

## CHAPTER ONE

# LEADERSHIP IS AN ENABLING ART

In the knowledge worker age, you  
manage things and lead people

*Stephen R. Covey*

*Stephen R. Covey is the author of several acclaimed books, including The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, an international best-seller that has sold more than 15 million copies in thirty-eight languages throughout the world. When his book, The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness, was released, it was quickly named number 1 on best-seller lists in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and USA Today. His other best-sellers include First Things First; Principle-Centered Leadership, with sales exceeding 1 million; and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families. Covey is cofounder and vice chairman of FranklinCovey, a leading global professional services firm with offices in 123 countries.*

Literally hundreds of books have come out in recent years on leadership. Leadership really is the enabling art. The purpose of schools is educating kids, but if you have bad leadership, you have bad education. The purpose of medicine is helping people get well, but if you have bad leadership, you have bad medicine. Illustration after illustration could show that leadership is the highest of the arts, simply because it enables all the other arts and professions to work. This is particularly true for a family.

I've spent a lifetime studying, teaching, and writing on both leadership and management. These collective experiences have

reinforced to me that both management and leadership are vital—and that either one without the other is insufficient. At times in my life, I've fallen into the trap of overemphasizing leadership and neglecting the importance of management. I'm sure this is because it's become so evident to me that most organizations, families included, are vastly overmanaged and desperately underled. This gap has been a major motivating force in my professional work, and has led me to focus on principles of leadership. Nevertheless, I've been powerfully reminded of the vital part that management plays.

I learned (painfully) that you can't lead things. You can't lead inventories and cash flow and costs. You can't lead information, time, structures, processes, facilities, and tools. You have to manage them. Why? Because things don't have the power and freedom to choose. Only people do. So you lead (empower) people. You manage and control things. The problem is, the organizational legacy we've all inherited says you do need to manage and control people.

## THE THING MIND-SET OF THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

We live in a Knowledge Worker Age but operate our organizations in a controlling Industrial Age model that absolutely suppresses the release of human potential. The mind-set of the Industrial Age that still dominates today's workplace will simply not work in the Knowledge Worker Age and new economy. Here's why.

The main assets and primary drivers of economic prosperity in the Industrial Age were machines and capital—things. People were necessary but replaceable. You could control and churn through manual workers with little consequence—supply exceeded demand. You just got more able bodies that would comply with strict procedures. People were like things—you could be efficient with them. When all you want is a person's body and you don't really want the mind, heart, or spirit that go with it (all inhibitors to the free-flowing processes of the Machine Age), you have reduced a person to a thing.

Many of our modern management practices come from the Industrial Age:

- It gave us the belief that you have to control and manage people.
- It gave us our view of accounting, which makes people expenses and machines assets. Think about it. People are put on the P&L statement as an expense; equipment is put on the balance sheet as an investment.
- It gave us our carrot-and-stick motivational philosophy—the Great Jackass technique that motivates with a carrot in front (reward) and drives with a stick from behind (fear and punishment).
- It gave us centralized budgeting—where trends are extrapolated into the future, and hierarchies and bureaucracies are formed to drive “getting the numbers”—an obsolete reactive process that produces kiss-up cultures bent on “spending it so we won’t lose it next year” and protecting the backside of your department.

All these practices and many, many more come from the Industrial Age—working with manual workers.

The problem is, managers today are still applying the Industrial Age control model to knowledge workers. Because many in positions of authority do not see the true worth and potential of their people and do not possess a complete, accurate understanding of human nature, they manage people as they do things. This lack of understanding also prevents them from tapping into the highest motivations, talents, and genius of people. What happens when you treat people like things today? It insults and alienates them, depersonalizes work, and creates low-trust, unionized, litigious cultures. What happens when you treat your teenage children like things? It, too, insults and alienates, depersonalizes precious family relationships, and creates low trust, contention, and rebellion.

