
5-DIMENSIONAL LEADERSHIP

***LEADING WELL IN A COMPLEX
WORLD***

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CHAPTER 1

HAVE WE BEEN MISLED?

Leadership Beyond Crisis

Fit no stereotypes. Don't chase the latest management fads. The situation dictates which approach best accomplishes the team's mission."

Colin Powell, former secretary of state

Who is your idea of an exceptionally effective leader? Rudy Giuliani? A good choice, given his remarkable response to the tragedy and challenges of 9/11. Jack Welch? He certainly worked magic at GE in the 1990's? Maybe you would mention Lou Gerstner, Jr. for navigating the successful turnaround of the IBM juggernaut. All three men have written best sellers recounting their exploits, successes, and philosophies of leadership. They have been lionized by the media, been featured in countless articles and interviews, and have received abundant praise and recognition for their leadership effectiveness in immensely difficult circumstances.

The perception of these three leaders as heroes exemplifies a broader trend in the business world and the media. Outstanding leaders are often portrayed as individuals who have risen heroically to the challenges of extreme crisis situations. Recent books focusing on leadership lessons from individuals like Alexander the Great, Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, George W. Bush, Colin Powell, and President Eisenhower are all part of this tendency. People love a good story filled with drama, challenges, and triumph. Larger-than-life crisis conquerors certainly fit that mold.

While this makes for fascinating reading (and short-term inspiration), it offers little real help to leaders looking for answers

to real problems. In fact, stories like this are misleading for two reasons: first, they ignore the fact that most business leaders do not operate in an environment of extreme crisis; and second, some of these heroes had very un-heroic moments.

In an interview with *Newsweek* magazine, James O'Toole, research professor at the Centre for Effective Organizations of Southern California's Marshall School of Business and author of numerous books on leadership, discusses a story he read about Rudy Giuliani:

“The point [of the story] was: what the world needs now is leaders, not managers that business leaders ought to look at Giuliani for the kind of forceful leadership we need. I think that's wrong on many scores. *Most American businesses are not in a time of crisis.* There were just a handful of companies affected directly by the World Trade Center attacks. To portray the general business culture as being in a crisis similar to what New York City is going through both underestimates the true kind of trauma and tragedy that happened in New York and grossly overstates the problems in corporations (emphasis ours).”¹

Epic tales of leaders as heroic crisis managers don't describe the day-to-day reality of most leaders, and they ignore the fact that these leaders were often floundering prior to the crisis, or failed as leaders once the crisis passed. What is highly appropriate leadership in a context of crisis is typically ineffective and even destructive in other contexts. Winston Churchill is a vivid example of this phenomenon. While brilliant as a forceful leader during World War II, he floundered in a time of peace because he did not adapt his authoritarian approach to the new reality.

It's not surprising that individuals trying to improve their power to lead sometimes look for a magic bullet, a single leadership approach guaranteed to work in all situations. They read about servant leadership, strategic leadership, visionary leadership, the leader-as-coach, or the leader-as-commander and focus on the one approach to leadership with which they are comfortable.

The belief that successful leaders operate in the same way in all circumstances is just not true. In fact, rigidity in one's leadership approach is a fast way to become yesterday's leader.

Take a look at three very different leaders: Rudy Giuliani, an instant icon with the perfect style for one indelible moment; President Jimmy Carter, whose inappropriate crisis management wildly missed the mark; and Sir Ernest Shackleton, whose flexible, adaptive leadership style actually saved the lives of his team.

THE GIULIANI MOMENT

9/11 and the Remaking of a Leader

Tomorrow New York is going to be here. And we're going to rebuild, and we're going to be stronger than we were before...I want the people of New York to be an example to the rest of the country, and the rest of the world, that terrorism can't stop us.

Rudy Giuliani, September 11, 2001

For having more faith in us than we had in ourselves, for being brave when required and rude where appropriate and tender without being trite, for not sleeping and not quitting and not shrinking from the pain all around him, Rudy Giuliani, Mayor of the World, is TIME's 2001 Person of the Year.

