the rest of the foundation of credibility (honesty and competence) and you would think you would have an unbeatable formula for success. (255) If your vision of the future is opposed to that of your hierarchical superiors or your teammates, you may be perceived as uncooperative and disloyal even if your view is *correct*. Leadership requires the realization of a unique and ideal image of the future. (257)

But not everyone will agree, and decisions must be made. Too much listening and too much polling of people's opinions can turn to inconsistency; it can become just trying to please, not trying to lead. (268) This ability to anticipate and commit to the future is the real test of leadership. (269) ...we have no choice but to take the risks, and accept the pain, the excitement, and the exhilaration of *becoming learners*... (272)