Organizational Dynamics And Human Behavior: Leadership Styles Paper

When thinking about leadership the first thing that comes to mind is a movie called 12 0'Clock High. I truly enjoyed this leadership movie and it's a great tool that is utilized in the military to illustrate the outcome of different leadership tactics. Before this assignment, I viewed this film with my Soldiers several years ago during a leadership and mentorship training session. This is genuinely a great movie and it brings to light the pros and cons of utilizing different leadership styles. Leadership can be a difficult topic to fully grasp without having the basic foundation and knowledge of how to be a leader.

Before I jump right into the classic movie “12 O’clock High” which is probably the most influential movie used in management and leadership training. We have to get a good grasp of the definition of leadership and the traits of a great leader. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines leadership as The individuals who are the leaders in an organization, regarded collectively or The activity of leading a group of people or an organization or the ability to do this. This is great, but what about the fundamentals of leadership. As an illustration, Leadership involves establishing a clear vision, sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, providing the information, knowledge , and methods to realize that vision, and coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders. In a nutshell, A leader steps up in not only in times of crisis but whenever its necessary and is able to think and act creatively in difficult situations.

Twelve O’clock High is the tale of a bomber regiment in World War II, which was commanded by Colonel Davenport first and Brigadier General Frank Savage. Second. Savage took over command from Davenports when he was released from duty after failing to effectively complete the mission. The film shows the results of the two characters’ different leadership approaches. It also highlights the consequences of certain decisions and or reactions. The leadership styles of Colonel Davenport and Brigadier General Frank Savage differ in many ways, but that’s the traits they had on how to be an effective leader.

Davenport was relieved of his post as a direct result of his over-identification with his boys as stated by Savage in the movie. Considering himself one of the “boys” made him popular with those in his command but also undermined his ability to lead. General Savage, however, understood that as a leader, he must make the difficult decisions that may put him at odds with those under him. This is one of the qualities found in almost every leader; but, without the right understanding of how to implement effective leadership strategies even the “born leader” will fail.

In the movie General Frank Savage. Savage realizes that in order to build up his men, he must first break down their defiant and don’t care about attitudes. He accomplishes that with a series of summary commands such as demoting an enlisted man for being out of uniform and reshuffling roommate assignments to prevent personal relationships from subverting smart combat decisions. The troops rebel, but Savage doesn't ease up. This did not sit well at first with the 918th Bomber Group; however, the team started to see itself transformed into a squad of precision bombers. The team started to appreciate the new tactics and to love and respect

the man Savage.

Theories X and Y can be seen in the group’s behavior as the film progresses. At the beginning of the film, the Army Air Corps 918th Bombing Group shows signs of theory X. The unit is known as the hard-luck group due to low morale and excessive losses during bombing missions. As a result, the group is finding ways to avoid their duties by pretending to be ill. The men have no ambition for their duties and shirk responsibility whenever possible. In order to motivate the men, the officers have adopted a soft approach in which they attempt to be sympathetic to the men while trying to gain their trust and, eventually, obedience.

Colonel Keith Davenport is guilty of this type of management. He tries to work with the men by showing empathy and constantly worries about their psychological state. He fears that they are becoming stressed by the job they are doing, and they are overworked whenever the weather is clear enough to bomb. The men do love and respect Davenport, but it is not enough in this war situation to truly work to motivate the pilots and crews. Davenport’s method of motivation could also be viewed as a form of servant leadership.

Unfortunately, the setting here is not a comfortable office, but a violent war zone. Serving with the men and showing them by example is not going to be an effective form of leadership to move these men from X to Y workers. Davenport is unable to get over his need to defend and sympathize with the men. A perfect example of this from the film is Davenport's defense of a young lieutenant who made a navigational error that jeopardized an entire mission. Davenport refuses to punish the lieutenant for the mistake because he feels too much of a personal connection to the young man. Davenport does not want the lieutenant to feel bad about himself. There is simply too much emotional contact between the leader and his followers. Due to his ineffective leadership style, Davenport is removed from command of the 918th group and replaced by General Savage.

Colonel Davenport’s leadership style did not work for many reasons. He was too close to his men, and he started focusing too much on their feelings and not enough on their mission. I don't believe this would always be a problem, but in this situation, you have to place the mission first, which he did not. Due to this, his man lacks sufficient training and knowledge to carry out the mission, which ultimately made them fail. Moreover, the Davenport bombing unit that has been reduced to chaos. Even though he is a beloved commanding officer, his empathy has seriously compromised his ability to lead.