Nancy Gibbs, *TIME*, December 31, 2001

On the cover of *Time*, Giuliani's qualifications for the award were summarized in this simple phrase, "Tower of Strength." A fitting tribute, Giuliani's response to the tragedy and trauma of the horrendous events and aftermath of September 11, 2001 was remarkable and exactly what the city and the nation needed. With the President being kept out of sight for national security reasons during most of that day, Giuliani's presence and voice gave immediate comfort and inspiration not only to New Yorkers, but also to the rest of the nation. His tireless efforts, demonstrations of courage and compassion, and words of inspiration and consolation continued to sustain us in the weeks that followed.

Given Giuliani's effectiveness in the aftermath of 9/11 it's easy to forget that just prior to that infamous day his reputation and approval rating was at its lowest ebb since becoming Mayor. Such lack of public support contrasted starkly with the results of his 1997 re-election where he garnered 57 percent of the popular vote, carrying four out of New York City's five boroughs. What was it that got him elected initially in 1993 and re-elected in 1997? And why was his popularity waning towards the end of his second term prior to the terrorist attacks?

Giuliani's past successes were patterned on confronting difficult situations with a firm hand. In the 1980s, as a U.S. Attorney in New York, Giuliani racked up an impressive number of convictions against Mafia bosses, drug dealers, white collar inside traders, and corrupt politicians. His reputation as a tough prosecutor was well earned. When he ran for the mayor in 1993, the time seemed right in the eyes of most New Yorkers for such a tough, confrontational, authoritarian approach to running the city. Taxes and unemployment had risen through the ceiling; violent crime and drug abuse seemed to control whole segments of the city; tourist dollars were fleeing; and one out of seven New Yorkers was on welfare. Fear and pessimism were pervasive. It felt to many that the city was out of control.

Giuliani didn't disappoint those who were looking for a warrior to fight their battles and restore peace, order, and prosperity to the streets of New York. *TIME* magazine recorded Giuliani's perspective on his election mandate: "People didn't elect me to be a conciliator... They wanted somebody who was going to change this place. How do you expect me to change it if I don't fight with somebody? You don't change ingrained human behavior without confrontation, turmoil, anger."²

A radical crack-down on crime, a stringently enforced welfare-to-work program, and strong tax reform measures marked his first term and seemed to deliver the promised results. Serious crime was reduced by more than a third and murders by almost half within two years of his election. Welfare rolls were cut in half. Taxes were cut by 2.5 billion dollars. Redevelopment proceeded at a remarkable pace. Prosperity returned and tourism dollars rose to unprecedented levels.

So it was little surprise when Giuliani handily won a second term. But things didn't stay rosy for Rudy. By September 2001, Giuliani's approval rating had dropped to below 40 percent. Now that New York's crime crisis had passed, people grew weary of Giuliani's constant battling with political opponents, his own appointees, the media, jay walkers, street vendors, and even his own wife. His successes through his hard line approach had parallel failures in areas where a more conciliatory, collaborative style may have served better (educational reform and relations with visible minority groups being two such examples). In March 1999, an instinctive desire to defend the police — and perhaps his policy of being tough on crime — led him to release the juvenile crime record of Patrick Dorismond, an unarmed security guard shot to death by undercover officers with whom he struggled. Giuliani wanted to demonstrate Dorismond's propensity for violence, declaring that the dead waive their rights to privacy and that Dorismond was “no altar boy.” In blaming the victim, he appalled the city.

The combination of Giuliani's inability (or unwillingness) to adapt his leadership approach and his very public marital problems seemed to guarantee that his lasting reputation would be very mixed in the minds of most New Yorkers when his second term expired. Had he been eligible to run for a third term and had the election been held on September 10, 2001, Giuliani would almost certainly been looking for another job the following day.

September 11 changed all that. It remade him into a leader of almost mythic proportions. It was the Giuliani Moment.

Giuliani's immediate responses to the destruction, chaos, terror and sorrow of that day were truly remarkable. His efficiency, aura of authority, rapid-decision making, inspirational words, and compassionate actions towards the victims and their families fit perfectly the needs and demands of the moment. His ongoing actions in the days and weeks that followed were likewise exemplary. Giuliani tirelessly attended funerals of victims, spoke eloquently at special events and press conferences, visited with and encouraged laborers, firefighters, police officers and relief workers at Ground Zero, toured the site with visiting dignitaries, and prodded businesses and the Stock Exchange to get on with

business and not let the terrorists win. These decisive actions were critical in helping the city begin to recover from the events of September 11.

