

Developing Leaders

Quarterly

MAKING ORGANIZATIONS MORE HUMAN



Followership

Catalyzing your leadership practice



Thinking imprinted.

The first step on any leadership development process is to create space and condition for reflection on your leadership practice.

Multiple studies have concluded that we absorb and digest information better when we read off the printed page. Reading is focused, uninterrupted and, with the chance to note down our own thoughts in the margins, print allows us to actively engage with the subject.

To embed the change, Developing Leaders Quarterly is best in print.

Developing Leaders Quarterly print edition is ideally formatted to slip into your pocket, bag or briefcase to read when you find you have a few minutes to spare before a business guest arrives, while commuting, at the airport...

SUBSCRIBE AT [DEVELOPINGLEADERSQUARTERLY.COM/SUBSCRIBE](https://developingleadersquarterly.com/subscribe)

Contents

Editor's Letter <i>Roddy Millar</i>	2
Followership Matters Everyone is a follower <i>Marc and Samantha Hurwitz</i>	6
Natural Followership and Why it is Important <i>Christian Monö</i>	26
Followership, Courage and Intelligent Disobedience <i>Ira Chaleff</i>	44
The Reciprocity of Trust in High Performance Teams <i>Langley Sharp MBE</i>	58
Levels of Empowerment How Followership is Changing the Leader-Follower Dynamic <i>Basil Read</i>	80
A Followership Journey A Human Resources Perspective on the Organization-Wide Implementation of a Leadership-Followership Program <i>Julie Newman</i>	94
To Pause and Reflect – The Leadership Imperative in Times of Change A Perspective from a Sabbatical in South America <i>Mark McCartney</i>	112
Lessons from the Maasai 3Rs – Responsibility, Ritual and Rulers <i>Roddy Millar</i>	130
Leadership Program ROI Useful Fact or Mythical Fiction? <i>Wendy Shepherd</i>	148
Idea #872: Why Followers Make Great Leaders	164
Idea #854: Followers Can Fix the Damage of Leadership Incompetence	170
Idea #846: Gender Diverse Teams are More Innovative and Impactful	176
Idea #866: Leaders' Management of Team Emotions Key to Agile Success	182
Book Review: Infectious Generosity	189
Book Review: The AI-Savvy Leader	193
Book Review: The Neurodiversity Edge	198



By Langley Sharp MBE

The Reciprocity of Trust in High Performance Teams

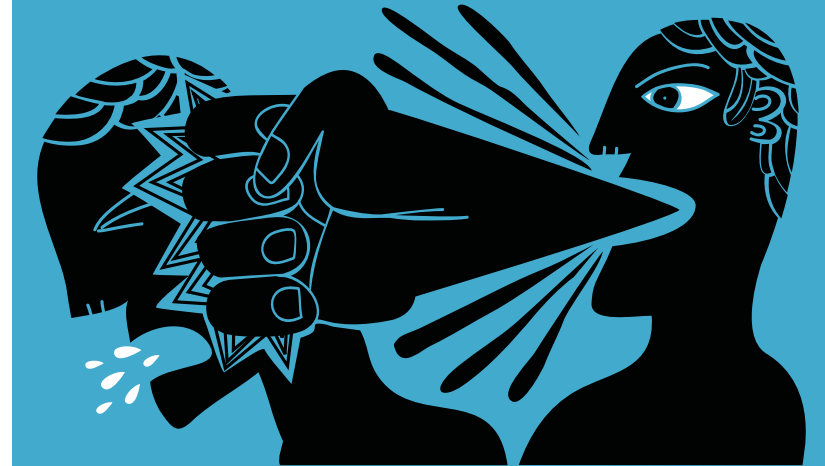
Many of us may reflect on our professional careers and recall transformative moments, experiences so pivotal that they evoke visceral memories. One of my earliest occurred on a cold, wet, winter morning, in the rural county of Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. We had gathered in a dormitory-style room at one end of Enniskillen Police Station, a space no bigger than half a basketball court. To the people stood in front of me it was their home for six months, crammed in two rows of triple-high bunk-

beds. This was 5 Platoon, B Company, 2 PARA. Standing there feeling somewhat exposed and trying desperately to exert an air of confidence, I was introduced as their new platoon commander. 30 seasoned paratroopers were now staring at me. The weight of judgement was palpable.

