



Research Paper

Scriptural Approaches for Contemporary Leadership Development

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Abstract: This text examines the principles and procedures implemented by Moses for developing leaders. Using Exodus 18 as the basis, the author explores how leadership skills are best developed in small group settings. The author then delves into contemporary leadership principles, such as authentic leadership, and how organizations can develop leaders at every level of the organization. Issues such as accountability, ethics, and trust will be discussed at length, with an examination of the expected outcomes of training leaders at all levels.

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I. Introduction

Leadership development is an ongoing process that is grounded in personal development and embedded in experience over time (Van Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman, 2010). Van Velsor, et al. (2010) defines leadership development as an expansion of a collective's capacity to produce direction, alignment, and commitment (DAC). Leadership development involves the achievement of DAC on a collective basis, in such a way that it enhances growth and effectiveness in an organization (Hackman & Johnson, 1999). Challenges and opportunities for leaders and those in charge of their development have never been greater as our world becomes increasingly complex. Leadership development represents an ongoing process that people need to prepare for and to be open to new experiences.

Some of the practices of leadership development include coaching, mentoring and discipleship. Leadership can be learned, and individuals can expand their leadership capacities at any age as long as they do not lose their capacities to learn, grow, and change. Organizations that prioritize leadership development encourage the establishment of developmental relationships; building connections between emerging leaders and those who can help them achieve their objectives, thereby increasing the chances of those emerging leaders. A good leader expands his follower's capacity to be effective in various leadership roles and processes to become a self-learner and ultimately a self-leader. Knowledge is the key to the nurturing, growing, and mentoring of future leaders. Leaders are learners.

Coaching, mentoring, and discipleship have subtle differences, and they ultimately complement one another in the leadership development process. A coach could be a life guide, while the teacher of a disciple acts as a spiritual adviser. In coaching and mentoring, the participants establish the roles and relationships, and in discipleship, the Lord establishes the roles. Moreover, in coaching, the apprentice sets the agenda, in mentoring, the mentor sets the agenda, and in discipleship, the commands of Christ top the agenda.

Leadership Development

Organizations need to groom effective leaders continually by setting up various processes, practices, and activities to develop leaders through the crafting of leader development systems (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 30). Moving from leader development (individual) to leadership development (collective) reflects the development of a broader perspective on leadership and on the targets and methods of leadership development. A mature leadership development system is characterized by initiatives customized to the needs of different leader segments, the intentional use of multiple methods of leader development, and an organizational climate for development (Van Velsor, et al., 2010, p. 57).

Leadership is learned from experience and for leader development to happen, entire systems are crafted, refined, and enhanced over time. Organizational systems provide a unique context for learning and development through experiences, and these five general clusters help create a conducive environment for developing leaders:

- Challenging assignments such as job rotations and stakeholder engagement.
- Developmental relationships across cultures between a manager and a constructive boss, a difficult person, and a non-work guide (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 73).
- Personal experiences often create emotion-laden memories of how values are shaped by cultures and sub-cultures.
- Adverse situations that include crises, mistakes, career setbacks, and ethical dilemmas.
- Coursework and training include formal development programs, international study tours, action learning projects, and spiritual training (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 26).

Organizational systems in leader development increase mastery, versatility and transfer of a virtuous cycle of growing leaders. Systems allow organizations to develop leaders from within through many developmental experiences (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 94).

Also, experience-based learning, reinforced by the return on experience can be a powerful methodology for developing and sustaining leadership talent. It is a worthwhile effort that there is a significant shift in leadership development from a top-down instruction-based approach to developing leaders through workable systems (Bell, 2006). Van Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman (2010) posit that emphasis on the development of leadership capacity as well as the development of individual leaders is consistent with the growing recognition that strategic leadership is essential for sustained organizational effectiveness in a dynamic global economy.

Leader development is the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. These roles and processes facilitate setting direction, creating alignment, and maintaining commitment in groups of people who share common work. Organizations make use of a wide variety of leader development methods such as developmental relationships using mentors, coaches, and social identity networks, developmental assignments such as job rotation, action learning projects, and temporary assignments, feedback processes such as 360-degree feedback, assessment centers, and performance appraisals, formal programs such as skills training, university programs and personal growth programs, and lastly, self-development activities such as the reading of books and articles, speakers, colloquia and professional conferences, and trade shows (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 41).

