THE CONSTANT QUEST FOR LEADERSHIP IMPROVEMENT

Professional Reading Expands Skills

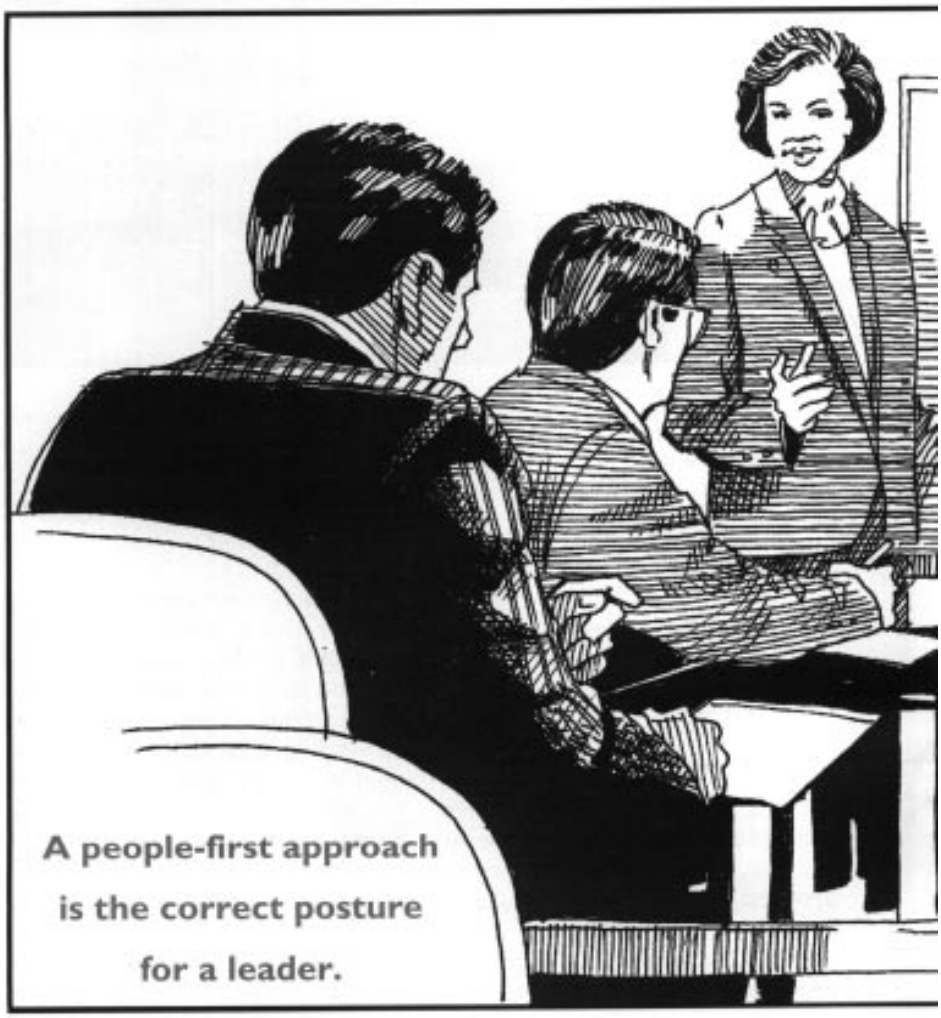
Colonel James M. McClaugherty, USAF

World leadership requires risks and sacrifices and I don't see America willing to do that anymore. You seem tired of leading.
—Alain Chevallier, French Industry Magnate

Leadership, in my judgment, is not definable. He who attempts to define leadership puts a fence around it, walls it in, and limits its scope. Leadership is much too complex to be imprisoned in words...(But) since such a formula has never been discovered, we are all free to talk about it; to speculate, theorize and philosophize about it; and in the end, come to no conclusion of scientific validity.
—L.H. Brereton

As a military officer, I am paid to be a leader. Regardless of our skills — airman, sailor, soldier or marine — the essence of our professional calling is leadership. Accordingly, my professional reading usually is focused on expanding my skills and comprehension of this complex, fascinating and critical commodity. So it was through a "leadership lens" that I recently finished reading three books — *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, The Customer Driven Company*, and *The Goal* — hoping to cull from each additional arrows to place in my personal leadership quiver.

