

[WHAT THE EXPERT SAYS]

## LEADING ONESELF



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**CHOOSE** wisely! What you stand for and believe in will influence not just who you are today, but how well you do tomorrow. Leadership emerges from leading oneself, it is not a TED X speech, YouTube video or clever phrases that make you a better leader. What you do with yourself makes the greatest difference, authentic leadership from the inside makes you the author of your own story and the maker of your own history. Leading oneself gives you the credibility to lead others and it's what others want from you – they want to know who you genuinely are on the inside!

In my book 'Leavers to Leaders', I elaborate extensively on the three dimensions of leadership found at the core of the book, otherwise known as the 3 L.O.S of Leadership. The primary dimension of leadership is the ability of leading oneself and that's because leadership starts with you. No matter how good you are, you will be a complete failure if you are unable to lead oneself. The team will not trust you. Additionally, you must have clarity of thought and communication to enable the team to work as a whole unit, the ability to connect on the right wavelength to empower your team, the ability to control your own shortcomings and, finally, have conviction in your decision-making.

Do you have it in you? Chances are that you do and need to discover and channelise these in the right direction – be it at home or in the workplace. Having worked with some of the highest military officers, engaged with some of the top CEOs and interviewed some of the highest entrepreneurs, the one thing they all have in common is the continuous effort of leading oneself. Lose that and you lose it all. That's because the more you know about yourself, the more

the unknown looms. Whilst leading oneself, you direct the power in your life to change things and accelerate your potential.

Your leadership education does not stop when you finish school; you don't stop learning to drive once you have your driving licence. If you are not developing your leadership skills every year, then you are most likely stuck in the past. And yet, when was the last time you spent that added time to develop your character and understand your values? One third of your life is spent working and another third of your life sleeping, which leaves the last third to do all of the other things in your life that you want to do. That's about 8 hrs a day or 56 hrs a week! Most people cannot account for those hours and yet they want to be debt free, dream free and drama free!

Over the years, I have taken a shot at a new job, business and career. At times, I have successfully engaged and transitioned, other times it was a failure. But I learned a lot more from my defeats. It made me stronger. In the military, we use the term 'watch & shoot'; watch for the situation, your circumstances, the opportunities, listen to your gut feeling and take a shot. If you don't, you miss 100%.

#### WORK ON YOUR VALUES

When you don't have a grip on leading oneself, you feel insecure, and never discover your possibilities. Those who are on our accelerators are encouraged to have three types of goals: personal, professional and social contribution goals. Many people get frustrated and feel discontent because they major in only one of them. Having a personal goal is not enough to keep you content at work. Having a professional goal is not enough to keep your house in order. I believe that we're most successful when our work motivates us, sparks excitement and



## “THE GREATEST OBSTACLE YOU WILL EVER FACE IS YOURSELF”

is in line with our values. Work on your values.

At first glance, it might be easy to say that you know your values. But on a deeper level, knowing your values means your intuition and strategic thinking are able to come together to provide clarity of your thoughts, decisions and actions. Our well-being is interdependent on our physical and emotional. Every mental event is recorded by our neuro, however, most problems these days are either financial or relational. During financial instability, those

who are trying to live like the Joneses are likely to feel the hard turn of the economy. In the end, it is very simple: spend less than you earn. Relational on the other side is not that straight forward. Well, for one, our social life is a lot more complex. We now have an online & offline life – be it personal or professional. You could be at work and wishing happy birthday to your friends on Facebook, or you could well be at home congratulating your colleagues on LinkedIn. Most people nowadays are human doing, and it is a mindless doing. Leading oneself puts you in the act of being, feeling, reflecting and doing, associated with our spiritual well-being.

As we move into a digital age and our lives become more transparent, people want to see more authenticity. It does not take long to work out the agenda of a leader: just listen to his talk and watch his walk. Unless you are learning every day and continuously working on your values and your character, what you are today is what

you will be tomorrow and that's because leadership doesn't begin with someone else, leadership begins with you, no matter your age or status. The higher the status the more you need to become aware of what you stand for and what you don't. When you know who you are, people will know what you are not.

If leading oneself was effortless, then everyone would be the best leader. Leading oneself guides you to better understand your values, your strengths and your weaknesses, because the greatest obstacle you will ever face is yourself. Therefore, first and foremost, concentrate on your strengths; put yourself where they can produce results. Second, work on improving your strengths. Third, discover where your intellectual arrogance is causing disabling ignorance and overcome it. Doing so puts you in the driving seat of change and regardless of how bumpy the road is ahead; you are always in control of you.