

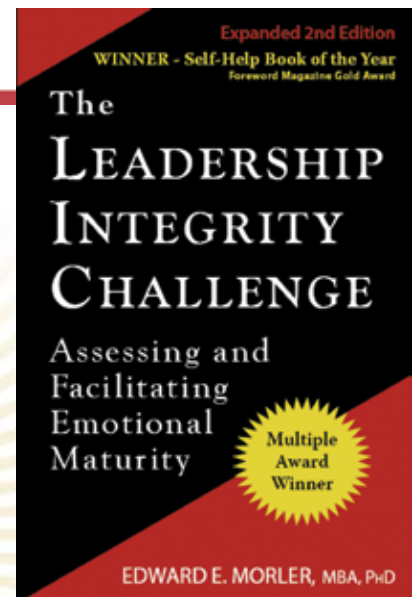
WHAT MAKES LEADERSHIP POSITIVE

BY ED MORLER, M.B.A., PH.D.

Excerpt from *THE LEADERSHIP INTEGRITY CHALLENGE*

Leadership is a dynamic process of keeping others reaching and moving beyond where they are. Effective persuasion and motivation are about addressing and meeting perceived needs. Leadership styles vary, but effective motivators have one thing in common: they have learned to relate at a level that meets their audience's need for and perception of something better. What that perception is depends largely on that audience's emotional state. Part of that process involves the leader accurately assessing the constituent's actual emotional level; communicating slightly above that level; and suggesting, offering, or modeling what that audience perceives as something better, thereby drawing them up.

A population in the lower levels feels overwhelmed, insecure and powerless, and wants and will follow virtually anyone who communicates a willingness and ability to deal with the perceived oppression/oppressors. For example, an angry, assertive speech can motivate an overwhelmed and dispirited population to move into action that feels so much better than the previous helpless inaction. Under some conditions, their sense of gratitude can become blind and fanatic allegiance.



The fact is that leadership can be positive or negative, constructive or destructive. The determining factor is the leader's own emotional level. An individual is only capable of leading others to his or her level of emotional maturity and no further. Leadership stuck in the lower levels (disconnected from essence values) is inevitably destructive.

It is not possible for you to influence others to live on a higher level than that on which you live yourself.

—Leo F. Buscaglia

A classic example is the charismatic leadership of Hitler. Stuck in anger himself, he adroitly used fear-based messages and angry rhetoric and policies to motivate an overwhelmed population (loss of WWI, hyperinflation of the 1920s, depths of the depression) desperate for change. Hitler led the German people *from* the despair, grief and fear of Levels 1 and 2 (for which they adored him) *to* the aggression and overt hostility of Level 3—and *stuck them there*—with *devastating consequences*.

If we wish to motivate a person or group who is acutely in the lower levels, it is vital that we continue the facilitation process as long as it takes to attain a responsible level (Level 4 and above). If we stop the facilitation process prematurely (before being completely out of

the lower levels), many of those facilitated will likely remain stuck in a lower level (irresponsible state), *only now more energized.*

Chronic low-level behavior, regardless of the person's socio-economic-political status or rank, is fundamentally insecure, and therefore self-centered and defensive. It is invariably accompanied by hostility (overt or covert), lack of compassion, and unethical and abusive behavior. *Individuals, groups, organizations, or nations stuck in the lower levels do hurtful and destructive things.* Their negative behavior ultimately leads to their own destruction, but in the process, the collateral damage can be enormous.

Motivating people has consequences and responsibilities. The way out is the way through – all the way through to the higher levels where responsible behavior resides. *Only when individuals are emotionally mature (connected with and acting from essence values) will their leadership be positive and constructive.* Hence, facilitating emotional maturity throughout one's organization (and society) is a priority of enlightened leadership.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Morler is president of Morler International, a management training and development firm specializing in integrity-based interpersonal effectiveness. His focus is the custom design and delivery of bottom-line, functional skill enhancement programs that simultaneously integrate the principles and dynamics of integrity, emotional maturity, motivation, and leadership. Examples are negotiation, client relations, and leadership development. Dr. Morler conducts trainings for corporations and government agencies worldwide.



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