Leadership, Persons, And Process

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"It is often said that leadership is a quality that people are either born with, or are not. The skill of leadership can be installed on a willing student, but its real nuances, its true purpose and qualities cannot be learned. Leadership can be taught as a process of learned behaviors. It can be displayed as one would show a weapon. It can be exercised on cue and even assigned to others. But the virtue that others can rally around and place their trust in is an innate component of the human spirit. Yet throughout the history of the human race there are countless instances of seemingly reticent people asserting themselves in ways that would at first seem improbable and then totally impossible."

Cover Page Footnote

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LEADERSHIP, PERSONS, AND PROCESSES

BY EDYSON JULIO

It is often said that leadership is a quality that people are either born with, or are not. The skill of leadership can be installed on a willing student, but its real nuances, its true purpose and qualities cannot be learned. Leadership can be taught as a process of learned behaviors. It can be displayed as one would show a weapon. It can be exercised on cue and even assigned to others. But the virtue that others can rally around and place their trust in is an innate component of the human spirit. Yet throughout the history of the human race there are countless instances of seemingly reticent people asserting themselves in ways that would at first seem improbable and then totally impossible. In times of war, peace-loving people have lead fierce attacks. Others, who would normally run from violence, deliver punishing blows and inspire their brethren to do the same. So then, what is this quality of leadership that inspires fellow humans to follow suit? Is it that the leader has learned tactics, behavioral triggers that lure companions to set aside free will and replace it with the will of the instigator? Or is it that the follower has no choice but to subjugate his own persona and instinctively defer to a “greater will”?

Leadership may instead be a process of development; a process of encouragement and trust that, given a nurturing confidence, human nature automatically assumes a search for higher aspiration. Men and women, who are merely expected to follow, can instead lead if they are entrusted with the expectation that the higher goal is always within them. Therefore, leadership may be both the person and the process, interchangeable with each other, yet rendered impotent without the human spirit, the aspiration to achieve a higher state of being. Parents will provide their children with the tools to lead the family into the future, but it is up to the prodigy to put the leadership tools to use. Managers will instruct their charges on how to build a better product, but it’s up to the line staff to do what they are paid to produce. Generals will plan and command their legions, but each soldier will carry out the actual process to move forward and ultimately to win. The leadership process is ultimately a human endeavor. It is both a learned and an innate phenomenon. It can be taught and it can be learned. It can be exercised by reticent people and bold ones alike.

Leadership must never be the sole possession of those who claim to have singular genetic pre-disposition. It should always be seen for only what it is: the ability of human beings to use it to achieve a higher order, a desired goal, or a better existence.