It was in that moment, fresh from 18 months of initial Army officer training, that the difference between command and leadership became a stark reality. I now had command authority of these young men, an authority with legal and constitutional status, and, as the Army's doctrine articulates, the responsibility and accountability that is implicit. I would ultimately be held accountable for not only the decisions and actions I took, but those of the soldiers before me. Yet, with the motto of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, *Serve to Lead*, ringing in my ears, I was also expected to be a leader. Whilst command is grounded in designated authority, leadership is a social relationship, a symbiotic partnership between leader and led.

One of the primary roles of any leader is to build this social relationship, nurturing the connections whose strength directly influences the collective performance of the group. It was acutely evident to me therefore, that to leverage the best of the talent and experience of the platoon, command authority would only get me so far. It

Authority is granted, leadership is earned.



was incumbent on me to develop relationships with every individual and to play my part in strengthening the social bonds of the team, upon which the mission depended. Authority is granted, leadership is earned.

But this is not just a tale of leadership. All too often, the focus of analysis is that of the man or woman 'out in front'. Far less the subject of study or debate is the effect such leaders create. Leaders may be the catalyst for change or action, but they are rarely the effect itself. That is the preserve of those who they seek to influence, the followers. As defined in the British Army's recently

published Doctrine Note, followership is, ‘the act of an individual or individuals willingly accepting the influence of others to achieve a shared outcome.’ Key to this definition is willing acceptance, for, as the Note continues, followership, ‘...requires the consent of those being led, whether consciously or unconsciously. A leader appeals to the wants and needs of an individual and, in return, the individual assesses whether it is in their interest to assume the role of follower.’

Eight months after that individually seminal moment, the world shared a collectively defining experience in the terror attacks of 9/11, an event that was to irrevocably shape my service over the next two decades. Reflecting on a further eight operational tours, a decade in special forces and command at every level up to battalion, I was intrigued to understand what compels one to ‘willingly follow’? What are the key ingredients to creating those social bonds and cementing relationships? Unlocking these provides not just the grounds for effective followership but great leadership and, in tandem, high performance. Having variously considered the compelling influences of authority, belonging, power and purpose, I consistently return to the essence of any credible partnership, trust.

But what is trust, why does it matter and how is the reciprocity of trust nurtured between leader and led?

A leader appeals to the wants and needs of an individual and, in return, the individual assesses whether it is in their interest to assume the role of follower.

The Fuel and the Glue (What and Why)

Like many well-versed but often nebulous business concepts, such as ‘strategy’, ‘culture’ and ‘leadership’ itself, trust is routinely touted as a fundamental to organizational success yet eludes universal understanding. Defined variously as ‘a belief in the reliability of someone or something’, trust is the cornerstone of our functioning as a social species, our ability to form relationships and to collaborate effectively. Indeed, hardwired to trust, our very survival demands it. We trust our parents and loved ones, our closest friends, our loyal teams and, to a greater or lesser extent, complete strangers. As Stephen Scott, founder of the behavioural analytics company Starling Trust argues, ‘Our survival as a species has hinged on an ability to cooperate with trusted others.’ Moreover, our domination as humankind has arguably been born not just of our superior intelligence but our ability to scale trust. ‘Our thriving as a species has come as a conse-

Trust provides a binding function, a conscious, or often unconscious, commitment that an individual makes towards another on a judgement of perceived safety to one's own self interests.

quence of our ability to collaborate with strangers, at scale, as a presumed behavioral norm.' From interpersonal relationships and high-performing teams, to functioning nation states, trust is sacrosanct.

As US Army Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen wrote, 'trust is both the fuel that drives the Army and the glue that holds it together.' In his simple statement, Caslen captures two critical facets of this all-pervasive concept. On the one hand, trust provides a binding function, a conscious, or often unconscious, commitment that an individual makes towards another on a judgement of perceived safety to one's own self interests. With cohesiveness established, trust also provides the 'fuel', enabling individuals to act effectively together. It allows us to challenge, innovate and make decisions in the interests of the group. Moreover, it is trust that unleashes the full potential of any team. Through this sense of assured reliability, we are able to grant agency



to others, who in turn seize responsibility for devolved decision-making and action. When people feel appropriately empowered, they are more motivated, accept greater ownership and add further value. Moreover, the organization is happier, healthier, and more productive. Trust, therefore, supports the two fundamental obligations of any business or organisation; the moral responsibility to look after its people and, inextricably linked, the corporate responsibility to optimise its core purpose.

