

Being Builders of Tomorrow

Michigan Municipal Executives



THREE RIVERS
CORPORATION

A Question for You:

**Do you have the courage
necessary to take responsibility
for inventing the future?**

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Every year in the U.S. \$50 billion is spent across all sectors of the economy on leadership development

BUT

...workplaces are filled with dissatisfied and disengaged employees who do not trust their leaders

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

- Preachy, feel-good, leadership industry based “inspiration” training has not produced desired effects in organizations
- Leaders are taught to obsess over how things ought to be while ignoring how to find the truth of what is going on and why it’s happening
- Insight, not inspiration, provides a solid foundation for an engaged organizational culture

A working hypothesis...

Leadership

Creating collective accountability and dedication to progressive revelation for the purpose of reaching compelling goals of mutual interest by honorable means.

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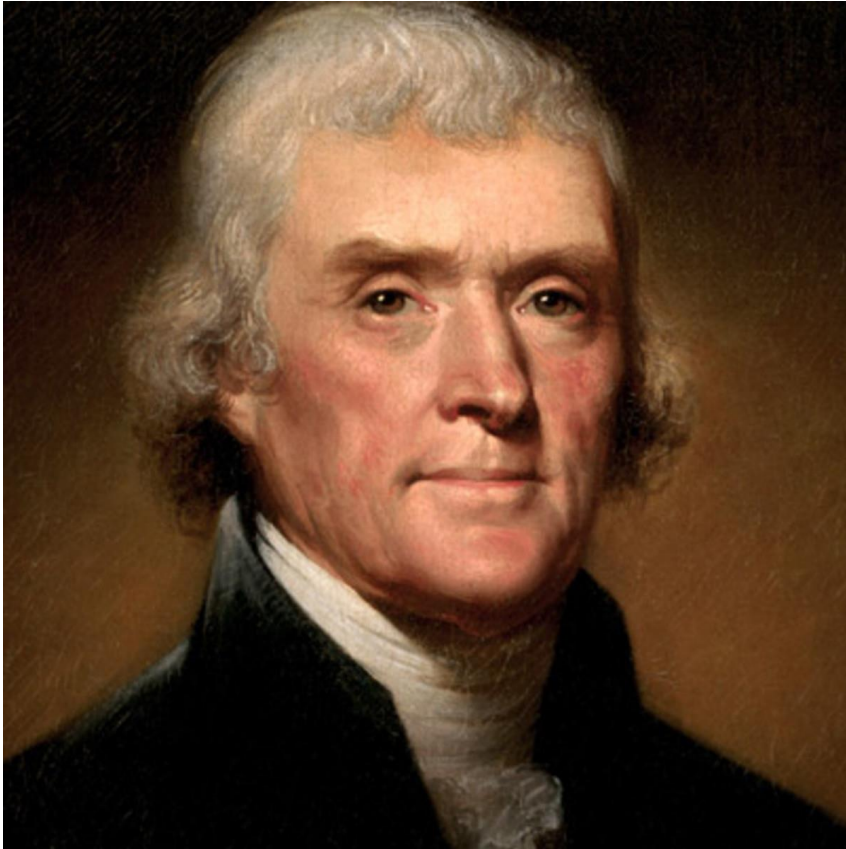
A Question for You:

When did

**“Gracefully accepts being treated poorly
due to title and role.”**

become a key performance metric of the
municipal executive’s job description?

The Public Servant



Thomas Jefferson:

“The civil service should offer drudgery and subsistence only, to those entrusted with its administration; a wise and necessary precaution against the degeneracy of the public servants.”

Edelman Trust Barometer

- Average trust in institutions by the general population in the United States declined 9% 2017 to 2018
- Steepest decline ever measured

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Limited understanding of governance / government

- 67% of Americans have a favorable opinion of their local government
- 67% of Americans say that their side is losing, more often than winning, in matters of politics
- 75% of Americans say an elected official should heed the will of the majority, even if that elected official (and their supporters) disagree with the majority

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Limited understanding of governance / government

- Democracy - common understanding of “majority rule”
- Republic - limits the latitude and authority of the majority via a constitution, therefore liberty is protected for all, even those in the minority
- Delegate - elected officials serve as a direct instrument of the people who elected them
- Representative - elected to utilize their judgment in order to make decisions in the best interest of the country and their constituents