To further illustrate—I frequently ask large audiences, “How many agree that the vast majority of the workforce in your organization possess far more talent, intelligence, capability, and creativity than their present jobs require or even allow?” Invariably, almost all

the people in the room raise their hands, and this is with groups all over the world. About the same percentage acknowledge that they are under immense pressure to produce more for less. Just think about it. People face a new and increasing expectation to produce more for less in a terribly complex world, yet are simply not allowed to use a significant portion of their talents and intelligence.

## THE POWER OF A PARADIGM

Author John Gardner once said, “Most ailing organizations have developed a functional blindness to their own defects. They are not suffering because they cannot resolve their problems, but because they cannot see their problems.” Einstein put it this way: “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

These statements underscore one of the most profound learnings of my life—if you want to make minor, incremental changes, and improvements, work on practices, behavior, or attitude. But if you want to make significant, quantum improvement, work on paradigms. The word *paradigm* stems from the Greek word *para-deigma*, originally a scientific term but commonly used today to mean a perception, assumption, theory, frame of reference, or lens through which you view the world. It’s like a map of a territory or city. If your map is inaccurate, it will make no difference how hard you try to find your destination or how positively you think—you’ll stay lost. If it’s accurate, then diligence and attitude matter. But not until then.

The new Knowledge Worker Age is based on a new paradigm, one entirely different from the thing paradigm of the Industrial Age. Let’s call it the Whole-Person Paradigm.

## THE WHOLE-PERSON PARADIGM

At the core, there is one simple, overarching reason why so many people remain unsatisfied in their work and why most organizations fail to draw out the greatest talent, ingenuity, and creativity of their people and never become truly great, enduring organizations. It stems from an incomplete paradigm of who we are—our fundamental view of human nature.

The fundamental reality is, human beings are not things needing to be motivated and controlled; they are four-dimensional—body, mind, heart, and spirit.

If you study all philosophy and religion, both Western and Eastern, from the beginning of recorded history, you'll basically find the same four dimensions: the physical and economic, the mental, the social and emotional, and the spiritual. Different

FIGURE 1.1.



FIGURE 1.2.

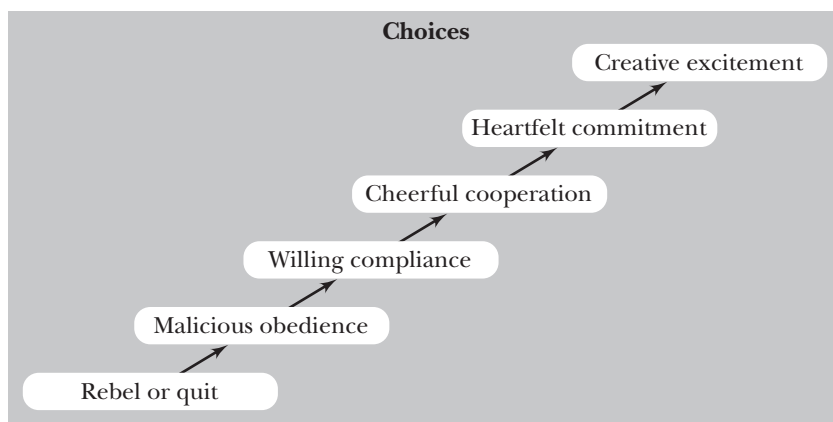


words are often used, but they reflect the same four universal dimensions of life. They also represent the four basic needs and motivations of all people: to live (survival), to love (relationships), to learn (growth and development), and to leave a legacy (meaning and contribution).

## PEOPLE HAVE CHOICES

So what's the direct connection between the controlling "thing" (part person) paradigm that dominates today's workplace and the inability of managers and organizations to inspire their people to volunteer their highest talents and contributions? The answer is simple: People make choices. Consciously or subconsciously, people decide how much of themselves they will give to their work depending on how they are treated and on their opportunities to use all four parts of their nature. These choices range from rebelling or quitting to creative excitement.

FIGURE 1.3.