I chose these books hoping they would expand my knowledge in three important dimensions: personal leadership values, quality leadership traits, and the latest panacea in the production community..."Theory of Constraints." This article will relate what



Colonel McClaugherty is Director of the Propulsion Directorate, San Antonio Air Logistics Center, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas.

I learned from these books and, most importantly, what I think I can apply as Director of six divisions, mixture of blue and white collar, comprising some 2,500 people in the tough engine business.

Leadership Philosophy

Let me share my philosophy of leadership. It's a personal creed developed during 10 years and will give you insight into personal biases as I journeyed through these books.

I have a CAVE-man approach to leadership; that is, I maintain there are four traits fundamental to leadership. While I recognize reducing leadership to four characteristics is an injustice to the complexity of the subject, my thesis is that a leader with these leadership tools has a higher probability of success than someone without them.

COURAGE, physical and ethical, is the spirit of leadership. We're familiar with the former, but pursuit of the right path, despite conventional wisdom and peer pressures, is laudable. Leaders with moral courage don't avoid tough decisions, and use them to create that most productive and creative environment — where risks are taken without an overriding fear of failure.

ARTICULATION is the ability to convey to those you are leading, whether in writing or verbally, the goals and tasks at hand. Leaders seem to express the opinions and attitudes of the group better than other members. While the political arena seems to have cheapened oratory because of the emptiness of politicians' words, I still hold President John Kennedy's inaugural address and Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" address as the two finest examples of leaders capturing aspirations of an audience and elevating them higher by eloquence of the message.

VISION is the intellect of leadership. This is a significant variable and true discriminator between managers and leaders. Where managers guide an organization toward its goals, leaders establish those goals. Although firmly rooted in yesterday and today, a leader lifts his sights to tomorrow with originality and imagination and is able to relate and inspire his followers with that vision. The concept is best summed up by a biographer's description of President Abraham Lincoln: "For him, the sky and the horizon never touched, and he saw shapes and ideas others could not."

EMPATHY rounds out my CAVE-man philosophy and is the true heart of leadership. I consider empathy the moral imperative of the leader. Successful leaders know they only can accomplish the mission through people, and the best leadership comes after an earnest identification with their follower's feelings, thoughts and attitudes. Indeed, the best leaders emerge from, and often return to, the people for regeneration and benchmarking. I pray President Clinton's penchant for this is sincere and persistent.

Principle-Centered Leadership

I'm convinced Dr. Stephen Covey is a fellow CAVE-man. His enormously popular best-seller, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, extols the virtues of "principle-centered leadership," which has the elements of vision and empathy at its core. What I liked most about Dr. Covey was his refusal to succumb to the quick-fix solution, opting instead for a values-based paradigm of seven interrelated and sequential habits:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win-win
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the saw.

The first three are habits to develop character, designed to help us achieve "private victories" that will grow us from dependence to independence. The next three are outward expressions of character leading to "public victories" that move us to his highest level of leadership maturity, interdependence. The seventh habit allows us to renew ourselves and sustain the process of growth.

What can I learn from Dr. Covey and apply to my job? There's enough to justify a paper by itself, but two things stand above all others. First, I need to return to myself, look inside-out, and ensure the "private victories" are there. Covey reminded me that leadership grows out of character; without it, my attempts to lead will be transparent to all *but* me. I am comfortable with my concepts of fairness, integrity and honesty but a return visit will be useful.

Similarly, I must revisit and refine my "vision" for leadership, particularly, where I want to lead my organization. In that regard, I have received from the Covey Institute his "Personal Leadership Application Workbook" to help me develop an organizational mission statement and a personal mission statement. These twin foci will fuel my efforts during this important stage of my career.

