# **Leadership That Is Moral And Responsible**

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#### Introduction

Effective leadership is uncommon. It's not that the majority of leaders lack responsibility; rather, responsibility in leadership is usually characterised in a way that leaves out a crucial aspect of responsible leadership. This article links virtue with responsible leadership. By using this meaning, it is implied that three premises—eudaemonism, intrinsic worth, and amplification—underlie responsible leadership. Secondarily, this meaning has two significant effects: it provides a stable point for coping with change and advantages for constituents who may not otherwise be impacted. Discussed are the benefits and significance of responsible leadership as virtuous leadership. Effective leadership is uncommon. It's not that the majority of leaders lack responsibility; rather, responsibility in leadership is usually characterised in a way that leaves out a crucial aspect of responsible leadership. This article's goal is to draw attention to this frequently disregarded quality of responsible leadership, examine its definition, and pinpoint two benefits for businesses. Organizations frequently hold the belief that its leaders must be trustworthy. In corporate companies, boards of directors look to choose CEOs who they believe to be most accountable for the performance and capital of the corporation. Voters in political elections try to identify which candidate will really carry out campaign pledges. Responsibility has been a common theme in the research on effective leadership (Doh and Stumph 2005; Yukl et al. 2002). According to Bass and Bass (2008) and Meindl and Ehrlich (1987), responsibility in this context is most frequently equated with dependability and accountability (as in being dependable in delivering on promises). Indicating that responsible people have the required authority and freedom of action, the terms "responsibility" and "freedom of action" are frequently used interchangeably. When assigned responsibility at work or given control over an activity or result, they have the capacity and resources to accomplish the goal (Spreitzer 2007). These two meanings of leadership responsibility are interconnected because empowered and free-acting leaders are more likely to be trustworthy and accountable (Spreitzer et al. 1999; Salancik and Meindl 1984). Responsibility in these two terms refers to being "response-able," or having the ability and capacity to react. Pless and colleagues have proposed a third interpretation of responsible leadership, in which responsible leaders are described as having particular traits and playing specific roles. In these discussions, responsible leadership is based on the idea that leaders interact with and are accountable to a variety

of stakeholders. "Architect, change agent, citizen, coach, networker, servant, storyteller, steward, and visionary" are among the positions connected to responsible leadership. (Maak and Pless 2006b, p. 107; Pless 2007, p. 439), and there is a long list of qualities that make a responsible leader. In these discussions, responsible leadership is defined as the art of establishing and upholding moral and ethical relationships between corporate leaders and various stakeholders (followers), predicated on a sense of righteousness, a sense of acknowledgement, a perception of care, and a feeling of responsibility for just a wide range of economic, ecological, social, and political commitments. (2007, p. 451). A wide range of responsibilities, traits, and connections are encouraged, and responsible leadership is seen as an ideal style that encompasses all main theories of leadership (such as transformational, charismatic, servant, and ethical). A fourth interpretation of the phrase "responsible leadership" is less common but just as significant. It is this quality that makes a specific kind of responsible leadership uncommon. It describes the capacity or propensity to behave appropriately (as when a person acts properly). The idea of appropriateness is essential to this meaning since it links taking responsibility with what is best, right, or true. In this context, acting responsibly is being morally upright or doing right (Walsh et al. 2003). Of fact, what is deemed good is sometimes debatable2, but one phrase that suggests a set of universal norms of righteousness is Building public trust, maintaining an impeccable reputation, "walking the talk," "managing with integrity," "making profits with principles," "delivering on the triple bottom line," "creating value for stakeholders," "mobilising people and teams," "coaching and reinforcing employees," "creating incentives to encourage respectful collaboration," "safeguarding freedom of speech," and "managing with integrity" are among the traits of responsible leaders, according to reports.

