

**GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE NEW NORMAL**  
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Let me congratulate Professor Christy and the institute for bringing us together at this unique global moment when the need for effective leaders has never been more critical. I want also to congratulate the institute for your work in highlighting the need for a leadership paradigm appropriate for a world that is integrating and fragmenting at the same time, a world in which the more interdependent we become, the more people are turning inward to smaller communities of meaning and memory.

I can remember when the search for leadership was a search for leaders who called us to a higher purpose, inspired us, elevated us and appealed to our better nature. But in recent years, we have seen the emergence of an alternate concept in which more and more people seem to be in search of leaders who fit their comfort zone, someone in whose image they see themselves, someone who looks like them, acts like them and thinks like them, that is if they think at all. This search for the ordinary, the romanticizing of ordinariness, provides a grave threat to our ability to cope with the complexities of living between two worlds; an old order that is dying but not yet dead and a new order that is conceived but not yet fully born. All around us we see the trauma of transition.

To make matters worse, we are meeting at a time in which the fabric of public life is being torn apart by passions that seem to be almost out of control. I am increasingly persuaded that the emotions on display have three dimensions, anxiety, alienation and anger; and that leaders who seek to address the present mood will need to recognize the distinctiveness of each of these emotions and develop strategies to respond to the cause of each. One of the worse mistakes we could make would be to misunderstand what divides us and to offer an inappropriate diagnosis of the pathologies that disturb us.

Think first of the anxiety so many people feel. There have been moments of great anxiety before. Here in the United States, the period after 9/11 was such a moment and the period after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy was such a moment. But psychologists have called the present moment a period of free-floating anxiety. The anxiety we feel is not the result of one event, but a confluence of events. It runs the gamut from anxiety about the lingering affects of the economic free fall we faced a few years ago to anxiety about what violent conflicts are doing to our soul as a people; from anxiety about the new meanness in public life to anxiety about whether the increasing tendency to use the public square to promote private interests will lead to an eclipse of the very idea of a public good. Some of us are so anxious that we are anxious about being anxious.

So if the first element of the emotion we see and feel is anxiety, the second is alienation. However, it is not just the alienation of population groups from each other that concern me. It is also the alienation from our own past. It was my great privilege to work with Nelson Mandela in South Africa and one of the things I learned is that enduring reconciliation is not possible without eliminating historical illusions, dismantling deceptions and coming to grips with mis-teachings. The poet William Wordsworth put it best when he wrote that the only thing worse than being untaught is to be mis-taught. I also learned in South Africa how public symbols affect the public memory and shape either a sense of belonging or a feeling of alienation.

Here at home, there are those who remind us that Americans disagree about who we are because we cannot agree about what we have been. We are at odds over the meaning of our own history, over the source of our national strength, over what it is philosophically and spiritually that make us Americans. It is increasingly true in many parts of the United States that if you step back and ask someone what it means to be an American, they will think of someone with whom they share a similar color or culture, a similar race or religion.

Reconciliation is difficult because too many of our leaders look at diversity and want to homogenize it to fit their comfort zone. Many good people with the best intentions fail to understand the difference between the individual as actor and our institutions as agents. A recent poll found, for example, that white Americans, by a two-to-one margin, believe that where racism is a problem, it is a problem of biased individuals. People of color who were surveyed were more likely to be concerned about biased institutions.

There is much made of the meanness tearing at the fabric of both national and international life. But the anger we see is often the result of anxiety, alienation or adversity. Occasionally, there are those moments when our spirits are uplifted and the dreams of a more perfect union seems within our reach. Those are the moments when we romanticize Nelson Mandela's call for reconciliation, the moments when we remember Martin Luther King's admonition to respect the humanity of the adversary, and the moments when we revel in what President Barack Obama called amazing grace, the spirit we saw in South Carolina when a horrendous act of violence hoping to cause a race war had the opposite effect. But while public acts of forgiveness may be empowering to the victim and disarming to the perpetrator, they are rather limited unless they lead to a larger social transformation that involves individual, political and economic reconciliation. And that is why Desmond Tutu and others in South Africa now speak of the fundamental deficit in the new democracy as the failure to achieve economic reconciliation.

This then is all a part of the new normal. So what are the implications for leadership studies, leadership research, leadership centers and the many manifestations of our commitment to improving the quality of leadership

for the future? The great management guru Peter Drucker once warned that the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence. It is to act on today's problems solely out of yesterday's logic. The same can be said for leadership. Many of the old paradigms as well as yesterday's styles and strategies may be helpful, but it would be a mistake to assume that they are fixed and final.

As I reflect on the leaders with whom I have worked and my own leadership experience in business, government and civil society, I am persuaded that global leadership in the new normal will require four essential elements. Daniel Goleman has emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence and I agree that leadership is more art than science. I have been a manager and I have been a leader. As a manager I prized order, but as a leader I had to be willing to risk chaos. Yet while my grounding in what Goleman called emotional intelligence has been critical, I found in Nelson Mandela and some of the other effective leaders I have known three other elements that have caused me to think of leadership as fundamentally a way of being.

