Leadership by Robert Goffee

Professor Robert Goffee is the author of a number of books on leadership, including his recent work “Why should Anyone be led by You?”

He will shortly release a new book on leading clever people.

In his recent presentation in Sydney he suggested that leaders need to shift from making individuals more valuable to organisations (through motivation and engagement) to making the organisation more valuable to the individual through authentic leadership (by being yourself and linking their work to the organisational goals). This is especially the case when leading clever people.

**When top leaders were asked what helped them to the top here is what they said:**

1. Capacity to develop strategy
2. Ability to work with a variety of people
3. Early responsibility for important tasks
4. Strong achievement goals
5. Early leadership experience
6. Experience of several business functions
7. Integrity, trust, concern for people.

**What followers want from their leaders:**

1. Community: the need to belong to a group which the leader helps to sustain
2. Authenticity: alliance between values and behaviour by the leader
3. Significance: the leader helps them to see how their work is important
4. Excitement: this can be positive or negative

**Qualities of leadership**

1. Leadership is contextual: the style chosen depends on the situation
2. Leadership is relational: effectiveness of the leader depends on quality of relationships with followers
3. Leadership is non-hierarchical: it works in all directions and at all levels

**What authentic leaders do**

1. Sense situations: intuitive ability to select the right approach
2. Read and re-write the context: translate situation to fit our context
3. Identify with others but keep a distance: show genuine caring but be apart
4. Reveal difference – know and show yourself enough
5. Reveal weakness: only those that don’t detract from credibility in current role.

**Leading in a downturn**

1. Don’t claim to know the future – but articulate a vision/values (integrity and optimism)
2. Understand the politics but try to stay above them
3. Focus on task (speed) but build cohesion (keep talking and listening)
4. Identify with the troops but be prepared to be apart
5. Be steadfast – but adapt and be nimble
6. Admit mistakes – and say sorry where necessary.

**As a leader, what can you do now to improve your situation?**

1. Provide your staff with crucibles of experience – early rich different experiences
2. Seek sources of replenishment for yourself as leader
3. Gain perspective – find a “third” place where you can be yourself and get feedback in a social situation. (Third place is not work or home)
4. Get feedback – make it easy for others to give you feedback
5. Don’t try to be perfect - go easy on yourself
6. Being good v being great. (Being good is conforming. Being great is conforming enough)
7. Are you in the right place to express your authentic self?

**How to lead clever people**

1. Be a benevolent guardian
2. Acknowledge their knowledge
3. Win them resources and give them space
4. Recruit other clevers
5. Provide opportunities for external recognition
6. Encourage failure
7. Be an umbrella
8. Be accessible

**Rules for leading clever people**

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<th><strong>Do</strong></th>
<th><strong>Don’t</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Explain and persuade</td>
<td>Tell people what to do</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use expertise</td>
<td>Use hierarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give people space and resources</td>
<td>Allow them to burn out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell them what</td>
<td>Tell them how</td>
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<td>Give people time</td>
<td>Interfere</td>
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<td>Provide boundaries (simple rules)</td>
<td>Create bureaucracy</td>
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<td>Give recognition</td>
<td>Give frequent feedback</td>
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<td>Encourage failure and maximise learning</td>
<td>“train”</td>
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<td>Protect them from the rain</td>
<td>Expose them to politics</td>
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<td>Talk straight</td>
<td>Use bullsh*t or deceive</td>
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<td>Give real world challenges with constraints</td>
<td>Build an ivory tower</td>
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<td>Create a galaxy</td>
<td>Recruit a star</td>
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<td>Conduct and connect</td>
<td>Take the credit as a leader</td>
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