We don't get to see what Davenport was like when he first took command of the 918th or any other group. All that was shown by his character was his sympathetic leadership skills. Savage and Major General Patrick Pritchard have great respect for him and feel he is a capable leader, so maybe, at one point, he was and the time he spent with the 918th broke him. We saw this happen to Savage, too. Savage also broke because he began to see himself responsible for the 918th. This is seen when Pritchard tries to get Savage to return to a staff job, but Savage refuses, claiming the 918th can't fully function without him. So, when the losses begin to mount, Savage takes them upon himself and falls into the same trap in which Davenport fell.

Savage turned the group around because he equipped them emotionally and physically to take care of themselves. He empowered them with the responsibility and tools needed to complete their missions. He was able to identify what they needed because he wasn't close to them yet, and like a business consultant, he had no personal or emotional attachment to the men. Savage

implemented his strict trait of a leader when he spoke to Ben Gately. For example, Gately went from being arrested for being Absent Without Leave to flying three missions with some cracked vertebrae. Savage transformed Gately from the spoiled son of a general who failed to live up to his talent into a man who sacrificed himself for his comrades and lead them to victory. Gately taught me that people can be inspired and often need to be challenged in a harsh way rather than given up on.

As a commander, Savage commanded and accomplished his goal letting his team see the pride in their accomplishments. Savage adopts the opposite attitude of Davenport, who was buddy-buddy with his 'boys', as he sees discipline lacking on the base. He also reprimands personnel immediately, makes necessary personnel changes, and closes the saloon on the base, all to signal to the troops that a change in the failing system has begun and that he intends to mold the group into a successful combat unit. Discipline is crucial in this situation because the safety of the troops depends entirely on their ability to maintain proper formation on their bombing runs, which of course would allow for zero buffer zone in the system, something that Davenport may have realized but because of his personal closeness with his men, he could not see.

Savage also comes off as a strict disciplinarian leader. Savage displays this trait several time through the film. is his previous command one can tell that Savage himself is not usually, but he sees the problems in the system as resulting from a lack of discipline, therefore he amends his own personality enough to result in the disciplinarian behaviors required by his position at the moment.

Savage's leadership skills, specifically his abilities as a contingent leader, are displayed through interactions with two of his soldiers Lt. Colonel Gately, and Lt. Bishop. Gately is the son and nephew of decorated high-ranking officers who, until Savage arrives, has been underachieving for his skill set. Instead of ignoring him, or cutting him loose, Savage skillfully berates Gately in private challenging his bravery and honor and then demote him to commanding an airplane full of 'failures' ordering him to paint 'Leper Colony' on the nose. By calling Gately 'yellow' Savage flips the internal motivation switches for Gately. Gately knows he is brave, honorable, a well-trained experienced pilot, but because throughout his life people have always only seen the last name he hasn't yet had the situation to prove to others what he knows about him. Because Savage treats him honesty, equality, and fairness he had yet to experience, Savage spurs him to action and Gately eventually rises to the challenges placed before him. Tailoring his leadership style to what is needed for each situation Savage's conversation second private conversation with Bishop is key to group cohesion as he adeptly uses words like 'we' and 'us' displaying to Bishop that he is a partner leader, that he values Bishop's opinion as an able mid-level leader. Again Savage shows the variability in his approach contingent to the situation, and Bishop hears what he needs from Savage to enable him to withdraw his original application for transfer.

Savage pilots a plane on a mission where every group abandons its mission because of poor weather. Savage daringly ignores the command to return, feigning ignorance and leads the group to an extremely successful result. Key to this mission was Savage's putting himself at personal risk at the helm of a bomber, a behavior that validates him as a commander to his troops that were specifically skeptical of his abilities when he stayed on the ground. Following the mission, Savage displays a most important leadership characteristic in that he humbly requests commendation for his troops but not for himself. Humility in success is the way a leader can prove through action that he values the contributions of his personnel. This finally

leads to Savage getting a cheer when he commends the group in a briefing; an action that prior to these actions elicited no response whatsoever.

Overall, leaders must treat their team members with great respect and care. They must also be professional and play the roles of the jury, judge and executioner. Good leadership requires treating people with great respect and care the better the respect and caring, the better the outcome. Treat everyone as if they are very important and valuable and you will cause them to feel and become this way. They will then treat their work, customers, peers, and management this way. They will follow your lead.

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