Coaching

Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and to improve performance. Tange (2010) defines coaching as a leadership practice in which one person (the coach) comes alongside another (the coachee) in order to help him or her achieve certain goals. Coaching is a process of empowerment aimed at providing a particular kind of freedom in terms of individual self-creation or self-actualization that exists in an atmosphere of trust. To be a successful coach requires knowledge and understanding of the process as well as a variety of styles, skills, and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which coaching takes place. This method of leadership development is not partial but rather focused on improvement in behavior. A coach develops specific skills for the tasks, challenges, and performance expectations at work. Hence, the major focus of coaching is performance with specific agenda roles and position-based sources of influence, while adopting teamwork and task-related arena based on relationships.

Ting & Hart (2004) explain that leadership coaching is a practice in which the coach and the person being coached (coachee) collaborate to assess and understand the coachee and the coachee's development needs and challenge current constraints while exploring new possibilities and ensuring accountability and support for reaching goals and sustaining development. Ultimately, the goal of coaching is to improve the effectiveness of the leader, his team, and the organization. The three key frameworks for coaching are trusted relationship, assessment, challenge, and support (ACS), and visible outcomes, which are the results of future learning (Van Velsor et al., 2010).

Coaches usually have set objectives to reinforce or change skills and behaviors, because coaching is task-oriented and performance-driven. The coachee's immediate manager is a critical partner in the process of coaching, within the context of an organization. Van Velsor, et al. (2010) posits that coaching has become a more strategic and value-added activity for many individuals and organizations because it is very relational, as both coach and coachee walk together through the process of reflection, interpretation, and future focus. Coaching amplifies other learning experiences as trust is developed between a coach and the coachee through openness and willingness to engage in relationships that are based on mutual commitment and respect.

Equally, Van Velsor, et al. (2010) discuss the principles of coaching that show how coaching relationships help to foster leadership development. Some of those principles are creating a learning environment, ensuring the coachee's ownership, facilitating and collaborating, advocating self-awareness, promoting sustainable learning from experiences, and modeling what you coach.

Coaching is important to leadership development because the success of leaders depends on the success of those they lead, as their job is to nurture, grow, and develop people so that everyone wins. Coaching requires a commitment to the improvement of others, and as being others-focused does not come naturally to everyone, most successful organizations make coaching a top priority in their leadership development efforts. Coaching is a process for bringing out the best in others. Baldoni (2003) posits that the best way to nurture manager-employee relationships is through frequent one-on-one coaching sessions and that it is the leader's responsibility to provide people with the needed support to do their job. Exceptional leaders prioritize the creation of the next generation of leaders, and they unleash their potential through coaching. Developing a culture of coaching in organizations is essential. The creation of a coaching culture is facilitated by leaders making expectations clear, providing feedback, creating a work development plan, considering career plans for their coaches, teaching coaching behaviors, and providing mentoring (Baldoni, 2003).

Kouzes & Posner (2012) encourage leaders to coach their teams and to keep the motivation and energy flowing so people can reach their full potential. Good coaches always ask good questions, which elicit answers from within the coachees. Then, good coaches model the way, and there is no better way to model the behavior you expect from others than to do it. Coaching can be learned, and to succeed in leadership development within an organization, people must integrate into the culture of coaching. Tange (2010) asserts that coaching meets an urgent need in our runaway world of late modernity, where our teachings might ignore questions about how one should define one's personal identity. Tange (2010) also describes coaching as a new way of leading in which one person comes alongside another in order to help him or her achieve certain goals.

Mentoring

Mentoring occurs within the context of a relationship, where a more experienced person guides a less experienced person (usually referred to as the protégé) to achieve success in a particular area of expertise. Bozeman and Feeney (2007) define mentoring as "a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development" (p. 731). However, mentoring can occur within both formal and informal contexts. The word 'mentor' is inspired by the character Mentor who was a friend to the Greek King Ulysses in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Mentoring is relationship-oriented, always long-term, and development-driven. The mentor may be older or younger than the protégé but has more experience in an area of expertise. The mentor has a deep personal interest, is personally involved, and cares about the protégé's long-term development. Mentoring is a beneficial relationship that is power free, where a mentor assists the protégé to reach his full potential.