Some American History

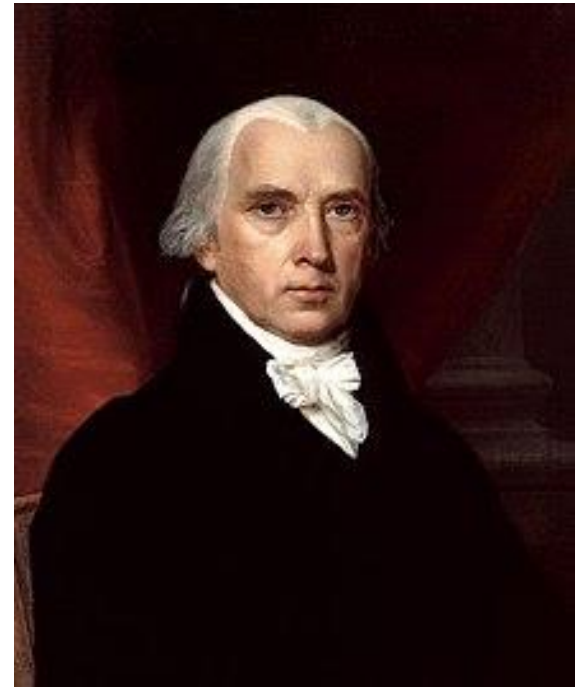


- 1776 Colonies declare independence from England
- 1787 Federalist Papers
85 Articles by **Publius** (John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison)
- 1788 Constitution is ratified
- 1789 George Washington elected 1st President

Polarization

Factions: James Madison – Federalist 10

- a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole
- who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community



Polarization

Factions

- so strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts
- It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution.

Polarization

Factions

- the Framers themselves believed that the fate of the republic depended on an educated citizenry
- Based on his studies of ancient republics, Madison concluded that broad education of citizens was the best security against “crafty and dangerous encroachments on public liberty,”
- Preservation of our republic urgently requires imparting constitutional education to a new generation and reviving Madisonian reason in an impetuous world.

Edmund Burke, “Speech to the Electors of Bristol,” Nov. 3, 1774
(considered the philosophical founder of modern conservatism)

Your Representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Judgment

- Judgments are decisions regarding the relative merit or value of what is being observed
- They often represent a choice between alternatives
 - Rarely clear between right and wrong
 - Most often between “almost right” and “probably wrong”

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Judgment Errors

- Judgments can be confused with reality and confirmation bias; “My mind is made up, don’t confuse me with facts”
- We are limited in our understanding of other people and how decisions affect them by our own range of experiences.
- Judgment by intellect is only part of the truth. Fact based assessments allow us to isolate impacts on people.
 - However, we rarely fail to find the facts we’re looking for

Air Marshal Charles Roy Slemon



Some Canadian History



October 5, 1960

NORAD radar in Thule, Greenland indicates massive Soviet nuclear attack with 99% certainty, notifies Cheyenne Mountain Complex

DEFCON 3

Duty commander contacts NORAD Commander, Gen. Laurence Kuter who is in flight and can't be reached

DEFCON 4

Second call to Deputy Commander, Air Marshal Charles Roy Slemon

DEFCON 5

- 99.9% certainty of an ongoing attack
- Authority to release SAC Airborne Alert Force for immediate attack on USSR

Leadership

Creating collective accountability and dedication to **progressive revelation** for the purpose of reaching compelling goals of mutual interest by honorable means.

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Often confused with management

- Misplaced value on measurement
- Mistaking metrics for a vision of the future
- Reducing individuals to conformance vs performance

What leadership is not

Management (exercising authority in oversight of the essential)

- Power conferred to perform a service, provide direction, or bring forth order.
- If people with authority meet expectations of their authorizers the system in which they operate works well.
- Success is driven by understanding what is expected of you and meeting those expectations with a high level of confidence.
- Exceeding the scope of one's authority can result in immediate disauthorization.
- Authority has a defined scope and conferred upon you by others than the managed.

What leadership is not

Management – relying on securing conformance or compliance with systems and structures to direct others to produce outcomes that define my own success.

