

2011/6/1 Abstract: The foundations of leadership

The foundations of leadership

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Leadership takes place in numerous situations of everyday life, and above all, of course, in a professional environment: in government or economy, in small firms or big concerns, but also in clubs, NGOs, or in organised activities during leisure time, or, in other words, everywhere, where a group of people follow a goal and organize more or less hierarchically for that. Here, one can detect three aspects which are inherent in leadership:

- A leader has to reach an objective.
- Leadership concerns people directly and/or indirectly.
- Leadership is identified by acceptance of responsibility.

Beginning with family and school environments, everybody has met leadership in the course of his life, and thus also has a very subjective idea of this matter, except he has experienced leadership training like in manager courses and all kinds of seminars or in special leadership training sites such as the military academies. Usually, however, the impression of the complexity of leadership remains vague even there, because of different emphases due to personal experiences and/or traditions both of the teaching staff and of the trainees. In the following essay the author tries to summarize the foundations of leadership in all its complexity. So people interested in this matter, and of course mainly executive personnel, can be enabled to reflect their situation as leaders, to realize possible deficits or too underestimated perspectives, and to compare them with their current leadership situations. Consciousness is the key to understanding and to the development of particular leadership capabilities. The essay is based on a positive intention of leadership which is embedded in a functioning social system working from a Western and democratic pattern. If a person has the proper motivation and a philanthropic personality, but is unable to make use of the instruments of leadership and completely fails within the organisation, he or she will be appreciated as a person, but will have to be removed from the position of leadership. On the other hand, a qualified leader with a misanthropic nature and selfish motivation will be deprived of confidence and sooner or later will be rejected as leader. For fully developing one's effectiveness it is essential to accept oneself as a human with all one's weaknesses and deficiencies, to appreciate oneself absolutely, and to make progress. With the combination of all personal capabilities, characteristic features and proper motivation one certainly will have the power to bring great lasting deeds about.

