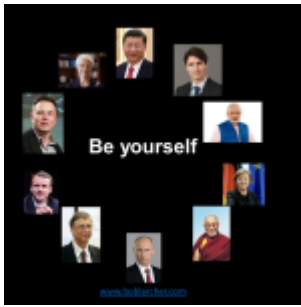


Be yourself leadership



"Be yourself – everyone else is already taken"

Oscar Wilde

Some people want to be charming, outgoing and sociable like Obama, some want to be direct, tough and imposing like Putin, some want to be imaginative, spontaneous and creative like Branson and others calm, centred and wise like Yoda.

The list of leadership qualities or characteristics is long and sometimes contradictory; empathetic and decisive, structured and flexible, collaborative & competitive, practical & conceptual, cautious & radical, demonstrative & measured to mention but a few.

No one has all the qualities or characteristics available, but everyone has their own qualities and characteristics; everyone has their own leadership potential – and it's just waiting to be discovered, developed and deployed in order to drive some kind of change or transformation.

So, how do we go about discovering our leadership potential? Well, we can wait to see if one day "something" happens and we are propelled into a leadership situation or we can decide to accelerate the process (the "something" may, after all, never happen) and take a serious look at ourselves and identify what we are really good at, what we think/feel we could be good at and what we will just have to live with.

"The unexamined life is not worth living"

Socrates

Personality questionnaires are a good place to start; there are a lot of these out there and you have to be careful with your choice. My preferred choices are those based on the work of C. G Jung and what have come to be known as Jungian preferences; questionnaires such as Insights, MBTI or Lumina Spark (I've tested them all and they work for me).

Gallup's StrengthsFinder questionnaire (again I tested it on myself and it reflects my strengths very well) is also very good; to use this in its simplest form you need to buy the book (around \$15 or so) and use the unique access code included with each book to complete the questionnaire.

This kind of approach will help you to understand you own unique blend of leadership qualities & characteristics and it won't be the same blend as anyone else – you are not anyone else!!

“Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?”

Benjamin Franklin

Having discovered your qualities and characteristics the next step is to conscientiously use them; you need to find yourself “safe” environments where you can test and validate what have been identified as your strengths and where you can put your weaknesses on the table without being threatened; friends, family, a local club or low risk professional situations – these are what we are looking for!

“The more seriously you take your growth, the more seriously your people will take you.”

John Maxwell

You need to become consciously competent in using your leadership qualities and characteristics such that you can

later become unconsciously competent; a bit like great guitarists – when I try to play an Eric Clapton solo I am very conscious of what I am doing, when Eric plays the same solo its within him, he's not just playing the solo he is the solo.

“Leadership is the readiness to stand out in a crowd.”

John Maxwell

Deploying your leadership qualities & characteristics is a move up the risk ladder from “developing” because it's about “less safe” situations; situations which may lead to conflict. “Deploying” is about “standing up and being counted”; it's about taking the risk of being “disliked”, being seen as “acting out of one's place” and using your leadership qualities & characteristics in “real” situations.

The opportunities to deploy one's leadership are everywhere; we are not looking for the “MLK moment” or the “Ghandi moment” – everyday “leadership moments” are omnipresent and you need to take them (or not) in a conscious manner.

“Those who believe they can do something and those who believe they can't are both right.”

Henry Ford

Leadership is about taking people somewhere; it's not about being happy with the status quo – it's about having a vision (or maybe “buying in” to a vision) of a “better” future state for oneself, one's organisation or the society one lives in.

Driving some kind of change or transformation is way up the risk ladder; this is about making a real stand for what you believe in – we are not necessarily in MLK, Ghandi or Jaures territory, but we are not far off.

“If you have nothing worth dying for then you have nothing worth living for”

Martin Luther King

If you would like help in Discovery, Developing and Deploying your leadership in order to drive some kind of transformation, be it personal, organisation or societal – don not hesitate to contact me.