If you neglect any one of the four parts of human nature, in effect you turn a person into a thing, and what do you do with things? You have to control, manage, and carrot-and-stick them to get them to move. Unless you value and enable each person to contribute in all four areas—"pay me fairly" (body), "treat me kindly" (heart), "use me creatively" (mind), "in principled ways

that serve mankind” (spirit)—they’ll rarely choose to give of themselves above the bottom three categories—rebel or quit, maliciously obey (meaning they’ll do it but hope it doesn’t work), or at best willingly comply. But in today’s Knowledge Worker Age, only one who is respected as a whole person in a whole job makes one of the upper three choices—cheerful cooperation, heartfelt commitment, or creative excitement.

Can you begin to see how the core problems in the workplace today and the core solution to those problems lie in our paradigm of human nature? Can you see how many solutions to the problems in our homes and communities lie in this same paradigm? This Industrial Age “thing” paradigm and all the practices that flow from it are the modern-day equivalent of medicinal bloodletting.

Peter Drucker, one of the greatest management thinkers of our time, spoke of this new reality in this way:

In a few hundred years, when the history of our time is written from a long-term perspective, I think it very probable that the most important event those historians will remember is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce—but the unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time—and I mean that literally—substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, people have had to manage themselves.

And we are totally unprepared for it.

FIGURE 1.4.

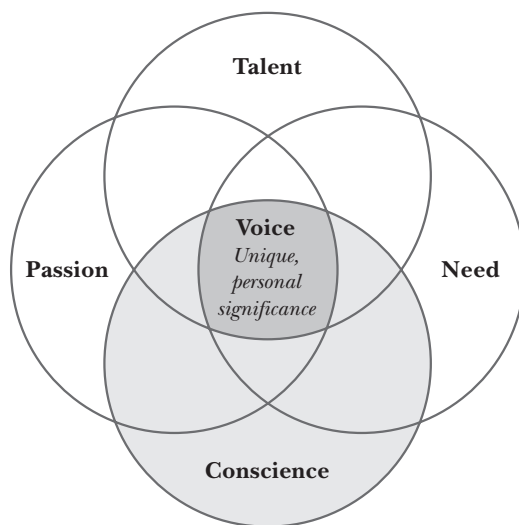


## THE CALL OF A NEW ERA

I have written much over the years on effectiveness. Being effective as individuals and organizations is no longer optional in today's world—it's the price of entry to the playing field. But surviving, thriving, innovating, excelling, and leading in this new reality will require us to build on and reach beyond effectiveness. The call and need of a new era is for greatness. It's for fulfillment, passionate execution, and significant contribution. These are on a different plane or dimension. They are different in kind—just as significance is different in kind, not in degree, from success. Tapping into the higher reaches of human genius and motivation—what we could call voice—requires a new mind-set, a new skill-set, a new tool-set . . . a new habit.

The pathway to the enormously promising side of today's reality stands in stark contrast to the pain and frustration many are experiencing. In fact, this pathway is a timeless reality. It is the voice of the human spirit—full of hope and intelligence, resilient by nature, boundless in its potential to serve the common good. This voice also encompasses the souls of organizations that will survive, thrive, and have a profound impact on the future of the world.

FIGURE 1.5.





Voice is unique, personal significance—significance that is revealed as we face our greatest challenges and that makes us equal to them.

As illustrated in Figure 1.5, voice lies at the nexus of talent (your natural gifts and strengths), passion (those things that naturally energize, excite, motivate, and inspire you), need (including what the world needs enough to pay you for), and conscience (that still, small voice within that assures you of what is right and that prompts you actually to do it). When you engage in work that taps your talent (mind) and fuels your passion (heart)—that rises out of a great need in the world (body) that you feel drawn by conscience to meet (spirit)—therein lies your voice, your calling, your soul's code.

Leadership in the Knowledge Worker Age will be characterized by those who find their own voice and who, regardless of formal position, inspire others to find theirs. It is leadership where people communicate to others their worth and potential so clearly they will come to see it in themselves. Therein lies a bright and limitless future.