# virtuous leadership:

The word "virtue" is not frequently used in scientific contexts. Discussions of virtue are supposedly linked to social conservatism, religious dogmatism, and scientific irrelevance, according to the prevalent paradigm in organisational studies (Chapman and Galston 1992; MacIntyre 1984; Schimmel 1997). Virtue is frequently associated with theology, philosophy, or simple naivete. For instance, Fowers (2008) said that positive psychologists' conceptions of virtue were "superficial" and "colloquial." Virtuosity, according to Fineman's (2006) argument, is culturally constrictive and narrow-minded. Given the expectations of stakeholders and economic constraints, its applicability in the workplace and inside organisations is not credible. Walsh (1999) examined word use in the Wall Street Journal from 1984 to 2000 and found that over the course of that 17-year period, the frequency of phrases like "win," "advantage," and "beat" in connection to commercial organisations had increased by more than fourfold. This confirms the bias. On the other hand, words like "virtue," "caring," and "compassion" hardly ever occurred in connection with business. Throughout the same 17-year period, there was little use of these phrases. There is no consensus on the definition and qualities of virtue according to an examination of academic literature on the topic (including the words "virtues," "civic virtues," "moral virtues," and "virtue ethics") (Cameron and Winn 2012). The

majority of articles discuss the controversy surrounding the existence of virtue (Alzola 2008; Wright and Goodstein 2007; Weaver 2006; Whetstone 2003), how virtue develops in societies (Moore and Beadle 2006; Nielsen 2006), or the definition of the concept (Fowers 2009; Moberg 1999; Rachels 1999). Several papers have made the effort to pinpoint universal There is no consensus on the definition and qualities of virtue according to an examination of academic literature on the topic (including the words "virtues," "civic virtues," "moral virtues," and "virtue ethics") (Cameron and Winn 2012). Most publications (Alzola 2008; Wright and Goodstein 2007; Weaver 2006; Whetstone 2003) focus on the debate over whether virtue really exists, how virtue manifests itself in communities, or the meaning of the term (Fowers 2009; Moberg 1999; Rachels 1999). Several articles have attempted to identify universal principles.

# Positive effects of virtuous leadership

Accepting virtue as a crucial component of good leadership has at least two practical advantages. Benefits do accrue even though extra advantage is not required for virtuous leadership to be appreciated. Virtue's ability to establish a fixed point in decision-making is one advantage. The improvements in performance that virtue brings about in companies is another advantage.