A mentor trains, grooms, empowers, and nurtures an inexperienced mentee or protégé based on career and psychological functions. Career functions include sponsorship, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. Psychological functions include role modeling, counseling, friendship, and acceptance (Hackman & Johnson, 2009).

Mentoring is also a form of coaching in that it works to develop talents and skills in protégés. The purpose of mentoring in organizations is to provide guidance over a long period of time to help the protégé acquire knowledge, skills, and social network connections. The performance of a protege does not necessarily reflect the mentor's performance (Baldoni, 2003). Major areas of mentoring include spiritual, family, financial, career, politics, health, and educational life.

Some of the benefits of mentoring for the protege include improved credibility, open doors of opportunity, enhanced self-esteem, and knowledge acquisition. It helps to save time and money and reduces frustration. Mentoring increases commitment, loyalty, level of success, and productivity. On the other hand, the benefits derived by mentors include knowledge of new innovations and technology (also known as reverse mentoring), and career advancement as the success of the protégé enhances the position of the mentor industry-wise. Laird (2006) points out that mentoring has been apparently beneficial in the career advancement of women and minorities in the workplace.

Aubrey and Cohen (1995) identified five mentoring techniques most used by mentors as follows:

- **Accompanying:** This entails being involved and taking part in the learning process with the learner.
- **Sowing:** Mentors have an investment mindset and know that though protégés may not realize the need for the lessons they receive on the immediate, they will find need for those things when the need arises.
- **Catalyzing:** Learning can escalate when change reaches a critical level of pressure. At that stage, the mentor plunges the protégé into change, provoking a paradigm shift that changes the protégé's perspective, causes a change of identity, or inspires a re-ordering of values.

- Showing: This is using a personal example to demonstrate a skill or activity so it can be easier for the protégé to grasp the lesson.
- Harvesting: The mentor guides the protégé to be aware of what has been learned by asking questions.

Mentors may choose to use one or more of the techniques at a time depending on the situation. Kouzes & Posner (2012) encourage mentors to look for what they refer to as *'teachable moments'* to maximize the mentoring experience. They emphasize though, that the credibility of the mentor is as essential to the quality of the mentoring experience as the mentor's skills.

Hackman & Johnson (2009) advise that joining an organization that has a mentoring program can simplify the search for a good mentor. Otherwise, the search for a mentor can be enhanced when the prospective protegee identifies what he or she needs (not whom), evaluates herself as a prospective protégé, identifies mentor candidates, prepares for the obstacles, and approaches possible mentors using indirect tactics. For example, it is helpful for the prospective protégé to research the mentor's work and to acquire information products they may have authored. Also, a protégé can serve the mentor if there is a way to do it. And, it is important that the protégé is someone who is making the best use of the opportunities in her career already. Then, the protégé should develop the capacity to empathize with the mentor, appreciating the demands of the mentor's work and the pressure on the mentor's time.

There is exegetical support for mentoring in 1st Corinthians 11: 1, where Paul the Apostle encouraged believers to imitate him as he imitated Christ. The ultimate mentor is Christ. He invested in a group of men and women over three years and the mission that he started is still ongoing after over two thousand years. The testimony of His impact as a mentor is captured in the scriptures: *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that had been with Jesus"* (Acts 4: 13).

It is worthy of note that it was not everyone who sought mentoring from Christ that could afford the commitment that was required to succeed in the pursuit of His mission. He declared: *"If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matthew 16: 24). Many changed their minds about following Him when they heard the requirement. It follows that prospective protégés need to demonstrate the willingness to make the kinds of sacrifices made by their desired mentors to achieve success. Many that admire the achievements of mentors are unwilling to put in as much effort as their mentors.

Parenting also creates a powerful mentoring dynamic, where a parent is more experienced, and provides inspiration and guidance to a child. There is a classic example in Proverbs 31, where a queen admonishes her son on the qualities required in a king and the need for self-control and then goes on to describe in detail the qualities her son should look for in a wife. Proverbs 22: 6 says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* However, parenting is different from mentoring in several ways. A mentor does not usually have the authority that a parent has, which confers greater ability on the parent to shape a child's life. But a mentor can have an influence on a child that is different from that of a parent.