Secondly, I'll take away from "Seven Habits" a reaffirmation that a people-first approach is the correct posture for a leader. Intuitively, I know this, and my MSP feedback confirmed that others recognize it in me, but the eloquence and compelling logic of Covey's book will be a permanent reminder. Critics may debunk the book as simple and redundant because the themes are not especially new to leadership students. Such a reaction misses Covey's real contribution: he has bound these themes forever in the fabric of timeless principles that guide SIMULTANEOUSLY our life, relationships and organizations. In that congruence is this book's special gift.

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Tips on "How To"

As a long-time player and cheerleader in the "Quality Revolution," I approached *The Customer Driven Company* by Richard Whiteley with low expectations. After all, how many different ways can you package "customer focus," "process improvement" and "empowerment"? I was delighted to find this is not just another educational treatise but, rather, a practical, how-to book with many valuable tips.

Whiteley catches your attention early with a statistic I had not heard: almost 70 percent of the identifiable reasons why customers left typical companies had nothing to do with the product, but with the quality of the service. I found his distinction between product quality and service quality useful to my organization where white-collar folks often complain about how "easy" it is for their blue-collar colleagues to push quality because they had a tangible product on which to focus. With this 70 percent statistic, I can make the point that the supporting infrastructure is really the potential achilles heel.

Most of the book explores the author's "seven fundamental imperatives" (There's that number again!):

1. Create a customer-keeping vision (Sound familiar?)
2. Saturate your company with the customer's voice
3. Go to school on the winners
4. Liberate your customer champions
5. Smash the barriers to customer-winning performance
6. Measure, measure, measure
7. Walk the talk.

Buttressing the excellent points and anecdotes in each lesson is a section at the end of each chapter called "Action Points" — what each leader should do to foster the customer-driven environment. More useful are the appendices, fully a third of the book, containing a customer-focus toolkit with three sections: the characteristics of a customer-driven company — a self test; tools for developing a vision; and tools for smashing barriers to customer-winning performance.

I learned from the self-test that my organization has a strong customer focus, but lacks in two critical areas — reaching out to the customer and measurement. As the book advises, I will strive harder for customer feedback and seek guides for improving measurement to ensure we are achieving what we claim. We are reshaping the Propulsion corporate vision. After reviewing Whiteley's section on creating visions, it's clear the one I've inherited is not the vivid, identifiable

impetus for change it needs to be. I will work with my Quality Council to formulate a new one that could serve as a competitive advantage.

"Theory of Constraints" Concept

My journey through Eli Goldratt's *The Goal* (as well as his latest book, *The Haystack Syndrome*) was by necessity, not choice. Apparently Mr Goldratt's Theory of Constraints (TOC) which comes from these books is the newest "cause celebre" and I felt I needed to familiarize myself with it.

Measurements for Manufacturing

The Goal is TOC's Magna Carta, the defining vehicle for the new way of manufacturing. Craftily interwoven into a rather enjoyable novel, Goldratt introduces a new set of measurements for manufacturing. After affirming the ultimate "goal" is to "make money," Goldratt cites "throughput" (the rate at which the money is generated through sales), "inventory" (all the money invested in purchasing that which is to be sold), and "operational expense" (all the money spent to turn inventory into throughput) as his replacements for more conventional ("cost world") terms such as profit and return on investment.

Focusing on throughput, he lasers in on the "constraints" that limit throughput performance. In the throughput world, constraints are the essential classification replacing the role that products played in the cost world.

In *The Goal*, this new consciousness enables the plant manager to save his plant and jobs (not to mention his marriage, an interesting little subplot throughout the book). Goldratt's self-proclaimed aim is to "rescue all of American manufacturing and transform it from an art to a science." As a neophyte to the world of manufacturing, much of this went over my head since I could not put it in context. But, I began my education in TOC. I've learned new terms, practically a whole new lexicon (buffers, buffer-origins, Jonahs, throughput dollar-days, etc.) and am at least sensitive to the subject. A 40-hour course the week after graduating the Defense Systems Management College Program Management Course further enhanced my understanding. Armed with at least a little knowledge, I await wisdom, the application of that knowledge.

Conclusion

This literary smorgasbord was a nourishing feast. I was ennobled by Covey's book, my leadership glands percolated at the wisdom of his insights. Whiteley's book was a pleasant surprise in its practical hints for developing that customer bias; several projects will grow from that experience. And while my understanding of Theory of Constraints is limited, I am well up the learning curve. Reading these books was time well-spent.