- Rules do not themselves lead to an ethical culture
- Rules simply inform people how not to get punished
- Managed adaptive decline – responding to continuously worsening conditions in an organized and well managed way

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Often confused with management

- McKinsey Maxim: What you can measure you can manage
- Individuals are not easy to measure (thermostat)
- Metrics mistakenly become conventional wisdom
 - GDP of the U.S. goes up when a cow is born but down when a child is born
- Measures lag and the future is unmeasurable
 - Try driving a car with speed, engine temperature, oil pressure, and fuel level data from last week

What leadership is

An experiential art—

- Identification of intelligent action
- Creating capacity for results; help people achieve things they don't see as possible
- Making sense of diverse perspectives

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Making people uncomfortable is your job

- Growth & comfort rarely coexist
- The highest rate of individual growth happens most far from our comfort zone

Creating a psychologically safe environment is your job

- When people feel safe working with others, their capacity for learning and performance increases significantly
- Employee safety is an accurate predictor of both engagement and quality of work produced

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Uncomfortable vs Safe

- Demonstrations of civility are most strongly associated with being an effective leader
- Demonstrating respect is the most important quality for getting people engaged and committed in their work
- How much formal training have you had on how to treat people with *dignity*?

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

The biggest problem is mostly you

- Leaders are judged by results
- Emphasis on results can push leaders to care more about those results than the people producing them
- The stark reality is that you are the “they”
- Change and alternative blindness are real

Demands are Relentless

- Decisiveness is required.
- Decisions come with risk.
- Speed & accuracy don't often mix.

Leadership

Creating collective accountability and dedication to progressive revelation for the purpose of reaching **compelling goals of mutual interest** by honorable means.

Another Question for You...

Are you a good story teller?

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

The story must be good

- Most people make decisions on the basis of social identities and (in politics) partisan loyalties, not an honest examination of reality
- When people don't have a lot of information they substitute guesses and views of the world that make them feel comfortable
- We make decisions based on momentary feeling and not on some sound understanding of how those decisions will improve or hurt our lives

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

The storyteller must be better

- Confident people are more convincing
- Dunning-Kruger effect: less intelligent people are incredibly confident
 - Often wrong but rarely in doubt
- Parkinson's Law of Triviality: people will put more time and effort into something trivial versus something complicated because they better understand the trivial than the complicated.
 - When you're explaining, you're losing



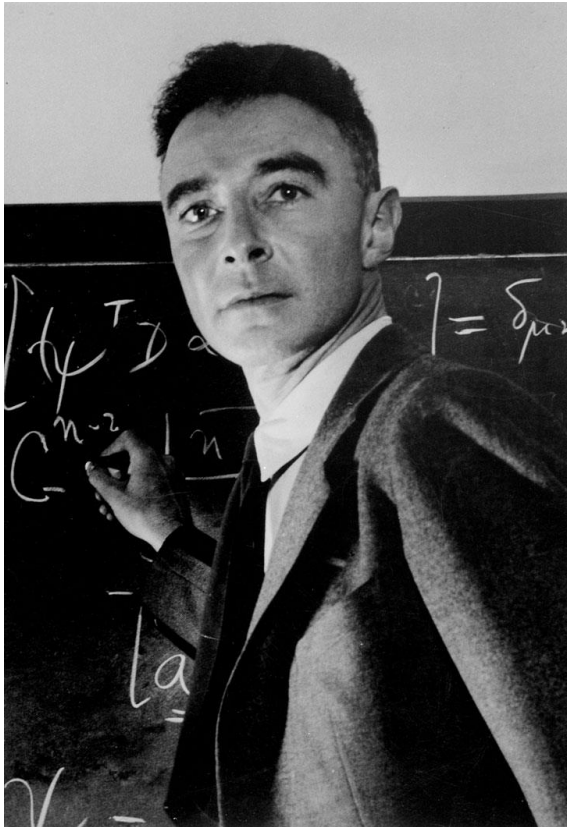
The Smartest Man in the World



Chris Langan:

- Began speaking at 6 months old
- IQ between 190-210 (30% higher than Einstein)
- Self-taught math, physics, Greek, Latin
- Independent Scholar
- Cowboy, construction worker, forest ranger, bouncer
- Cognitive Theoretic Model of the Universe

Leader of the Manhattan Project



J. Robert Oppenheimer:

- Physicist educated at Harvard and Cambridge
- Poor research lab skills
- Affiliated with the Communist Party
- Appointed to lead development of nuclear bomb during World War II

How important is storytelling?