But consistency in high performance requires a responsibility from every individual in the team. The very nature of trust is one of reciprocity, a mutual responsibility between leader and led (as well as peer-to-peer) to create, sustain and magnify. Followers need to trust that their leader will form sound judgements, share sacrifices,

use their authority appropriately and act with integrity. In turn, leaders need to trust their followers to take ownership, be proactive within the given intent, and provide candid feedback. As I stated in the Army's official account of leadership, *The Habit of Excellence*, 'Without these layers of vertical and horizontal trust, communication breaks down, confidence ebbs and mission success is threatened.' This leader-follower reciprocity demands what I refer to as the '5 Cs of Trust': competency, consistency, character, courage and care.

The 5 Cs of Trust (How)

Competency

First and foremost, trust is earned through a perception of role-specific competency. From close friends to complete strangers, it is arguably one of the primary metrics of judging whether to trust. We trust a pilot to fly us, a dentist to drill our teeth and teachers to care for our children. Yet competence is contextual. A surgeon might be trusted to conduct a life-saving operation but not to build a house extension. We trust those we deem to have the relevant skills and experience expected of their position, and necessary for the task in hand.

Beyond task-specific technical skills, leaders are also prized for their competency in decision-making. Problem analysis, judgement and clear communication are

staple expectations of leadership competency. Yet in a fast-evolving world, many leaders are challenged to keep pace with the breadth and depth of specialist skills required to remain competitive. Whilst a growth mindset is important for any leadership role, increasingly those in senior positions find themselves at the behest of the knowledge of those more junior. Having the humility to know when others should step forward and assume the leader role, regardless of formal positions of authority, are a fast-track to earning trust and respect. In my first few months on operations, I routinely deferred to my soldiers and junior leaders to contribute their superior experience to the plans that I would ultimately direct. Almost 20 years later I commanded a Parachute Regiment battalion. Despite the wealth of experience I had accumulated, almost on a daily basis I would revert to the role of follower in favour of those more junior to me, on the grounds of competency. Not only was it right for the task, but it undoubtedly enhanced mutual trust and respect.

But trust is reciprocal. For followers to earn their leader's trust they too must demonstrate the competencies expected of their role, to consistently push boundaries, take the initiative and assume ownership of their part in the collective endeavours. High performing teams thrive on the delegation of responsibility that enables

Having the humility to know when others should step forward and assume the leader role, regardless of formal positions of authority, are a fast-track to earning trust and respect.

everyone to offer their full potential. Yet delegation comes at risk to those enabling it. First and foremost, leaders need to be reassured that granting agency to others will be met by a competency to deliver. As the British Army's doctrine succinctly states:

'Followers feel and believe in the imperative of mutual trust in both the leader-follower and commander-subordinate relationship. As much as they expect their leader to trust them, they ensure reciprocal trust by being loyal, selflessly committed, reliable and values-driven, as well as consistently delivering to the highest standards.'

Consistency

As former Deputy Chairman of Saatchi and Saatchi, Richard Hytner put simply, 'People like to know they can trust you, and trust is predictable behaviour over time.' By nature we crave certainty; certainty reassures. From individuals to institutions, we trust those we can

predict: doctors with a track record of successful patient care; investment funds routinely yielding high returns; and e-commerce companies delivering on time and at speed. In the same way we might assess the validity of data based on patterns of predictability, so too do we assess trust in others based on predictability of their actions. We seek consistency in competency – in the performance, product or service delivered – but also in character. We trust others because we know what they stand for and that they are consistent in acting in accordance with their shared values.

Trust is rapidly eroded if those deemed close allies of the leader are treated more favourably. A perceived lack of moral courage in failing to maintain standards for all is a secured path to undermining credibility. Consistency in behaviour is also a foundation of effective followership, generating trust from both leaders and peers alike. Leaders are more likely to invest responsibility and freedom to act in those they are assured will deliver.

Consistency is a cumulative effect. It is the predictability of everyday actions built-up over time. Hence why elite team performance is matured with leaders, peers and followers alike having developed an almost intuitive understanding of one another's behaviours. When it matters most therefore, on the battlefield, pitch or boardroom, the very best teams are able to act on instinct.