Discipleship

Participants establish roles and relationships in coaching and mentoring contexts. In discipleship, however, the Lord establishes the roles. Also, the coachee sets the agenda in coaching, the mentor sets the agenda in mentoring, but the commands of Christ set the agenda for discipleship. The biblical construct of discipleship has its root in Christ. He said: *"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher"* (Luke 6: 40). A disciple is one who grows in Christ and in so doing models and teaches others the precepts of the Bible, relationships, prayer, doctrine, Christian living, service, and worship.

Not everyone can be coached, but everyone can go through discipleship without pressure, and with passion and conviction. Therefore, while helping people to find and fulfill their calling is the language of coaching and mentoring in leadership development, growing people to fullness in Christ is the language of discipleship.

The biblical understanding of discipleship connotes following Christ and learning to become like Him. When Christ called his first disciples, the plan was for them to spend time together with him and learn from him, and afterward, He would send them to represent Him before the world (Mark 3: 14). So, Christ called those men to obey, follow, and learn from him. Apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 4: 11-13 that the purpose of teaching and training by the leadership of the Church is the maturity and empowerment of believers, so they can meet people's needs with the power of God. This is not a model of absolute power or dependency (Tange, 2010). Coaching includes familiarity and power with the transfer of knowledge from a coach to a coachee. Mentoring takes place when one person desires to emulate the life of another and seeks to learn from the mentor's store of knowledge and personal patterns. Discipleship occurs in a spiritual context through the training of people as it relates to their faith in Christ.

Discipleship is biblical in context, and it is all about following our Master, Jesus Christ. Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who resides in their hearts, to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life, and to become more and more Christ-like. The biblical foundation for discipleship can be found in Matthew 28: 18-20. It is a command from Christ, which has guaranteed the continued expansion of Christ's mission on earth. Paul the Apostle said, "*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*" (1st Corinthians 11: 1). It follows that it is those who have experienced discipleship that have the capacity to disciple others.

Coaching is task-oriented, short-term, and performance-driven, while discipleship is long-term, development driven, and focuses more on relationships. Leadership development is thus a form of cultural development that often requires the ongoing development of individual leaders (Van Velsor et al., 2010, p. 427). Tange (2010) defines coaching as a practice of empowerment that provides a particular kind of freedom, in terms of individual self-creation or self-actualization.

Equally, discipleship and coaching practices ponder on how we can nurture healthy individuality by helping people to discover their uniqueness in God. Coaching may not be enough to lead people into their calling as humans and as Christians, but discipleship can do a more rounded job.

Christian discipleship is the process by which Christ's disciples grow in character and competence after the manner of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who resides in their hearts, to overcome the pressures and trials of life. Disciples learn to love like Christ. This is the foundation for character development. Christ said in John 13: 34-35, "*A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.*" Thus, discipleship is concerned with becoming Christ-like, through a process that is established on a covenant relationship.

Gyertson (2006) posits that the Christ-centered principles of discipleship rest on the following:

- **The Lamp of Learning:** The foundation for discipleship is the transmission of knowledge. Romans 12: 2 says, "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*" Renewal of the mind is the foundation for the transformation of a life. According to the Great Commission mandate, the building blocks of mature discipleship rest upon the solid foundation of divine revelation through the word of God given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As matured followers of Christ, we must stretch our renewed minds as the heads-first calling that is fuelled by the conviction of Jesus Christ as the only way, truth, and life (John 14: 6).
- **The Cross:** We must cradle our restored heart through knowledge, which is the blossom of the exercised mind, because compassion represents the fruit of the circumcised heart, while the cross is the symbol of the restored heart. So, embracing and sharing the liberated and enabled love symbolized by the cross is fundamental. The knowledge of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, symbolized by the cross, is the foundation for our faith in the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, changing us into the image of Christ.
- **The Waiting World:** Our outstretched hands call us to a life of service, which produces tangible and life-changing results as true witnesses of Christ. We who have experienced the transforming power of Christ seek actively to see others transformed into the image of Christ. Becoming like Christ solves all human problems.

We must embrace the call to a life of heads-first and hearts-fast discipleship, by being real witnesses and disciples of Christ, reflecting Him in all our actions, behaviors, and deeds. The Holy Spirit is thus able to express Himself to the world through us and to transform people into the image of Christ one person at a time.

