

(Established by Act of Parliament No 15 of 1965)

IKEJA & DISTRICT SOCIETY

HUMBLE LEADERSHIP

A NEW MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP

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WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Leadership is the ability to influence and guide a team to achieve an organization's strategic goals. Anybody can be a leader.

WHAT IS HUMBLE LEADERSHIP?

Humble leaders have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They don't think that they are more or less capable than others. Humility and confidence are not mutually exclusive. Humble leaders can be confident in their strengths and abilities. Therefore, Humble Leadership is a relationship-based leadership model that is collaborative, cooperative, team-based, and impersonal. It emphasizes communication within the group, openness, trust and confidence in group members, and appreciation for work done. Contemporary Humble Leadership is generally more concerned with group members' overall well-being and satisfaction.

When leaders follow outmoded autocratic models, their organizations may tend into becoming coercive, joyless, transactional, robotic, and deadening initiatives. The traditional Top-down, arms-length, machine-like leadership style which relies on the designated roles and rules of the basic managerial culture is outdated and more importantly counterproductive. Examples include traditional bosses and team members characterized by oppression, intimidation, domination and power. It doesn't recognize people's common humanity.

Humble Leadership doesn't rely on hierarchical roles. It replaces subordination with collaboration. Examples include close colleagues on corporate teams. Companies don't gain from positioning their leaders as masters of the hierarchy and designated heroes. Smart organizations are no longer hierarchical. They know worthwhile leaders can emerge from any tier in the company. Depending on their circumstances, talents, and capabilities, everyday people can and do step up and lead, often contributing substantial knowledge and expertise.

Present-day professionals are learning that friendly, personal relationships with their colleagues and those they serve are more effective and enduring than formal, distant ones.

WHY IS HUMILITY IMPORTANT IN LEADERSHIP?

According to Dr. Robert Hogan, Humility is broadly defined as:

- Self-awareness
- Appreciating others' strengths and contributions, and
- Openness to new ideas and feedbacks regarding one's performance.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF HUMBLE PEOPLE?

- They do not belittle others. Humility is the ability to see others as equals. ...
- They are not jealous. ...
- They are not proud. ...
- They are not rude. ...
- They are not vain. ...
- They are not materialistic. ...
- They are not possessive. ...
- They don't feel sorry for themselves.

Power can cause leaders to become overly obsessed with outcomes and control, and, therefore, treat their employees as means to end. Research has shown that this ramps up people's fear; fear of not hitting targets, fear of losing bonuses, fear of failing, and as a consequence, people stop having positive emotions and their drive to experiment and learn become stifled.

According to Harvard Business Review – “When you are a leader, no matter how long you've been in your role or how hard the journey was to get there, you are merely overhead unless you're bringing out the best in your employees.” Unfortunately, many leaders lose sight of this. Humility in leadership leads to higher rates of employee engagement, more job satisfaction and lower rates of turnover.

Humble leaders recognize individual employees as valuable. The study has shown that the best way to make employees to feel important and valued is to listen to them. A study shows that the no. 1 reason employees don't take initiative at work is because their leaders fail to get their inputs before taking decisions. People want to be heard and feel valued.

When decisions are made without getting inputs from people, they tend to hold back their ideas and take less initiatives to make improvements.

By focusing too much on controls and end goals, and not enough on their people, leaders make it more difficult to achieve their own desired outcomes. The key, then, is to help people feel purposeful, motivated, and energized so they can bring their best to work. One of the best ways is to adopt the humble mind set of servant leaders.

Servant leaders view their key roles as serving employees as they explore and grow, providing tangible and emotional support as they do so. Servant-leaders have the humility, courage, and insight to admit that they can benefit from the expertise of others who have less powers compared to them. They actively seek the ideas and unique contributions of the employees that they serve. That's how servant leaders create a culture of learning and an atmosphere that encourages followers to become the very best that they can be.

Humility and servant leadership do not imply that leaders have low self-esteem or take on attitudes of servility. Instead, servant leadership emphasizes that the responsibility of leader is to increase the ownership, autonomy, and responsibility of followers, to encourage them to think for themselves and try out their ideas. A study showed that the second big factor in keeping people from stepping up is how leaders react to employee ideas and inputs. The study showed that leaders dismissing ideas without exploring the ideas is the second biggest reason why people won't take initiatives.

In today's Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) world, versatile leadership makes more sense than the sharp-worn model of lofty corporate heroes and disruptors who are supposedly invincible.

Companies that want more initiative and for employees to bring more of their ideas to work need to regularly recognize people who are constructive irritants or who take initiatives even if they break the rules a little.