Regardless of the uncertainty and volatility of the situation, trust is implicit based on consistent, predictable behaviours.

Character

Acclaimed WWII General and former Chief of Staff of the US Army, Matthew Ridgway once stated, 'Character is the bedrock on which the whole edifice of leadership rests. Without it, particularly in the military profession, failure in peace, disaster in war, or, at best, mediocrity in both will result.'

Tactical mistakes he could abide, often using them as a vehicle for our development, but behavioural transgressions or poor moral judgements would face a harsher critic.

In this succinct yet powerful statement, Ridgway encapsulated the essence of why trust matters. We trust others because we have faith in who they are – their character. Defined as 'the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual,' character might otherwise be seen as the 'true you'. It is, as Mary Crossan et al. described, the 'interconnected set of habituated patterns of thought, emotion, motivation or volition, and action,' that reflect what is deemed to be virtuous. In those regarded as being of trustworthy character, there is not only a consistency and alignment of thoughts, words and deeds, but all are judged to be virtuous. Put simply, we trust those who demonstrate integrity, knowing they will do the right thing in difficult circumstances.

In my first six months as a platoon commander, I benefitted from the mentorship of our highly respected company commander, Major Rob Stephenson. Not only was he the consummate professional but expected, and role modelled, high moral standards. Tactical mistakes

Courage is also required to let go of control, passing the baton to others even if the assigned leader remains ultimately accountable.

he could abide, often using them as a vehicle for our development, but behavioural transgressions or poor moral judgements would face a harsher critic. It was an early lesson in securing and maintaining trust. If the 'easy' decisions were taken in peacetime when the stakes were low, the implications for such habitual decision-making in war could be catastrophic. Hence for the British Army, adherence to its Values and Standards – the moral boundaries that inform expected standards of behaviour for both leaders and followers alike – is paramount. As author James Kerr stated, 'Our values decide our character. Our character decides our value.'

Courage

'Courage,' C.S. Lewis would argue, 'is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means at the point of highest reality.' It is of little surprise therefore, that courage is considered *primus inter pares* amongst British Army values. Not just

the physical courage required to deliver its core purpose, but the moral courage to do so within the expectations of the society it serves.

But both as leader and follower, courage, a psychological tenacity borne of true inner confidence, manifests in many forms. We trust leaders with the courage to make difficult decisions, to stay the course amid uncertainty, and to hold both themselves and others to account in the maintenance of high standards. Courage is also required to let go of control, passing the baton to others even if the assigned leader remains ultimately accountable.

Furthermore, it takes courage to be vulnerable. As Patrick Lencioni advocates in *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, it is vulnerability-based trust that drives true performance. The courage to self-identify and declare '...skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings and requests for help.' Often perceived as a weakness, vulnerability, when applied with contextual judgement, is a strength. It allows others to see the human side of a leader and in so doing, gives permission for others to mimic, encouraging a far more open and transparent environment. This creates what Professor Amy Edmondson terms *psychological safety*, 'a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.' It is such risk-taking that drives much-heralded creativity and innovation, providing people the cognitive and

The role of the leader is to serve the interests of those they have the privilege to lead.

emotional latitude to ‘intelligently fail.’ It also promotes a healthy but too often elusive challenge culture, in which people have the courage to disagree, question traditional thinking and provide alternative perspectives. It is in such an environment, rooted in courage, that real progress is made. As the Army Doctrine Note states, ‘Without challenge, failures are not learnt from, groupthink is reinforced, safety compromised, cognitive diversity suppressed, initiative stifled, and homogeneity fostered.’

But such a culture of risk-taking and challenge encouraged by the leader is not realized if courage is not reciprocated by followers. They too face demands to do the right thing, admit mistakes and persevere in difficult times. But they must also have the courage to speak with candour in the interests of the task. In the parallel and complementary rank structure of the Army, the role of the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) is often vital in this regard. At the interface of turning direction into action, NCOs are entrusted to speak ‘truth to power,’ ensuring that higher-level decision-making matches tactical reality. Courageous NCOs, acting as critical friends, have been at the heart of every effective military team I



have worked with. Those most respected are unabashed in offering honest, purposeful challenge, based on a mutually trusting relationship that relies on what Timothy R. Clark defines as ‘high intellectual friction and low social friction.’ A challenge culture, underpinned by the courage of leaders and followers alike, is an undoubted competitive advantage.