His masterful response to 9/11 should not obscure the fact that his leadership was not widely appreciated just prior to that infamous day. This is what we call the *Giuliani Moment: A new set of circumstances launches a faltering leader into renewed effectiveness when their singular leadership approach happens to matches the needs the moment.*

Unless you are gifted at repeatedly finding situations and environments that call for that approach — or are fortunate enough to have those situations repeatedly find you — over-reliance on one dimension of leadership is usually a recipe for lost effectiveness. Continuing to employ your past leadership approach when the context has changed can ruin you. Jimmy Carter's presidency poignantly illustrates the point.

THE CARTER DISCONNECT

Energy, Hostages and the Unmaking of a Leader

"Few stories better illustrate the intersection of character and leadership than the story of Jimmy Carter. The very qualities that got him elected—tenacity, religious certitude and an absolute confidence in his abilities—made it nearly impossible for him to govern."

Adriana Bosch, Writer and Director, Wisconsin Public Television

In January 1975, when Jimmy Carter began his campaign to become the Democratic presidential was virtually unknown to the American public. He was a long shot to win his own party's nomination, let alone the presidential election. Nevertheless, two years later Carter was inaugurated as the thirty-ninth President of the United States.

Three factors merged to lift Carter from national obscurity to the Presidency:

- changes to the rules for candidates

- Carter's campaign style and emphasis
- public disaffection with politicians.

The first factor involved extensive changes made to the rules for party and presidential candidates in the early 1970s. Carter was fortunate to have two assets that allowed him to capitalize on these changes. One was an early start to full-time campaigning. His governorship of Georgia had ended in 1974, allowing him to devote himself full-time to the campaign process at a very early stage (Carter formally entered the race on December 12, 1974). The other was a very shrewd campaign strategy, largely devised by a young aide named Hamilton Jordan.

The second factor in Carter's success was his campaign style and emphasis. Carter understood the loss of respect and trust in political leadership that many Americans experienced following the Vietnam War and Watergate. He promised he would never lie to the American public, underscoring that promise in these opening statements in his 1976 presidential campaign brochure:

Our whole system depends on trust. The only way that I know to be trusted is to be trustworthy. To be open, direct and honest. It's as simple as that.³

This emphasis fit well the context of the early post-Vietnam, post-Watergate era. So did Carter's religious and ethical beliefs. Rather than alienating the public, Carter's unabashed declaration of his religious faith and moral perspectives seemed to assure people that he would act decently, sincerely, and morally. Carter's religious orientation was not a pretense. It was the core of his being and profoundly influenced his actions and decisions. As Fred Greenstein says, "Carter stands alone among the modern presidents in the centrality of religious principles to his political leadership, and, indeed, his very being."⁴

The third factor in Carter's electoral victory was his positioning of himself as an outsider to the Washington political apparatus. And an outsider he was. Carter's political experience was entirely at the state level in Georgia — two terms in the state Senate and one term as governor. One might have expected voters to view this as

the rather limited experience of an obscure Southerner. Instead, many hoped his outsider status might lead to refreshing change in the now-disgraced political machinations of Washington.

And so, Jimmy Carter became the next American President.

In the first few months of his presidency Carter enjoyed great public support. One month after his inauguration, Gallup pollsters reported an approval rating of 66 percent. By mid-March it had climbed to 75 percent. This support, however, soon began to erode. Just one year later only 34 percent of Americans were pleased with his leadership. In his final year as president, Carter received the lowest-ever presidential approval rating (even worse than the disgraced Richard Nixon's). Carter's support had slumped to a mere 21 percent.

What happened? The answer, quite simply, is that Carter continued to lead as a president in the same way he had as a governor. Five elements were particularly evident in Carter's leadership approach as Governor of Georgia.

The first was the centrality of his ethics. This was evident in his Gubernatorial inaugural address when he declared, "the time for racial discrimination is over...No poor, rural, weak, or black person should ever have to bear the additional burden of being deprived of the opportunity for an education, a job or simple justice."

