

## Leadership – Fulcrum Above & Beyond, Part 2 <sup>1</sup>

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In the previous article in this series, we looked at some aspects of what Leadership means, Gartner survey establishing the need for being different than before and the three mantras of being a Futuristic Thinker, to serve the people and be passionate about leadership.

In this article, we would cover some needed attributes for future leaders which I believe will be a key differentiator for them in the current context of digital transformation.

**Adaptability:** I strongly feel that future leaders will have to be adaptable to the ever-changing situations around them, Covid-19 has presented one such challenging but real scenario. Nobody within the world knew that we'd be hit by such a horrific pandemic and priorities changed so quickly to accelerate the pace of work in certain cases while ensuring sustenance of business in others. Countries, economies, governments, companies, individuals all had to adapt to the new normal.



Let me share a small story that may be seen as an analogy to how leaders are no longer seen as leaders if they fail to adapt. This is a story of The Choluteca bridge in Honduras - The Choluteca Bridge was situated in Choluteca, Honduras. The government knew the bridge was getting to face extreme conditions and wished to create a bridge that may bear any environment. They recruited renowned architects within the world to create a bridge that would stand up to any environment. The architects created a bridge, with the purpose of providing a much-needed access point for the inhabitants of Honduras and were designed to be standstill in any weather.

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One fine day, the region was hit by a cyclone, known as Mitch, a class five storm. The region was utterly wrecked; roads were destroyed and there were a lot of injured people. However, the Choluteca Bridge stood its ground and survived in close to excellent condition. Even though the bridge stood its ground, there was one drawback, the storm caused the watercourse to carve a totally new path that did not run underneath the bridge. Now the bridge did not stand over the water, creating it primarily useless. It is remarkable to understand how quickly things can change, so a leader must be adaptable to changing things which will give them the edge over others to pivot ahead.

**Empathy:** Empathy is, at its simplest awareness of the feeling and emotions of other people, it's the link between people and how an individual understands others' feelings and emotions.



Empathy could be broadly categorised into 3 kinds:

- **Cognitive** - It is knowing how another person feels and what they might be thinking, it's also called perspective thinking. It is concerned with thought, understanding and intellect. The benefits are it helps negotiations, motivating other people, understanding diverse viewpoints & ideal for virtual meetings.
- **Emotional** - It is the feeling of physically knowing another person as though their emotions could be felt. It is concerned with feelings, physical sensations and mirror neurons in brain. The benefits are it helps in close interpersonal relationships & career coaching
- **Compassionate** - with this kind of empathy we not only understand a person's predicament and feel with them, but we are spontaneously moved to help when needed. It's concerned with intellect, emotion and action. The benefit is it considers the person more holistically and is able to assess and resolve (if needed) accordingly.

The leaders should have all the 3 kinds mastered to lead the team successfully.

**Purpose** -- Think of the word purpose; there are 2 ways to use this one as long term and the other as short term. I remember a quote from Simon Sinek “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.”



This leads me to another story of a heart valve manufacturing company that hired a consulting firm to increase their productivity as it was very flat for couple of years. Post the consultants analysis they came up with the suggestion to put up 2 posters, one at the entry gate where the workers come inside to work and the other at the cafeteria. The executives were perplexed that, they paid so much money and consultants were asking them to put up posters. The consulting firm said yes and the reason for it is you are building heart valves and the employees think they are building heart valves that’s the short-term purpose but the bigger purpose as a company is to save lives. Put up posters of patients who have received your valve and are alive today. Your employees must understand that the valve they built has saved so many lives and once they understand that they are not just building valves but are saving lives they will work with all the efficiency and passion. The consulting firm also found out that some of the employees of the company themselves had valves fit, so they suggested to the company to rotate these posters and put up the employee’s posters who have received valves and that would elevate their working efficiency more. They not only will understand that they are not just saving the lives of strangers but have also saved the lives of some of the people with whom they are working.

I feel that if leaders drive their people with the purpose they will certainly succeed in this uncertain world.

I would want to conclude this article by saying leadership for future is based on the three key aspects namely Adaptability, Empathy and Purpose. While these are not all encompassing, they certainly are most important ones.

This article focused on enumerating the attributes Leaders need in the future decade, the final series will concentrate on the mindset shift the leaders will have to master to build a sustaining team.

Stay tuned for the last series of Leadership – Fulcrum Above & Beyond...

## Acknowledgment & References

[Quote by Simon Sinek: “People don't buy what you do; they buy why you ...” \(goodreads.com\)](#)

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## About the Author



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**Gaurang Vora** is a knowledgeable Program Manager well-versed in providing strategic direction and ongoing leadership to teams, also proficient in building strong innovative teams delivering successful solutions. He is a veteran of project management with almost 2 decades of demonstrated track record of success playing a pivotal role in transforming through people, process and technology. Ready to apply expertise and experience to challenging new roles, he brings deep understanding of program/project management, delivery management, budgeting and revenue forecast.

Gaurang is a results-oriented leader with a strong track record of working in a BRIGHT (Blur, Risky, Interconnected, Global, Hi-tech, Timely) world with Thought Leadership, Ownership and Accountability. He was a Top 15 PMO influencer as part of PMO Global Awards 2020 and is Director – Projects & Alliances at PMOGA India Hub.

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