### Virtuousness as a Fixed Point

Turbulence is widely acknowledged to be the most important aspect of the current business environment. Most people agree that change is both common and constant. Unfortunately, managing change is hard when everything is changing (Cameron 2006). Direction and progress are uncertain in the absence of a constant, unchanging reference point. Piloting an aeroplane provides a helpful metaphor. The secret to safe flying is controlling the plane's movement in reference to a solid, constant referent, such the ground or the horizon. Steering a course is impossible without a definite referent. Navigating is impossible for pilots who are not in visual or instrument contact with a fixed point. Take John Kennedy Jr.'s last flight, which he started by flying up the coast of New England after twilight. When it got dark, he also lost sight of the horizon line and the country. He misplaced his reliable frame of reference. He became disoriented as a result, and he probably didn't even realise he was heading towards the ocean when When there are no stable referents, both people and organisations suffer from the same confusion. Leaders have nothing by which to direct when there are no distinct fixed points or unquestionable guiding principles. Up from down and forward motion from backward motion are no longer distinguishable. Leaders frequently create their own rules when there are no set points, reliable principles, or reliable standards (Weick and Sutcliffe 2001; Weick 1993). They decide for themselves what is true and what is suitable based on standards like prior experience, instant gratification, personal benefit, and other considerations in order to make sense of the uncertainty and chaos they encounter (March 1994). flew his jet into it. Without a standard that never moved, he was unable to control his airplane's constantly shifting location. It has been apparent in the ethical realm that some leaders have just made up their own laws in high-pressure, high-velocity circumstances. They ultimately cheated, lied, waffled, or claimed naivete because they had developed their own justification for what was acceptable in addition to the fact that it was advantageous to their financial situation. The issue is that criteria that prevent damage or restrain misbehaviour differ from those that guide someone to the best. It is not the same as chasing the good to avoid the bad. Norms and guidelines that at first glance seem to direct moral responsibilities and socially responsible behaviour may really have the opposite effect. For instance, instead of going on strike, unions frequently "work to rule"—doing just what is outlined in contracts and guidelines. The usual organisational operations are soon destroyed by this kind of conduct. Similar to accounting techniques, environmental pollution regulations, or performance rating systems, obeying the letter of the law frequently results in the reverse of what was intended—for example, recalcitrance, rigidity, opposition, and revolt (Caza and Cameron 2008). More crucially, ethical norms frequently adapt to new situations and times. For instance, moral norms about segregation in public schools have significantly evolved since the 1960s. The same holds true for ethics relating to business dealings, accounting standards, environmental regulations, sustainability, mortality, marriage, free speech, and many other topics. Because they are social constructs, ethical norms typically do not stay constant. As a result, ethics may not always serve as acceptable reference points or define universalistic ideals in various settings. On the other side, virtue may act as a compass to direct leadership during turbulence, uncertainty, and rapid change. This is due to the fact that virtue stands for what individuals strive to be at their finest, kindness and nobility, and these goals are common and constant in almost all nations, cultures, and faiths (Peterson and Seligman 2004; Kidder 1994). It is challenging to pinpoint immovable fixed points by which to control change in the absence of virtue. Responsible leadership is therefore leadership that can successfully handle the turbulence and volatility that characterise the contemporary external environment, as symbolised by virtue. The constant standard by which judgments should be made is virtue.

# **Virtue and Successful Organizational Results**

Despite the idea that virtue need not be connected to useful results in order to be valuable, a large body of research has been done that demonstrates the link between virtue and desired outcomes. A small number of studies have looked at the impact of virtue on organisational leadership, despite the fact that comparatively few have done so. For instance, Cameron and Caza (2002) and Cameron et al. (2004) carried out a series of studies in which performance outcomes and virtuousness indicators were evaluated in organisations across sixteen industries (such as retail, automotive, consulting, health care, manufacturing, financial services, and not-for-profit). All of the organisations involved in these trials had just undergone downsizing, so it seemed probable that the well-documented adverse impacts would start to manifest. That is, performance generally declines as a result of downsizing. After downsizing, the majority of firms see declines in quality, morale, trust, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Cameron 1994, 1998; Cascio et al. 1997). A survey instrument was used to determine the leadership virtuousness scores in each organisation. The survey instrument evaluated the