#### **Moral Intelligence**

While some leadership programs have focused on what a leader needs to know and others on what a leader needs to do, I have been concerned with how a leader needs to be.

Emotional intelligence must be accompanied by moral intelligence. One of the greatest challenges leaders face in applying ethics to our aggregate existence is how to think about, how to talk about and how to apply values to our work in public and private institutions without getting caught up in the politics of virtue or the parochialism of dogma. I cannot over emphasize what a grave mistake it would be to allow questions regarding the appropriate role of ethics in our aggregate existence to remain primarily the domain of moralists interested only in the private behavior of individuals.

Far too much of our discourse about ethics in public life is about the micro-ethics of our individual existence, the private virtues that build character. My interest discussed more fully in my recent book has been in the macro-ethics of our aggregate existence, the public values that build community. It is not that I am uninterested in the cultivation of private virtue. It is simply that religion does a great job of proclaiming moral absolutes for individual behavior, while our leaders must often deal with moral ambiguities in our political, economic and even spiritual life.

There are many who question whether it is possible to identify moral prescriptions or standards for the new normal that would be acceptable to all humanity. In other words, they ask, is it possible to identify a set of common values, a set of precepts so fundamental that they dissolve borders, transcend races, outlast cultural traditions and transcend the boundaries that the writers of sacred texts and the proponents of secular philosophies have created to protect cultural identities.

In preparing to write about ethics in my recent book, I pondered this question and wondered why many people who share my concern were worried about a kind of moral imperialism. I warned against a moral imperialism. But in my research I came to focus on the universality of what we have come to call the Golden Rule. Consider these examples as a starting point for global leadership:

**Christianity** "Whatever you want done to you, do also to others."

**Islam:** "No one of you is a believer until he loves for his neighbor what he loves for himself."

**Judaism:** "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire law; all the rest is commentary."

**Buddhism:** "Hurt not others with that which pains yourself."

**Hinduism:** "This is the sum of duty; do not onto others what you would not have them do unto you."

**Confucianism:** What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."

**Bahia:** "And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou chooses for thyself."

**Yoruba Proverb** (Nigeria): "One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby should first try it on himself to see how it hurts."

It is clear from these excerpts that the Golden Rule constitutes a set of precepts that transcend national, cultural and religious borders. So we are left with the question of why moral intelligence matters. The first answer is that most of the great issues of the day are moral issues. How we establish justice is a moral issue. How we promote the general welfare is a moral issue. How we use power is a moral issue. These are values that are found in the constitutions of most of our nations, but they are increasingly absent from the discussion about ethics in public life.

Regardless of the reason for the renewed emphasis on values, it is increasingly obvious that the need for a moral thermostat is not confined to any one group or locale. Moral intelligence encompasses both what people should demand of their leaders and what their leaders should demand of them.

#### **Social Intelligence**

Effective leadership in moments like these also requires a very special form of social intelligence. One of the things that stood out about Mandela was his emphasis on the dignity of difference. He set out to demonstrate that diversity need not divide, that pluralism rightly understood and rightly practiced is a benefit and not a burden, and that the fear of difference is a fear of the future.

Howard Thurman, the black mystic, poet and theologian, who was a mentor to Martin Luther King, had it right when he said "I want to be me without making it difficult for you to be you."

Can you imagine how different our world would be if more of us were able to say I want to be me without making it difficult for you to be you? Can you imagine how different my own nation would be if more Americans were able to say "I want to be an American without making it difficult for an Asian to be an Asian, an African to be an African or a Latina to be a Latina." Can you imagine how different many of our communities would be if more Christians were able to say "I want to be a Christian without making it difficult for a Jew to be a Jew, a Muslim to be a Muslim or a Buddhist to be a Buddhist."

I am increasingly persuaded that successful leadership in the era of a new normal hinges on an ability to turn “me” and “you” into us. The Mandela era in South Africa introduced a new form of diversity that was considered essential to an orderly and compassionate democracy. But the principles of pluralism must go beyond democracy and diversity to include demographics and diversity. Public conversations about diversity always seem to begin with the grand and almost obligatory assertion that diversity is more than race and, in so doing, the discussion is often about everything else but the richness of racial diversity. Let me be clear then; race still matters. This is not a post-racial society, and how we deal with diversity can be a benefit or a burden. I am increasingly persuaded that successful leadership in the era of a new normal hinges on the ability to turn me into us.

It has been my experience that many very good people make very bad mistakes in assuming that since their own motives are good they could not possibly be a part of the problem. The truth is, however, that racial inequalities occur and are often produced and reproduced without the intention of doing so and even without reference to race. Some observers call this “lassie-faire racism.”

Cultivating social intelligence must also emphasize the role of context and culture in shaping leadership styles, strategies and even paradigms. I learned very early that my effectiveness in social movements, for example, required a very different form of leadership from the authoritarian style that worked so well in the military as a twenty one year old college graduate fresh out of the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps. My first leadership assignment was based on the power of position. I served as the leader of a detachment in an infantry brigade where my leadership assignment was called a command and I was called a commanding officer.

