

Confidence in Leadership

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Abstract—*Gone are the days when the terms confidence, trust and dependency are only practiced by people and are not studied of. Each such trait has become a field of research, gifting people with the knowledge of how to become better and better. To be the best in an organization has always been the thrive of a leader. Confidence is the prime pre-requisite, which this journey of being the best, demands. To be aware of what contributes to confidence and what it is build up of, gives an edge to a leader to inculcate this attribute and stand out, being the best.*

Many leaders today are misguided by their notions of greed and pride. They are blinded by their overconfidence and as a result are being drowned into the unethical standards. Believing in himself and overcoming fear, insecurities and aggressiveness could be a big challenge for such a leader today. Be it a president or a team leader of a small project, what he needs is confidence to accomplish his tasks with excellence. Confidence is the aggregated attribute, enveloping a few characteristics which give a tendon-support to the trait. It is the most common attribute which takes a leader to great heights.

Keywords: *Confidence, Self-esteem, Self-reliance, Self- assurance, Direction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Portraying confidence is something that everyone has been learning since their childhood. It is one of the uttermost important ingredients that determine the success of a person. A confident leader is most often known for making a killing. But confidence, being a common trait to every field of operation, what role does it concretely play in leadership?

To aspire to become someone great by emulating your epitome is not merely possible without self-esteem. The courage to lead others comes only when you can lead your own spirit with a strong determination and trust. A confident leader would rather be poised by the inbuilt boldness and sureness than be reliant on his followers.

Confidence, as a result of all these authentications, has become one of the most anchoring core fundamental keystones for a person to win over challenges.

1.1. Meaning and Definition:

What does the word 'confidence' mean? Dictionary defines confidence as the state of feeling certain about the truth of something or having firm trust. The word confidence was

derived into a late Middle English word from the Latin words 'confidentia' and 'confidere' which mean 'to have trust.' The origin of the late 16th century word 'confident' which is an alternative word for confidence is from the French word 'confidente' which also refers to having full trust. The verbal word 'confidere' is formed by the combination of two words 'con' and 'fidere' which mean 'expressing intensive force' and 'trust' respectively. All the meanings of these words have been revolving around the word trust. Haven't they? So what does this trust that contributes so much to confidence mean? It is defined as the reliance on the integrity, strength, ability and surety of a person or thing.

1.2. Confidence in decision making:

Most of the managerial functions are directly or indirectly effected by the level of confidence a manager holds. An unconfident director is not a leader who the subordinates would like to work with as he would prefer to escape the challenging projects and would let confusion prevail in his team, disturbing the role clarity of the human resource.

Decision making, which is one of the key managerial functions, demands the confidence of the decision maker. To implement the decision is where exactly this attribute comes into picture. A decision might be sound with its apt solution for any problem but if it cannot be implemented efficiently, the whole problem would be equal to a decision unseized. The decision maker must believe in what he wants to be put into action.

Marie Curie said, "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that thing must be attained."

2. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CONFIDENCE

Confidence, like any other trait, is not an independent character. It's interdependent of a few leadership qualities. The factors of SOKET, assure keeping confidence intact with a leader.

SOKET stands for self-esteem, optimism, knowledge, experience and trust which as an aggregate contribute to the levels of confidence in a leader.

2.1. Self-esteem:

The term self-esteem was popularized with the rise of psychology in the 1960s. It refers to respect and admiration, especially to one self. Caroline Smith says that self-efficacy and self-esteem are two things which contribute to self-confidence. Confidence is balanced with self-esteem. It gives a hope to the leaders to acknowledge that he can do it what he is supposed to do. Self-esteem would keep a leader from falling into insecurities and increases the confidence levels in a leader.

2.2. Optimism:

Positive thinking is a soft skill which contributes to the growth of a person. A leader should be optimistic and must go ahead accepting challenges with a positive approach towards the task. Helen Keller says, "**Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.**" Optimism avoids unnecessary tensions and leaves fear away from the door of success. Coco Channel says that success is most often achieved by those who don't know that failure is inevitable.

