

What the Coronavirus tells us about Leadership

Few things in our lifetime will ever tell us as much about our leaders as the Covid-19 pandemic will.

Perhaps the most important element of good leadership is character, and as Goethe told us, "Character is formed in the stormy billows of the world." I don't think anyone would disagree with that statement and the fact that we are now experiencing what Goethe referred to. For at least the last 40 years much has been written about leadership.

This, however, is a time in which we will clearly see the types and qualities of leadership we are exposed to in our daily lives in business, government, religion, NGOs, etc. There is nothing like adversity to introduce us to, not only ourselves, but those to whom we look for leadership, and there is nothing like fear to focus the mind on what is important, what really matters.

So, as we all move through the days ahead, it's a good time to reflect on what is really important to us with regard to the leaders we look to and how they measure up to our expectations. Do we value honesty over spin? What role should empathy and compassion play in leadership—actually caring about people—and how important are they? How should a good leader make the tough calls that will have to be made? How important is a sense of inclusion in decision making?

One of the most misunderstood things, and one that leaders covet the most is something called engagement.

Employee engagement is not only about employees feeling deeply connected to what they're doing, but also deeply connected to the leader for whom they are doing it.

So, leaders, understand this: Your actions in these times will define you for years to come. The question on which to reflect is, are you giving your employees a reason to be engaged, a reason to be proud of you, the person to whom they look for leadership? Now, here's the real test: Don't forget all this after the crisis is over.

Good luck on your journey!

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