A second element was his bulldog-like tenacity. This was demonstrated when he pushed through a sweeping governmental reorganization plan, the centerpiece of his legislative program.

The third component of his leadership style was his acute self-reliance and self-confidence. Even though Carter surrounded himself with a group of loyal, dedicated staff, he characteristically operated as a loner. He spent vast amounts of time ingesting documents and mastering the minute details of situations and options, believing that he was the best one to handle many situations.

Carter's preference for face-to-face persuasion constituted a fourth aspect of his leadership approach. Carter believed that if he could sit down with someone in person, his calm demeanor, intelligence, and sincerity would achieve the results he wanted. Customarily it worked.

The fifth element of his leadership *modus operandi* was a populist tactic of appealing directly to the public to gain support for his initiatives. Carter disdained the machinery of government and often sidestepped the political norm of building consensus and lobbying other politicians for support on different initiatives. He preferred to use public pressure as a means of swaying votes in the Georgia senate.

An inflexible adherence to these same leadership tactics, successful in the relatively tranquil context of Georgia politics, ultimately led to Carter's unmaking as the leader of the nation. The realities of Washingtonian politics and the emergence of major domestic and international crises required leadership responses very different to that which Carter had employed thus far in his career. His dependence on a singular leadership dimension led to several failed initiatives and a public perception of ineffectiveness. This is the Carter Disconnect.

Carter's loner approach cost him the support of his team and the Democratic Party. His attempts to master the myriad details of circumstances and issues rather than rely on his staff was cumbersome, time consuming and disaffecting to his team. It also cost him party support. At times Carter would garner Democratic support for an initiative only to drop the proposal without warning or explanation, having alone decided not to pursue it.

Furthermore, Washington politics required compromise—something Carter usually loathed, equating compromise with a betrayal of his ethics. According to Douglas Brinkley, Director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at Metropolitan College of the University of New Orleans, this lack of compromise and his naiveté regarding the need to play the Washington political game, resulted in Carter alienating both the liberal and more conservative wings of the Democratic party. Thus even with substantial Democratic majorities in both the Senate and the House, many of Carter's initiatives were either rejected or significantly watered down (particularly his flagship energy bill). Ted Kennedy's strong challenge to an incumbent president for the party's presidential candidate nomination in 1979 was an indicator of how much Carter's style had disaffected his own party. The

unyielding approach that had worked at the state level had little success on the national scene.

This is not to say that Carter had no political achievements using his typical leadership approach. His tenacity worked well in pushing through the Panama Canal treaty and with the Camp David peace accord. Carter's ability to persuade people individually also played a key role in brokering and salvaging the peace accord reached between Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin. But generally, Carter's failure to adapt his leadership approach to the new realities of national politics and the way Washington worked cost him crucial support. With his failure to get several key programs passed into law (for example, national health insurance, welfare reform, and controls on hospital costs) he began to lose public support and gained a reputation for being powerless.

Carter's loss of public esteem was reinforced by his responses to two major crises that occurred during his presidency. During Carter's years, the U.S. economy "tanked". Inflation, interest rates, and unemployment all climbed steadily during his term. The deficit continued to balloon, and the value of the U.S. dollar eroded greatly. And then the energy crisis occurred. Shortages of oil and gasoline in early July 1979 led to trucker blockades of expressways. Rioting took place in several cities. Carter eventually responded to the crisis with a televised address on July 15, in which he focused on what he referred to as a widespread "crisis of confidence" in the nation, rather than specific solutions to the energy and economic crisis.

Quickly dubbed Carter's address "the malaise speech," commentators and the public alike felt Carter blamed the American public rather than providing effective leadership. As historian Roger Wilkins says, "When your leadership is demonstrably weaker than it should be, you don't then point at the people and say, 'It's your problem.' If you want the people to move, you move them the way Roosevelt moved them, or you exhort them the way Kennedy or Johnson exhorted them. You don't say, 'It's your fault.'"⁵ Carter's address lacked both vision and inspiration, crucial ingredients for leadership in a time of crisis.

The other crisis, which perhaps damaged Carter most, was the taking of more than sixty U.S. American hostages at the American Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979. Carter had granted the deposed Shah of Iran entry to the United States on humanitarian grounds for treatment of his cancer, despite concerns that there might be reprisals. This exacerbated the ongoing frustration of the Iranian people with the United States. A group of Iranian university students retaliated by storming the American Embassy and seizing its members.