Care

In 1945, three years after taking command of the Fourteenth Army, Field Marshal Viscount Slim led what many regard as one of the finest victories in military history. Turning 'defeat into victory' in the jungles of Burma, he reversed the fortunes of a ravaged million-strong multinational force, to vanquish the revered Japanese Imperial Army. Affectionally known as 'Uncle Bill', Slim was renowned on the one hand as a leader with a sharp decisive mind, a willingness to take calculated risks and driven by an indomitable will to win, and, on the other, great humility, an advocacy for empowered action, and a deeply held love and respect for his soldiers. From senior generals to junior soldiers, Slim was universally trusted because he cared.

This innate desire to be protected, valued and loved, stems from one of the most natural of human instincts. Our survival necessitates a sense of safety and we feel safe in the hands of those we believe will look after our interests. In turn, we trust. The role of the leader, therefore, is to serve the interests of those they have the privilege to lead. As Major General Patrick Marriott, former Commandant of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst argues, 'That preparedness to serve others at the expense of oneself is perhaps one of the litmus tests by which others judge leaders – and quite rightly.' Caring for

For teams to perform at their best, service to others cannot be the preserve of the leader alone. Followers must have an equal commitment to the interests of their leaders and teammates alike.

others requires leaders to know their people, to understand their motivations, appreciate their strengths and weaknesses, and support their aspirations. It demands an intention that goes beyond the needs of the task, or expectations of the team and focuses on the intimate needs of every individual. As President Roosevelt wisely counselled, 'Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.'

Assured that the leader cares, followers trust, and with such trust comes a reciprocal expectation of loyalty and compassion. For teams to perform at their best, service to others cannot be the preserve of the leader alone. Followers must have an equal commitment to the interests of their leaders and teammates alike. Phil Jackson, one of the most successful basketball coaches of all time, understood this intuitively. 'Good teams become great ones when the members trust each other enough to surrender the "me" for the "we".'



Summary

It is this sense of service to the “we” not the “me” that has defined my military experience. From the 30 paratroopers who first helped to mould me into the leader and follower I was to become, to the many thousands I have had the privilege of both leading and being led by since, it was selfless service that united us. The intense social connections developed, akin to familial love at their strongest, were the catalyst for us to operate, and succeed, in the most extreme of environments, amid the

most daunting of challenges. The result was a force-multiplying effect far beyond the capabilities of any one individual. For success, whether in business, sport or public service, is a collective endeavour.

Yet true teamship cannot be realized without the ‘fuel and glue’ of trust. Trust is the currency of high performance, strengthening and scaling the social bonds we rely upon to operate at the highest level. It is hard fought and easily lost, demanding responsibility from every individual. Enduring success requires an intricate web of symbiotic and mutually reinforcing partnerships, every individual engaged in a reciprocity of trust. It is the ‘5 Cs of Trust’ – competency, consistency, character, courage and care – that unlock both great leadership and effective followership, and in tandem, exceptional team performance.

A fully referenced version of this article is available on request from editor@dl-q.com

Langley Sharp MBE is the former head of the Centre for Army Leadership, responsible for championing leadership excellence across the British Army. He led a counter-insurgency Task Force operation, commanded a Parachute Regiment Battalion and delivered the training programme for the London 2012 Olympics venue security, for which he was awarded an MBE. He is the author of the British Army’s official account of leadership, *The Habit of Excellence*.



FEATURED OFFER



Unlimited Digital Access

\$3 for 3 months

~~\$6/Month~~ | Save 83%
then \$6.00/month

SELECT



Unlimited Digital Access

\$55 / year

~~\$72/Year~~ | Save 24%

SELECT

DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR



Unlimited Digital Access + Print

\$95 / year

Get 4 beautiful collectible booklets for your library for only \$40 more.

SELECT

We also offer organizational subscriptions for those looking to support their colleagues with a regular quarterly print and/or digital delivery of leadership thinking.

Organizational subscriptions are discounted from the above rates, please contact editor@dl-q.com to discuss.

IDEAS FOR LEADERS
CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK

CffO CENTER
FOR THE FUTURE
OF ORGANIZATION

www.dl-q.com