

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

Today, I was fortunate, I guess. I came upon in an email, a new leadership newsletter, which I think I'm going to get weekly, but it's called leadership@smartbrief.com. And so, I brought it up and I started reading the articles. And the first one I thought was really quite interesting and maybe valuable to share a little bit about. It's called Larger Than Life Leadership. And this Larger Than Life Leadership, you probably could pick out some examples of that. But basically, the leaders that are very much out there out there, out there with big emotions, big plans, big ideas, and maybe not always the follow through and the nuance and other things that go along with leadership. And we've had quite a few of those over the years. They're the folks you probably see on the news all the time and that sort of thing.

But the point of the article was that when you have that larger than life leadership, sometimes your people just become followers. You're making all the big calls so they don't have to make decisions so they can rely on you for decisions. Entrepreneurship may not be as strong because you've got all the big ideas for them, or you only accept the big ideas from yourself. But those big plans, big emotions, calls to action, all of those are great in a short run, but leadership needs to occur in the long run.

And one of the points of the article is that leadership is very nuanced. It's got to be there day to day. And some of the important aspects of leadership may be run counter to that larger than life leader characteristics that you may think that you need to be. And some of that nuance being personal folks, connecting with folks, being vulnerable. One of the most important characteristics I think for a successful leader is to be vulnerable, to show that you don't have all the answers, that you don't know everything, that you have your own weaknesses. And when you do that, what you find is that opens communication lines with people. You find out what's really going on in your organization, you find out what's real. And plus, those folks now maybe show a little more entrepreneurship, make more decisions, because they know you aren't the one with all the answers.

But when it is one person with all the answers, that oftentimes creates a gap. Another aspect of that, one of the things that I think is so important in effective leadership is just caring, caring about your people, and then thinking that you care about them or knowing that you care about them, and you show that on a daily basis. You can't do that, just flying in every once in a while, and making some big thing, "Oh, everybody's going to get a bonus now." Yeah, that's great, but that wears off very quickly. And with the larger than life leadership, that seems to be one of the characteristics. So, I was reminded of one of the best business books out there, *Good to Great*, which is pretty aged by now, but Jim Collins in *Good to Great* identified seven characteristics of these companies that sustained greatness over a long period of time. I think it was over 30 years. And the companies that were most successful had a commonality in leadership, which he described as sustained and understated leadership.

So, a sustained and understated leadership almost sounds like the polar opposite of larger than life leadership, right? So, what he was saying in his example used back then was Lee Iacocca in the book, and he was very much out there, I think, in the public and making big pronouncements and all of that, even ran for president, I think. But that was his counter example of somebody that was maybe a larger than life leader. So, if you're thinking about your next step in leadership and where you need to be, maybe larger than life, and the kind of things that go along with that is not what you need to be doing, and maybe you need to be targeting more of that sustained, understated, nuanced leadership that this article speaks about. So, take a look at this newsletter leadership@smartbrief.com and read the article. I think you'll enjoy it and learn something.

Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.