LANGAN

- Kicked out of Reed College for missing a financial aid form deadline
- Learned to simply accept hardships versus trying to change them
- Lacked savvy required to effectively influence others

OPPENHEIMER

- Received academic probation for attempting to murder his instructor with lab chemicals
- Developed skills in public speaking, negotiation, and “presence”

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

Messaging Matters

- Persuasion comes from narratives, not lists of pros and cons or bullet points – the mental movie is far superior to the evidence based message
- The story is not presented in a vacuum and is held hostage by the storyteller
- The messenger matters
- How much formal training have you had in messaging?

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

We Resist Persuasion

- It hurts to be wrong... literally
- Anterior cingulate cortex, monitor of physical pain+
- Brain is wired to reject facts inconsistent with our beliefs

WHY LEADING IS DIFFICULT

We Resist Persuasion

- In 2005 and 2006 researchers at the University of Michigan found that when the misinformed are exposed to corrected facts they rarely changed their minds
- Political partisans particularly became more strongly set in their beliefs
- Facts, it was found, did not cure misinformation but rather actually made it stronger

Opinions vs Facts

Opinion

- An expression of belief, value, or feeling
- May be based on either facts or emotions
- Can be measured (surveys)
- Sometimes are meant to mislead others
- Important to understand purpose and language

Fact

- Can be strictly defined
- A statement that can be proven true or false
- May change over time

Opinions

- Are based on someone's thoughts, their feelings, their understanding of the matter
- Facts may be used to add credibility to an opinion, but it's still an opinion
- An opinion being widely accepted does not make it a fact

Opinions

- Opinions typically come first
- Everyone is entitled to their opinions
- Opinions are merely untested hypotheses
- Untested, opinions offer little value as they leave room for error in their foundational thought process
- Words like; seems, I think, probably, maybe, and might signal the untested opinion
- Rather than argue about opinions, test them

Facts

- Criteria of relevance must be established, particularly regarding appropriate measurement (this is typically the most controversial aspect of the decision)
- Hierarchy of facts, implicit or explicit, must be acknowledged. Some presume that empirical facts are more meaningful than qualitative facts for instance.
- Guard against merely looking for facts that fit a conclusion already reached

Uninformed vs Misinformed

Uninformed

- Lacks knowledge or information

Misinformed

- Relies on false or inaccurate information
- Has information supporting his position in mind
- Opinions formed by what the individual feels is careful, consideration of facts

Misinformed

- Opinions based on rational consideration of inaccurate information feel sound and seem intelligent
- Opinions are often also driven by our beliefs, wherein beliefs dictate the facts we choose to accept
- Opinions can then be reinforced by incorrect information because that information also reinforces our beliefs
- This cycle causes the individual to be more confident that they're right (Dunning-Kruger)

Creating the well informed

- Attacking views / beliefs amounts to attacking the person
- First disassociate the person from the view, they must first give themselves permission to have been wrong
- Precise, disciplined and frequent reminders of facts are no match for emotion and a good story
- Facts are, however, the ammo we must supply so that the person can rationalize their decision to others

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Some Irish History



- 1320 Lynch Castle built in Galway, Ireland
- 1493 James F. Lynch elected Mayor
84 Mayors of Galway have been of the Lynch clan
- 1524 Memorial erected



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More Than Construction



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The Public Servant



Government service must be attractive enough to lure our most talented people. It must be challenging enough to call forth our greatest efforts. It must be interesting enough to retain their services. It must be satisfying enough to inspire single-minded loyalty and dedication. It must be important enough to each individual to call forth reserves of energy and enthusiasm.

A Question for Them:

**Are you a citizen, or do you just
live here?**

In conclusion...

- People trust local government, educate them on the role of sound judgement in governing
- Appreciate the differences between leadership & management and lead based on respect, civility and dignity
- Have a good story to tell and be excellent at telling it
- Be always committed to doing the right thing
- Challenge them to be meaningful participants, **CITIZENS**