2.3. Knowledge and Awareness:

Monica Burns says that knowledge is the key to unlocking and maintaining the confidence. When a leader is aware of what he should do, he works with confidence in what he knows. The knowledge about the task helps the leader to walk in the path that he already is familiar with. He doesn't have to go through the process of knowing and understanding things before taking up the task. Peter Barron Stark says, "**If a leader can't lead himself, how can he possibly lead his team.**" Here is why confidence supported by knowledge comes into picture.

2.4. Experience:

It is the experience which counts for most of the leaders to know and understand the strategies of leadership. Why do the senior executives reflect more confidence than those of the junior executives? It's because of their experiences they have gone through. The leaders are potential and feel capable when they take up challenges of the similar kind they took up in their past. Past experiences stand as pillars for the leaders to lean on, to face future challenges. And it is the experience which makes a leader achieve excellence in his performance.

2.5. Trust:

Dr. Robert Karlsberg and Dr. Jane Andler say that trust is one of the building blocks which when implemented, rapidly encourages confidence. Trustworthiness is embodied by leaders who are self-confidence. Trust enables leaders to rely on the abilities they possess, making them feel confident about what they can do, how they can do and why they have to do.

3. AUTHENTICATIONS FOR LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Leaders who lack confidence either mask their inability with aggressiveness or induce themselves into their inner fears.

They fear the lack the experience and do not take risks. They avoid risks and try to push the responsibilities over to their followers. These leaders draw a circle, within which they hide their fears, inside the cage of aggressiveness. Sometimes, leaders who possess knowledge and yet lack confidence become hosts for aggressiveness which develops into arrogance leading them to a downfall.

3.1. Aggressiveness, the False-Confidence:

Aggressiveness is not confidence. It is a trait which leaders who lack confidence tend to adopt. It is running away from accepting this lack of confidence. It works to patch up the insecurities of a leader. One of the most convincing reasons for leaders to develop aggressiveness is the fear of loosing power. In order to protect their insecurities, they inculcate this negative trait. Such leaders are not looked at by their followers as their aggressiveness stands as a strong evidence for their false confidence.

Amy Jo Martin says, "Confidence and empowerment are cousins in my opinion. Empowerment comes from within and typically it's stemmed and fostered by self-assurance. To feel empowered is to feel free and that's when people do their best work. You can't fake confidence and empowerment."

3.2. Fear, the core rival of confidence

To look fear in the face is to look at the weaknesses magnified. It prevents people from doing things, killing their initiativeness. A leader with fear accumulated within himself, would always want to run away from his innovativeness. Fear imprisons all the potential and creativity of a leader. It gives rise to insecurities.

If you are a leader trying to work out your fear, how would you overcome it?

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

A leader who learns to accept both his strengths and weaknesses has a scope to convert his shortcomings into his robust strengths.

4. OVER-CONFIDENCE

Overconfidence is exaggerating one's ability to successfully perform any operation.

Albert Phrung said, "There's a fine line between confidence and overconfidence. Confidence implies realistically trusting in one's abilities while overconfidence usually implies an overly optimistic assessment of one's knowledge or control over a situation."

Overconfidence makes one feel better than what he actually is. Overconfidence is the by-product of pride. "**Pride comes before fall,**" is a household proverb which says that pride ruins success. (Pride infiltrates a person's heart, employing diverse channels. It could use your caste, creed or culture as its

medium. Charles Spurgeon said to his London congregation, "Be not proud of race, face, place or grace."

5. THE LAW OF CHANGE

Molding to something that you are not? Change is good as far as it is a correction, which builds up a leader. And if change is good, how can the confidence in being oneself be good? Is changing yourself trying to clothe yourself in hypocrisy? Certainly not! And it's very much the same optimistic character as confidence is. To be open to correction is the primary requisite for a refreshing change. And for this open heart of learning, it takes confidence balanced with humility to invite correction and become a better and an effective leader. Confidence is not just trusting in your strengths but also acknowledging your weaknesses and converting them into your strongholds. The weaknesses, if not accepted and worked on, will turn out to be the stumbling blocks which can sabotage the success of a leader. Confidence gives the scope to humility and allows one align being a better leader who can accept the actuality of his blind spots and prevents them from disrupting the stream which flows into the ocean of success. Mistakes will happen! You need to have the courage to admit it and that is how confidence holds a leader.

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