

Why Lead At All?

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This edition was one of the trickiest to produce since the Dean TMUC herself was contributing her wisdom to this one. The theme is around Leadership, with the eminent leader of highest rung sharing her say about the 'brand of leadership'. Thus, here is an edition for all those who aspire to be leaders!

As we grow in our profession and serve in the industry, we *supposed mavens* can be observed as married to the complacency of the ordinary and wedded to the shackles of conformity while resisting all opportunity for growth, evolution and personal elevation. In the ceaseless quest to progress, we tend to dilute our cognitive bandwidth and fragment our attention, accepting mundane tasks and ordinary achievements while leading lives of unsatisfying mediocrity. I feel, amidst all this, the sense of purpose gets lost in the piles of deliverables and we conveniently ignore the requirement of our inner satisfaction. As yourself, *do you look forward to going to work the coming day?* Ask yourself, dig deep and reflect. It is a huge possibility that you will end up realizing how mentoring a colleague, proposing a solution in a group, collaborating and filtering ideas or perhaps providing an IT hack at workplace makes you feel enriched, a sense of accomplishment unleashes. If that is how you feel, you are already leading! 😊

Nothing is perfect but I truly believe that striving for excellence is healthy and constructive to boundless limits. The very unyielding quest to be the best makes you capable and upskills you tremendously on the way that you experience the very essence of motivation and inner satisfaction. When you lead, you create success for yourself and other. As much as there are some who are born with the *Leadership Skills*, there are those who work on themselves and gain the edge. Succinctly putting it, the *leadership attribute* needs to be nurtured any way!

Take it from me, *dedication* and *discipline* beats brilliance and giftedness every day of the week. Additionally, A-Players do not get lucky, they make lucky. Each time you resist a temptation and pursue an optimization, you invigorate your heroism. Take the energy to next level and accelerate to achieve more. Become the best version of yourself, be creative, be empathetic - be the leader who is empowered and empowers. Trust me, there is nothing more rewarding.

Plato encouraged us to 'know thyself', and on this intuitive note, I am going to lead you to the piece shared by our Dean, Kholah Yaruq Malik.



What Brand of Leader Are You?

Kholah Yaruq Malik, Dean TMUC Pakistan

'What kind of a leader are you?' is a direct reflection of what your world view has been.

Leadership is about people's energy. It's about *Connecting* people's personal energy with purpose. It can be through social exchange, through creating an enabling environment for people around you to connect and grow with purpose.

If we look at the spectrum of leadership there's the heroic leader to the humble leader and every kind of style that sits along that spectrum. Your perspective on leadership style is likely to influence how you lead. If you think it's about command and control or serving and enabling only, you have a lot to learn about leadership.

Leadership always happens in a context. Whatever context we are in and which values we take along determines the kind of leader we are. Leadership is a value-driven activity, the more we are self-aware and know of our frailties, the more effective a dialogue we will have with ourselves and others.

The mistake some of us make is we live in ignorance; when we think we are displaying leadership, what we are merely doing is management. Until you transcend from mere management and permeate to leadership you live in mediocrity as a leader.

There are times when you are challenged like we were massively in the pandemic, we needed both management and leadership. Knowing when and how to use the two is key. The symphony of both is what a sound leader uses and knows where one ends and the other has to begin.

If we look at the essential management function, we know of the acronym PRAISE. What do managers manage? They manage; People Resources, Activity, Information, Themselves, and the Environment. However, Doug Parking once said, 'Leadership is also something called VEEDA; Vision, Energy, Engagement, Direction, Alignment'. VEEDA has always resonated with me. Simply put, management is about the present and leadership is about the future.

Acknowledging complexity is key. Leadership should not be a lonely activity it should be shared. If leadership is not shared you will not have the same unified success. Trust is massively pertinent it is the binding underlying thread.

Unique challenge of leadership in HE is that success is multifaceted. Universities are doing multidisciplinary multifaceted things. There's research, internationalisation, learning and teaching, student engagement, market engagement etc.

The most challenging is to engage people into one vision. The politics in HE are quite complex. Instead of authority and command as these are academically accomplished individuals one would require influence to connect and that is quite interwoven. You will not have a following or a team if you are unable to ignite in your team the fire. They take the heat from you. No heat. No team. No influence. No unison. No harmony.

It requires a particular brand of leadership that is both high calibre; authentic and self-aware. No individual can achieve anything near this leadership space until they have gone through a self-accepting and self-awareness journey.

Do ask yourself, *What brand of leader are you?*

Wish to write to the Kholah Y. Malik, Dean TMUC?
Email at: dean@tmuc.edu.pk
She's very perceptive. 😊