Vision...a leader lifts his sights to tomorrow...and is able to relate and inspire his followers with that vision.

PMC 94-1 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Photo by Richard Mattox

Mrs. Colleen A. Preston, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Reform), is greeted by DSMC Commandant Brig Gen (Sel.) Claude M. Bolton, Jr., USAF, on arrival at the DSMC campus to deliver the PMC 94-1 keynote speech, January 24, 1993. Mrs. Preston stressed the need for reform legislation and regulations based on the Section 800 Panel recommendations.

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Department at DSMC to attend the annual DTE, DOTE, PEO and PM Executive Off-site Meeting and participate as a member of the DAWIA-mandated Test and Evaluation Function Advisory Board.

Using his appearance as an opportunity to express heartfelt appreciation for his exceptional support of the College; his promotion of, and efforts to improve, T&E education; and his friendship; DSMC surprised Mr. Adolph with an Honorary Professor Award. His departure from DOD will be felt throughout the T&E community, but through the Honorary Professor Award we hope to continue our professional association and our friendship.

(Acting) Under Secretary of Def
Honorable R. N

- Dir, Small & Disadvantaged Business Util - Mr. H. Crouch
- Dir, Special Programs - Brig Gen Ralph Graham
- Exec Dir, Defense Science Board - Mr. John Ello
- Dir, Administration - Mrs. B. A. Reese

Principal Deputy
Under Secretary of Defense (Acq & Tech)
Honorable R. Noel Longuemare, Jr.

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- Dir, Tactical Systems - Mr. Frank Kendall
- Dir, Test & Evaluation - Mr. Charles Adolph
- Dir, Acquisition Pgm Integration - Mr. Gene Porter
- Dir, Defense Procurement - Mrs. Eleanor Spector
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Director
Defense Research & Engineering
Dr. Anita Jones

- Dep DDR&E - Mr. Jack Bachkosky
- Dir, Advanced Research Projects Agency
  Dr. Gary Denman
- Dep, Lab Mgmt - Dr. Craig Dorman
- Dep, Tech Transition - Dr. Lance Davis

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Advanced Technology
Mr. V. Larry Lynn

- ADUSD, BMD - Vacant
- ADUSD, Adv Tech Dev - Dr. Louis Marquet
- ADUSD, Concept Development - Vacant
- ADUSD, Special Projects - Vacant
- Office of the Thrust Leaders
- Def Airborne Recon Ofc - Maj Gen Kenneth Israel

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Environmental Security
Ms. Sherri Goodman

- ADUSD, Compliance - Ms. Josephine Huang
- ADUSD, Clean-Up - Ms. Patricia A. Rivers
- ADUSD, Conservation & Install - Mr. Russell E. Milnes
- ADUSD, Pollution Prevention - Mr. Get Moy, Acting
- ADUSD, Envr Technology - Dr. Daphne Kamely

- Dir, Defense Logistics Agency
  VADM Edward M. Straw

LEGEND: Exec Level | Non Career

(As of 11 Mar 1994)

(Acquisition & Technology)
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Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Acquisition Operations
Dr. Lawrence J. Cavaloia

Assistant Secretary of Defense
Economic Security
Mr. Joshua Gotbaum - Nominee

PDASD, Dual Use Tech & International Pgms
Dr. Kenneth Flamm

DASD, Economic Reinvestment & BRAC
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Mr. Walter B. Bergmann, Acting

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Dir, Ballistic Missile Defense Organization
LTG Malcolm R.O'Neill

Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
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Dir, On-Site Inspection Agency
BG Gregory G. Govan

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Acquisition Reform
Mrs. Colleen A. Preston

ADUSD, Acq Process & Pol - Mr. Robert Scott

ADUSD, Sys Acq - Vacant

Dir, AET & CD - Dr. James McMichael

President, Defense Acquisition University
Vacant

CMDT, Def Sys Mgmt College
Brig Gen (Sel.) Claude Bolton, Jr.