Carter felt the safe return of all hostages was his personal responsibility and clearly made their freedom his number one priority. His religious beliefs, including a strong aversion to any loss of life whatsoever, played a strong role in his response. The depth of this conviction was evident during a meeting with the National Security Council and Pentagon heads concerning a planned rescue attempt. Carter asked if U.S. soldiers could use rubber bullets so that no Iranian guards would be killed.⁶ This concern for human life was laudable, but not necessarily the most appropriate political or military response in a hostile situation.

As is common in such circumstances, public support rallied for Carter in the initial months of the crisis, surging from 32 percent in November to 56 percent in January. But as winter turned to spring and patient negotiations didn't bring the hostages home, the public began to demand stronger action. By April public support had once again dropped, registering only 39 percent.

On April 11, 1979 Carter approved a high-risk rescue operation, called 'Desert One.' An unfortunate series of mechanical failures and weather conditions forced him to abort the mission, but not before eight servicemen were killed in an accident. The next day, Iranian footage showing the smoking remains of the U.S. rescue attempt. Americans watched in dismay, and many blamed Carter's weak leadership for the botched attempt, loss of life, and seeming American impotence.

The crisis lasted a total of 444 days, ending on the very day Carter turned over presidential power to his successor, Ronald Reagan. Carter's inability to return the hostages was a key factor in his electoral loss — especially when contrasted with Reagan's

stringent campaign rhetoric accusing Carter of appeasing Iran and claiming that he would never negotiate with terrorists.

Jimmy Carter's very public demise as a leader is regularly replicated on a much smaller and usually much less visible scale in the business world. *The Carter Disconnect occurs when a leader continues to rely on one dimension of leadership even though it is inappropriate in their current context. This inevitably leads to the collapse of their leadership effectiveness.* The business equivalents to losing the presidential election are being fired, staff turnover, and lower profits.

Our survey of leadership effectiveness so far has shown us two common phenomena. Giuliani's story demonstrates the fortuitous recovery of one's reputation when circumstances emerge that fit one's preferred leadership approach. Carter's story shows the negative consequences of refusing to change one's approach when a different context requires it. But there is another story to be told: A story that reveals the secret of ongoing leadership effectiveness.

THE SHACKLETON SECRET

Matching Response to Context

After the conquest of the South Pole by Amundsen... there remained but one great main object of Antarctic journeyings — the crossing of the South Polar continent from sea to sea.

After long months of ceaseless anxiety and strain, after times when hope beat high and times when the outlook was black indeed, we have been compelled to abandon the ship, which is crushed beyond all hope of ever being righted, we are alive and well, and we have stores and equipment for the task that lies before us. The task is to reach land with all the members of the Expedition. It is hard to write what I feel."

- Sir Ernest Shackleton

The remarkable story of Sir Ernest Shackleton's harrowing Endurance Expedition to the Antarctic (1914-16) has enjoyed renewed popularity in the last decade. It is a compelling story of courage, hardship, resourcefulness, and triumph over the forces of nature. Although Shackleton didn't achieve his primary objective—

the crossing of the Antarctic on foot—he nevertheless demonstrated remarkable leadership throughout the expedition.

Shackleton's charismatic personality, optimistic nature, and previous polar experience all played a role in his effectiveness. But his real brilliance was his ability to employ a variety of leadership approaches in differing situations. Shackleton, unlike Giuliani or Carter, was able to draw upon a range of approaches and match them to the specific context. That is the Shackleton Secret.