It was a paradigm of positional leadership that has been romanticized for centuries. The alpha male approach of command, control and coercion, what has come to be called hard power, still has many strong advocates. I can remember even in my own studies of Western literature the seductiveness of the idea of a leader that came out of Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, the brave warrior in the Trojan War. Yet, I learned over time that it was preferable for the soldiers in my unit to follow me because they wanted to rather than simply because they had to.

My second experience of authoritarian leadership some years later was in a large transnational business corporation. The people in my division did not elect me as their leader. I was recruited and appointed by the Chairman, but by virtue of my position I had the power to reward performance. Unlike my experience in the military where the power to lead was secured and strengthened by the power of disincentives, the capacity to lead for many of my colleagues came from the skillful use of incentives. I learned during my years as a business executive that an organization is what it rewards. It is not so much what it says in its mission statement, its strategic plan or its code of conduct as it is what it rewards its people for being. If the company is committed to equal opportunity, for example, this commitment must be expressed through the performance review process and must be in some way tied to the compensation system.

In the 1960s, I helped organize and lead the civil rights movement in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I found the collegial model more appropriate and, indeed, more effective than the military-manufacturing model that worked so well in bureaucracies and business. The collegiate model, based not so much on power as persuasion, is now being re-discovered and reaffirmed by the new young leaders who are on the forefront of an intergenerational transfer of leadership. The collegial leader is a natural relationship builder. He/she are masters at building a sense of belonging. They empower others by finding ways for them to have a say in decisions that affect their goals and how they do their work.

The collegial leader needs consensus in order to act, but the most effective leader is likely to be the one who is able to shape consensus rather than simply wait for consensus to emerge. I have found that whether I work through formal bureaucracies, informal networks or self-managed teams that form operate, dissolve and reform, my influence comes from the fact that my primary objective is always to develop, energize or liberate the leadership potential in others. It is like the sculptor who defines his work as simply chipping away the excess stone to allow the statue within to come out.

There is no better example of the role of context in shaping leadership styles and strategies than the response to a disaster. There are at least three elements or stages involved, relief, recovery and reform, and each requires either different leaders or different capabilities in dealing with the widely different circumstances involved.

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

The final element of leadership for the new normal is what I like to call spiritual intelligence. And here I refer to something that transcends organized religion. Religion is for many a set of coherent answers to the existential problems of humankind while spiritual intelligence is not just the capacity to find meaning in mystery, but a quality of the human spirit that helps cultivate openness to the unknown, the unexpected and the unexplored. Religion is more closely tied to doctrines and sacred traditions than what I am calling spiritual intelligence, but both may help develop a sense that we are a part of something bigger and more mysterious than the self.

A friend of mine describes spirituality as a sort of privileged access to one’s own soul. That makes a lot of sense to me because I have learned much over the years about the importance of being in touch with the inner self and at ease with my own strengths and weaknesses. I have found that I am happiest and most at harmony with myself and others when I practice compassion, forgiveness, tolerance and patience. I have found inspiration also from others with whom I have felt a deepened sense of presence. I have not always had to retreat from the noisy sounds of either the streets or the workplace because stillness does not always mean silence. For some, it requires detachment from secondary attractions. Yet, it has been my experience that it can also come from a short “break away” moment, from the magical sound of the ocean, the mystical seduction of a song, the singing of a bird or simply the rustling of the wind.

I emphasize spiritual intelligence and argue for the cultivation of our spiritual nature to emphasize that the effective leader must be not just an agent of reconciliation but a purveyor of hope. And here I have in mind something very different from optimism. Hope theology and hope psychology both argue that optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Hope, on the other hand, enacts the stance of the participant who actively struggles against the evidence in order to make things better.

For a long time, hope has been considered an emotion, and, therefore, ignored, discounted or simply dismissed, as an essential element of leadership. But psychology is now being joined by other disciplines in seeking to develop a cognitive based theory of hope and leadership. The basic premise of those who study what they describe as hope theory is that hope is comprised not only of emotion, but thinking as well.

Researchers are now trying to understand the role of hope in sustaining innovation; the relationship of hope levels to stress, commitment and performance; even the impact of hope in business organizations on profits, job satisfaction and retention rates. Hope provides a good metaphor for understanding the role and importance of spiritual intelligence. But it is the kind of hope that Vaclav Havel had in mind when he said, “I am not an optimist because I do not believe that everything ends well. I am not a pessimist because I do not believe that everything ends badly, but I could not accomplish anything if I did not have hope within me; for the gift of hope is as big a gift as the gift of life itself.” So if you remember only one thing I said this morning please remember that while you are being called on to help build a leadership culture fit for the normal you must also provide hope; and the gift of hope is as big a gift as the gift of life itself.

*(Ambassador James A. Joseph is professor emeritus at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. He was also the founding director of the United States – Southern Africa Center for Leadership and Public Values, a partnership between Duke and the University of Cape Town. He has served in senior executive or advisory positions for four U.S. presidents, including Deputy Secretary of the Interior for President Jimmy Carter and U.S. Ambassador to South Africa for President Bill Clinton)*