

## Leadership style: A self-narrative

Richa Thapliyal<sup>1</sup>, Vjay Paul<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Mandakini Sharma<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>HSS, Graphic Era Deemed to Be University, Dehradun

<sup>2</sup>HSS, Graphic Era Deemed to Be University, Dehradun

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India,

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### ABSTRACT

Of the six styles of leadership, I find myself closely representing the “participative” type which is indicative of collaboration, cooperation and a democratic relationship between the leader and the followers. I have always espoused team spirit and I invite views from my team members. For me, soliciting views from the team helps in two ways. For one, it helps in empowering the team members given the fact that they perceive themselves to be an intrinsic part of decision-making process. Secondly, and more importantly, it helps in brainstorming and a number of creative ideas and suggestions are presented at the spur of the moment. Following the “participative” style of leadership has helped me in several ways. For one, I have been able to secure confidence and trust of my team members. My team members do not find themselves in a belligerent position and they feel privileged as I welcome their opinions. There is camaraderie and every challenge is surpassed easily. Besides, for tackling any problem, all of us work as a team and there is no hierarchy as such. Therefore, the team members find me accommodative and they are fearless in providing their views at any point of time. In a nutshell, decision-making becomes smooth in different circumstances.

### Keywords: .

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### INTRODUCTION

Of the six styles of leadership, I find myself closely representing the “participative” type which is indicative of collaboration, cooperation and a democratic relationship between the leader and the followers. I have always espoused team spirit and I invite views from my team members. For me, soliciting views from the team helps in two ways. For one, it helps in empowering the team members given the fact that they perceive themselves to be an intrinsic part of decision-making process. Secondly, and more importantly, it helps in brainstorming and a number of creative ideas and suggestions are presented at the spur of the moment. Following the “participative” style of leadership has helped me in several ways. For one, I have been able to secure confidence and trust of my team members. My team members do not find themselves in a belligerent position and they feel privileged as I welcome their opinions. There is camaraderie and every challenge is surpassed easily. Besides, for tackling any problem, all of us work as a team and there is no hierarchy as such. Therefore, the team members find me accommodative and they are fearless in providing their views at any point of time. In a nutshell, decision-making becomes smooth in different circumstances.

At the same time, my “participative” leadership style costs me some times when critical decision-making is required. There are times when decision needs to be taken immediately and there is no time for taking views from all the team members. Therefore, it becomes a daunting task to accommodate the views of all the team members. A second challenge which I have figured out while adopting the “participative” leadership style pertains to the often polarized views of the team members. Such conflicting views lead to conflicts and taking a unanimous decision becomes difficult. Finally, there are differences among the team members themselves owing to personal or professional reasons and the same get reflected while they are providing their suggestions. Therefore, personal biases and prejudices coupled with tackling urgent problems pose serious challenges while adopting a “participative” leadership style.

### **Mistakes someone could make when providing feedback to others**

Unpleasant feedback that is wrongly delivered to an employee may have a negative impact on her productivity, self-confidence and performance. It can damage the relationship between a leader and her followers. For instance, by providing an adverse feedback may sound prejudiced to her follower. A follower might perceive that she was not given an opportunity to make a representation for her case and the feedback was biased. She might perceive such a leader as not being an empathic leader. Therefore, a leader should give ample opportunities to the follower to express herself and present her case clearly before giving feedback.

Being judgmental on the basis of the past performance does not help either. For instance, a leader may commit a grave error by giving quick feedbacks on the performance of her employee based on the past performance. Therefore, timing is very crucial. A leader may believe in giving feedback on a weekly basis or quarterly basis, or annual basis. However, there might be another leader who might prefer giving feedback on project basis and such a leader might prefer to give feedback to her followers only after a project is complete or mid-way during the course of the project. While it is difficult to pick either of the two courses of action, a leader should take into consideration the overall personality, cultural background and efficiency of the follower before giving feedback.

Feedback should be constructive by all means. While it is good for a leader to be precise and clear in expression in her feedback, it is important that her feedback provides an opportunity to her followers to derive lessons from the feedback received and make suitable amendments for better performance. Feedback should be given personally face-to-face besides following formal communication channels. Often, owing to the paucity of time, a leader finds it difficult to manage one-to-one interaction with the followers. However, it is important that face-to-face interaction be held while giving feedback.

Finally, feedback should not be about the person; it should be about the work done. A leader should always remember that she cannot give feedback about the follower. This is not her task to tell her followers that “you are good” or “you are bad”: instead, she should tell her followers that “your work is good” or “your work is bad”.

### **Lessons learnt**

There are three significant lessons to be derived from the article:

a. There is no single leadership style which one may strongly cling to. There are six leadership

styles which have been identified in the article: “directive” with its emphasis upon coercion and control; “visionary” with its focus on clarity and communication; “affiliative” which emphasizes upon building relationships; “participative” with its emphasis upon democratic decision-making, collaboration and cooperation; “pacesetting” with its emphasis upon personal heroics and charisma; and “coaching” which implies forging a mentoring and advisory role. It is better that a leader moulds her leadership style contingent upon the circumstances in which she is placed. In fact, it would be good if a judicious mix of each of these six leadership styles is internalized in a leader.

b. Each individual has a different personality and it becomes difficult to change one’s personality over a period of time. While being characterized by a particular leadership style, one needs to be flexible enough to mould as per the requirements. Such flexibility is required while managing a team of different personalities and cultural backgrounds. Besides, a leader should regularly introspect one’s behaviour and should any changes be required in one’s behaviour, the same should be taken into account while dealing with followers. Besides, self-introspection, a leader should be accommodative to listen to others’ views and perspectives. A good leader is one who is as good in speaking as she is in listening to others. Therefore, listening is an important leadership trait.

c. Good planning is important for achieving organizational goals. It is important that short-term and long-term plans be developed by a leader with the participation of the fellow team members and strategies should be evolved for accomplishing these goals. A shared vision should be laid down explicitly and all should be geared towards the achievement of the same. With the right mindset and an empathic approach, a leader should endeavour to secure the trust of the followers. According due respect to the team members and building mutual trust will sustain harmonious relationships between the leader and her followers besides accomplishment of organizational goals.