Shackleton's leadership wisdom was demonstrated from the very start of the expedition. When interviewing a prospective member (more than 5000 men applied for the voyage!) he used unorthodox questions to try to discern their suitability. For example, Reginald James, the *Endurance* physicist, recalled his interview thus: "Shackleton asked me if my teeth were good, if I suffered from varicose veins, if my circulation was good, if I had a temper, and if I could sing. At this question, I probably looked a bit taken aback, for I remember he said, 'Oh, I don't mean any Caruso stuff; but I suppose you can shout a bit with the boys.'" ⁷

Shackleton regularly asked the question about singing. It had become for him a standard test of a person's attitude towards teamwork. Based on his previous experience in polar exploration, Shackleton was convinced that a positive team atmosphere was a non-negotiable for success. He judged that certain personal attributes were needed beyond technical skills and did his best to ascertain that the person was a good fit. As he put it: "The men selected must be qualified for the work, and they must have the special qualifications required to meet polar conditions. They must be able to live together in harmony for a long period of time without outside communication, and it must be remembered that the men whose desires lead them to the untrodden paths of the world have generally marked individuality. It was no easy matter for me to select the staff." ⁸ This care in selecting men who were "team players" accounts for much of the relative peace and harmony that prevailed throughout the odyssey.

Having selected the full complement of twenty-six individuals, the voyage south from London, England began on August 1, 1914. The *Endurance* sailed to Buenos Aires and then to the whaling

station on South Georgia Island, a sub-antarctic island group in the South Atlantic. They arrived in early November.

On December 5, 1914, Shackleton and his crew departed, planning to sail to Vahsel Bay, a distance of some 1000 miles. The plan was to arrive at Vahsel Bay well in advance of winter so the expedition party could disembark and The Endurance could return in time to winter at South Georgia Island. Shackleton had arranged to have the exploration party picked up at the Beardmore Glacier on the west side of the Antarctic by another ship, the Aurora.

Unfortunately, Mother Nature did not cooperate with Shackleton's plan. By January 18, 1915, after maneuvering around and blasting through heavy pack ice for weeks, the Endurance was solidly frozen in a vast ice floe — only one day's sail from the intended landing site. Over the next few days, Shackleton and the crew could only watch as the current in the Weddell Sea began pulling the ice floe and their captive boat in a slow north-westerly direction, further and further away from their desired location.

The short-term objective was now to ride out their entrapment until the ice pack released the Endurance to sail again. Knowing the unpredictability of the polar region, Shackleton had arranged extensive supplies of food, coal, and warm clothing. A regular supply of seals provided fresh meat. So, although the likelihood of a successful mission was now remote, circumstances were not desperate.

Indeed, a point often overlooked in telling the story of the Endurance Expedition is that the longest portion of the voyage was not a crisis situation, but rather an extended period of relative inactivity, fighting boredom and the pressure of living in such close quarters. This relatively mundane phase of the journey required a very different leadership response than that of the crisis conqueror.

Using a variety of tactics, Shackleton set about to prevent the boredom, conflict, and low morale that captivity could create. He first provided structure and appropriate work for everyone. A definite daily schedule and specific assignments gave the men a means to focus and use their energy in constructive ways. This was balanced by regular times of fun and recreation — from soccer games on the ice floe, to sing-a-longs and skit nights. His own

occasional spontaneous antics (for example, spontaneously waltzing with the captain) were matched with planned birthday celebrations and festive meals for special events. In all these ways and more, Shackleton sought to create a strong sense of togetherness.

Indeed, from the very beginning of the voyage, Shackleton had placed an emphasis on creating unity aboard ship. Customarily, on such expeditions the officers, seamen, and scientists all kept to themselves, reflecting the educational, occupational, and class distinctions of the day. Shackleton sought instead to democratize and unify the entire group. Scientists were required to share in the ship's chores and crewmen helped take scientific readings and samples. Everyone had a turn at steering the ship and pulling night watch duty. This camaraderie proved critical in combating the long days of entrapment in the ice (it would also prove critical for the stressful period of prolonged crisis that was to come).

Shackleton also sought to develop and maintain strong personal relationships with all aboard (including, ultimately, a stowaway discovered shortly after leaving Buenos Aires). He took time to talk with each of the men on a regular basis. Even those men who were "harder to like" received his attention. When one of the least popular crew-members fell ill, Shackleton had him share his own cabin and personally attended to his recovery. This relational dimension of Shackleton's leadership accounts in great part for the deep loyalty that he received throughout even the bleakest and most dangerous parts of the journey.