leadership's compassion, integrity, forgiveness, trust, and optimism (concepts found on lists of universally admired virtues, such as Chun 2005; Peterson and Seligman 2004). The objective measurements of profitability, productivity, quality, customer retention, and staff retention (voluntary turnover) from business records, as well as employee evaluations of comparable outcomes, made up the organisational performance outcomes. Between virtuousness ratings and both objective and subjective measures of performance outcomes, statistically significant connections were discovered. Firms with higher virtuousness ratings outperformed other organisations in terms of productivity, quality, customer retention, and staff turnover. Organizations with higher virtuousness scores were significantly more profitable after adjusting for factors like size, industry, and the amount of downsizing. They also outperformed competitors, industry averages, stated goals, and past performance, significantly improving all other outcome measures. In a more thorough investigation, Bright et al. (2006) examined the relationship between organisational resilience and tonic virtue—or virtue that happens regardless of circumstances, such as kindness or integrity—and phasic virtue, or virtue that depends on circumstances, such as forgiveness when harm is done or courage when danger is present. When leaders exemplified virtue in the middle of downsizing, their companies were noticeably better equipped to withstand system shocks, recover from challenges, mend relationships, and work together. Organizations with moral leaders were also better able to function successfully despite the difficulties caused by downsizing, both tonally and phasically. After the catastrophe of September 11, 2001, a different sort of research was done in the U.S. airline sector. This study looked into the connections between the firms' financial success and the morality of the downsizing tactics used by their executives (Gittell et al. 2006). The disaster resulted in significant financial losses for U.S. airline corporations, and the research looked at how these companies' executives handled their financial setbacks. In this study, virtue was defined as upholding human dignity, investing in human resources, and fostering an environment where workers' well-being was prioritised. Eight out of ten U.S. airline businesses made cuts, although the strategies used by their executives varied greatly. In spite of accounting for unionisation, fuel price hedging, and financial reserves, the analysis discovered a link in the data from the companies. One year later, firms with higher aggregated virtuousness ratings considerably outperformed those with lower virtuousness scores in terms of financial success, employee turnover, and overall organisational environment. The next year, highly virtuous firms outperformed comparable organisations in terms of outcomes. This shows that rather than the opposite, leadership virtue was a predictor of financial outcomes. The second research, which involved 30 health care companies, looked at changes in virtuousness ratings over time and their impacts on specific measures of organisational performance. The multi-day training that the leaders of these firms attended were meant to assist them in implementing and facilitating moral practises and procedures within their teams. This investigation produced two intriguing findings. One is that businesses whose leaders were exposed to virtuousness training increased their virtuous practise scores considerably over a three-year period when compared to those who did not strive to increase their virtuousness. Units that were not given virtuousness

training did not improve. The second conclusion is that the firms that had the biggest gains in their virtuousness ratings also saw the biggest gains in their results. On the outcome measures used in the study, double digit improvement was seen over a 2-year period. In the following years, businesses that increased their overall virtue outperformed those who did not increase it in terms of patient happiness, employee retention, climate, resource sufficiency, and healthcare quality. The paradox in this research is that while virtue does not necessarily require a clear, instrumental payoff to be valuable, attention to virtue typically becomes subservient to the very real pressures related to enhancing financial return and organisational value if observable, bottom-line impacts are not detected (Jenson 2002; Davis 2008). Few corporate executives make investments in procedures or methods that do not increase profits, productivity, shareholder returns, or customer happiness. In other words, individuals responsible for managing organisational resources disregard virtue and believe it has little value to key stakeholders if there is no obvious payback. Therefore, leaders may be more receptive to its practical value when links between virtue and desired results are seen in companies. Increasing virtue also improves economic results.

#### Conclusion

There are two benefits to linking accountability to virtue. One is that it aids in establishing a generally recognised benchmark for what leaders might deem to be excellent or beneficial for people in general and their companies in particular. The ultimate aim of humanity is virtue, and responsible leadership in the service of the greater good is a noble goal. Second, there is evidence that moral leadership results in positive outcomes. By concentrating on positive results, these aims may benefit all constituencies rather than favouring some at the expense of others. For instance, Seligman (2011) has stated a vision for psychology that is to be accomplished by the year 2051. By that time, it is desired that 51% of the world's population will be prospering. Experiencing happy feelings, engagement (flow), fulfilling relationships, purpose in one's work, and success are all considered to be characteristics of flourishing. These measures were chosen since it is claimed that they represent results that are highly appreciated by all people. They stand for possibly good goals in the context of this essay. According to Huppert et al. (2009), Northern Europe, which includes countries like Denmark and Norway, now has the greatest levels of flourishing at around 35%, while Eastern Europe, which includes countries like Russia and Bulgaria, has the lowest levels of flourishing at around 5%. One of the most plausible ways to go toward such an aim would seem to be to adopt a responsible leadership philosophy that also carries the implication of virtue. In order to assume responsibility as a leader, one must be accountable, dependable, authoritative, and empowered. But the consequences grow more broader and comprehensive if accountability also include the idea of virtue. Eudaemonism, the pursuit of the highest good, and, secondarily, the creation of benefits for constituencies that may not otherwise be touched are what responsibility entails.

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