At the same time, when needed, Shackleton could also respond in a stern, confrontational manner. For example, in dealing with disruptive behavior from a crewman, Shackleton confronted it directly. When a delegation of the seamen complained to him about bullying treatment at the hands of the bosun, John Vincent, Shackleton immediately summoned Vincent to his cabin. This large, swaggering trawler hand left the cabin shaken, demoted and rehabilitated! He caused no further specific problems. As First Officer Lionel Greenstreet put it, "He [Shackleton] could put on a look, a disdainful look that made you shrivel up. He could be very cutting when he wanted to, but I think it was more the look."⁹ On a few other key occasions, Shackleton proved capable of dealing swiftly, directly, and commandingly with difficult individuals.

These examples of varied leadership approaches — chosen according to the needs of the situation — demonstrate the Shackleton Secret in action: adapting one's leadership approach to the context.

Shackleton also proved to be a remarkable crisis conqueror, responding skillfully to unimaginably difficult circumstances. It is this aspect of his story for which he is most frequently remembered.

In the fall of 1915, having drifted northwest more than 750 miles since becoming ice-bound, pressure from the ice pack began to do critical damage to the *Endurance*. On October 27 Shackleton ordered the men to abandon ship. The damage was beyond repair and it had become dangerous to stay on board. Salvaging the three lifeboats, the sleds and dogs, and the supplies, the men set up Ocean Camp on the ice floe. They were now 350 miles from the nearest land and the temperature was -15° Fahrenheit.

Shackleton immediately demonstrated his ability to respond effectively in a crisis. Gathering the men together he explained their situation, reviewed the options, and then offered them a concrete plan of action. Shackleton thanked them for their efforts thus far and asked for their support. All the while his manner was calm, confident and optimistic. Entries from two of the men's diaries show the immediate impact of this moment. R. W. James, wrote:

“He spoke to us in a group, telling us that he intended to march the party across the [ice] to the west...that he thought we ought to manage five miles a day, and that if we all worked together it could be done....I can't remember the matter being discussed in any way. We were in a mess, and the Boss was the man who could get us out. It is a measure of his leadership that this seemed almost axiomatic.”

The meteorologist, Leonard Hussey, stated, “it was a characteristic speech — simple, moving, optimistic and highly effective. It brought us out of our doldrums, our spirits rose, and we had our supper.”¹⁰

Next, Shackleton demonstrated his concern for his men in a most practical way. Only 18 reindeer skin sleeping bags were available, the remaining being wool and much less warm. Shackleton arranged for the drawing of straws, ostensibly so that the allocation of bags would be perceived as fair. Through some act

of subterfuge, all the officers ended up with the wool bags, a fact not lost on the rest of the men. Able Seamen Bakewell noted, "There was some crooked work in the drawing as Sir Ernest, Mr. Wild...Captain Worsley and some of the other officers all drew wool bags. The fine warm fur bags all went to the men under them."¹¹

After a failed attempt to walk to open water, the company had to settle down to wait for warmer weather and the breaking up of the pack ice. Shackleton continued to ensure a daily regimen, specific assignments, recreation, and entertainment. He also made sure that food rations were carefully determined and distributed. Emergency drills were held practicing a speedy departure. Shackleton left nothing to chance. All the while he continued to maintain an optimistic outlook with his men. Shackleton lived by his own belief, "Optimism is true moral courage." This was much appreciated and frequently noted by his men. Over the next several months of camping they drew strength, comfort, and hope from his resolute confidence.

Over time, the situation steadily deteriorated. The number of penguins and seals used for fresh meat was dwindling and as the pack ice continued its northern drift and temperatures rose, the ice began to break up, causing dangerous crevices and splits to suddenly appear.

The continuing drift now created the possibility of reaching several nearby islands and on April 9, 1916 the three lifeboats were launched when a lane of water opened up. In the midst of heavy seas, gale-force winds, pack ice and icebergs, the pursuit of land began. As Caroline Alexander states, "The men had been trapped in the ice for fifteen months. But their real ordeal had just begun."¹²

Over the next seven days Shackleton would forgo sleep, standing erect day and night on the stern-counter of the lifeboat as a visible beacon of leadership. Several times he had to alter the intended destination and shift direction based on changing weather, wind and ice conditions. He ensured the men got as much rest as was feasible, though conditions often made sleep impossible. Finally, against all odds, the lifeboats landed on Elephant Island, a

deserted, bleak and inhospitable mountain terrain. After having been at sea for more than sixteen months, on disembarking many of the men “filled their pockets with stones, or rolled along the beach, burying their faces in the stones and pouring handfuls over them.”¹³

Shackleton soon realized that the next step in their arduous journey home would be an attempt to cross the Southern Ocean, the most difficult and dangerous water in the world, and land on South Georgia Island. With many of his crew being too weak to hazard the journey, he chose a crew of five men to accompany him in the *James Caird*, the largest of the three lifeboats. The remaining men were to be left behind on Elephant Island in the hope of eventual rescue, should the voyage of the *James Caird* succeed. So, on April 24 they set out to accomplish what all knew was highly improbable — sailing a life boat 800 miles in the midst of gale-force winds, snow, ice and colossal waves, using only a sextet to navigate. The journey was an amazing display of courage, skill and good fortune.

Miraculously, after seventeen days at sea, they reached land.

On May 10th Shackleton and his disheveled crew landed on the west side of South Georgia Island, the opposite side from the whaling station. Weather and ocean conditions, as well as the severely depleted state of three of the men, made an attempt to sail around the southern end of the island impossible. Instead, Shackleton chose the two men who were least exhausted to accompany him on a 30-mile trek over the mountains, leaving the other three behind to await rescue. In spite of setbacks, fatigue, and severe weather, thirty-six hours later, the three men walked into the whaling station at Husvick. So disheveled were they that Shackleton reported scaring two children and an old man into the whaling station.

Shackleton immediately arranged for the rescue of the three men left behind on the other side of the island. Only three days later, though exhausted, he boarded a whaler for the first of three attempts to rescue the rest of the crew still camped back on Elephant Island. Although it would ultimately take four months before the rescue was achieved, when they finally arrived, Shackleton was overjoyed to find that all his men had survived.

Thus ended one of the most amazing stories of survival and leadership effectiveness in the annals of history.

Throughout this journey Shackleton faced a wide range of circumstances: routine ship life, months of relative inactivity, weeks of anxious uncertainty, and days of absolute crisis. In all these shifting contexts, he maintained an incredibly high degree of leadership effectiveness. What accounts for this? Shackleton varied his leadership approach and emphasis to match the needs and demands of the particular context. That's the Shackleton Secret to leadership effectiveness.

THE LEADERSHIP EDGE

Leveraging Your Strengths to Broaden Your Organizational Impact

“Leadership is not the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It’s a process ordinary people use when they’re bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Liberate the leader in everyone, and extra ordinary things happen.”

- James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

Shackleton would have heartily endorsed Kouzes and Posner’s perspective on leadership. So do we. It is another way of describing the Shackleton Secret. Effectiveness is based on reading the situation at hand and using an appropriate leadership response. This is in contrast with the more common practice (demonstrated differently by Giuliani and Carter) of depending on one approach in all situations.

The question is this: is it just the notable few like Shackleton, unusually gifted, who have what it takes to flex their leadership approaches? Does it take an unusually gifted person to be flexible like Shackleton?

Absolutely not.

This book will show you a quick, easy way you can increase your flexibility in order to maximize your leadership effectiveness. It’s a revolutionary approach that draws on the strengths you already have.

This practical guide will give you the tools to identify and build on those strengths to increase your range of leadership approaches. You will see which approaches are needed for a variety of business contexts and how you can immediately use your strengths to start leading with the appropriate approach.

Some other practices in leadership development do help individuals identify their strengths. But its primary emphasis lies in identifying and overcoming a leader's weaknesses. This traditional approach is a waste of precious time and energy and, ultimately, it's self-defeating. It places your focus on what you lack instead of on the skills and talents you already possess. Focusing on weaknesses can lead to frequent failures in attempts at major change while resulting in minimal development.

The good news is that you don't need a major personality overhaul to increase your range of Leadership Dimensions and your effectiveness. 5D Leadership is faster and far less painful, and the results are often astonishing.

CONCLUSION

So, are you ready to begin the journey? You may not end up taking people to the ends of the earth like Sir Earnest, but you will maximize your impact on your world.

In the following chapter, we will explore the five leadership approaches needed for today's complex business world.