Biblical Perspectives on Coaching, Mentoring, and Discipleship

Mentoring pours knowledge and guidance into the protégé, coaching pulls answers out of the coachee, while discipleship comprises both the pouring-in and pulling-out processes. While coaching carries familiarity and power with the implied transfer of knowledge from a coach to a protégé, mentoring takes place when one person desires to emulate the life of another, and such emulation usually includes the mentor's personal habits and successes. Discipleship occurs strictly in a religious context as it entails training someone with the objective of getting them to become like Christ. Not everyone can be coached, but everyone can be disciplined or mentored. Also, coaching is usually short-term and focused on the achievement of specific tasks or objectives, while both mentoring and discipleship are long-term and are focused on the growth into maturity of the protégé or disciple.

Coaching has arguably been the fastest-growing leadership development method in recent times. However, discipleship is still imperative for the wholesome development and long-term success of emerging leaders. Coaching draws out of the coachee ideas and solutions the coachee may not be able to articulate. The coach, however, does not necessarily serve as a role model for the coachee as a mentor does to a protégé. In

discipleship and mentoring, those being mentored or disciplined (mentees and protégées) tend to take on the characteristics of their mentors, because they see them as role models. Foley (2012) posits that in coaching, the apprentice sets the agenda, in mentoring the mentor sets the agenda, and in discipleship, the commands of Christ are the agenda. Coaching and mentoring in leadership development are focused on helping people to find and realize their potentials, but discipleship is focused on growing people to the fullness of the stature of Christ, which is God's predestination for everyone (Romans 8: 29). Therefore, emerging leaders can learn, grow, and develop through the developmental relationship programs of coaching, mentoring and discipleship.

Christ launched His ministry by recruiting disciples. He was intentional about His leadership development program, and His objective was discipleship, which would encapsulate both coaching and mentoring. He said to His first prospective recruits, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4: 19). His promise was not just to train them, but also to change (make) them. Also, Christ promised rest, signifying relief, peace, and joy to the downtrodden in the society (Matthew 11: 28). Then, He invited them to a place of deeper commitment to become like Him when He said, "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*" (Matthew 11: 29).

Copeland (2003) opines that the idea of modeling is vital to discipleship, and that those who are leaders and developers of others must first be disciples of Christ, understanding that everything else they do is an offshoot of their own discipleship and Christ-following experience. It is good followers that ultimately end up as good leaders. Christ gave His disciples the ultimate stretch assignment when He commanded them, and invariably all believers, to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28: 19). He premised this on the fact that all authority had been given to Him (v. 18). This authority, backed by the power of the Holy Spirit would enable the disciples to function like Christ.

Opportunities for coaching surfaced when Christ's disciples asked Him to help them develop specific skills, like praying. He gave them a prayer outline, elucidating on the attitude they should maintain in prayer (Luke 11: 1-4). He taught them to pray and to be persistent in prayer.

Christ mentored His disciples by cultivating relationships with them. He told them openly that He loved them (John 13: 34). Then He challenged them to do likewise to each other. He delegated His authority to them and sent them to places He would have gone, to do what He would have done. They were excited when they returned because they had gotten the same results as Christ. Luke 10: 17 says, "*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.'*" Christ expressed faith in His disciples, invested in their spiritual growth, held them accountable, encouraged them in times of crisis, and was a role model to them. Then He promised that the Holy Spirit would be to them all that He had been to them.

II. Conclusion

Our world is in dire need of effective leaders, and one of the important priorities for those who lead is a commitment to the development of emerging leaders. People in organizations learn leadership skills by watching other leaders, and the best forms of learning happen when relationships are nurtured and emerging leaders watch those ahead of them perform their tasks. Great learning opportunities exist in organizations, as emerging leaders position themselves to learn from those ahead of them. Burton et al. (2011) explain that the transfer of knowledge can be implicit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is structured and can be taught. However, implicit knowledge can only be caught through observation. Both dimensions occur in varying dimensions through coaching, mentoring, and discipleship.

The key advice for emerging leaders is to stop, look, and listen, and to build relationships with people higher than them in the areas where they desire to learn and grow, who have had similar experiences as theirs in the past. Most executives love to help the next generation of leaders. They only want to be sure their investments of time and effort will be worth their while. Great leaders love to reproduce themselves. They do this through coaching, mentoring, and discipleship methods of leadership development. Participants in coaching and mentoring establish roles and relationships. However, in discipleship, Christ establishes the roles.

Coaching draws out of people what they cannot see in themselves, and the coach does not serve as a role model for the coachee. But in discipleship and mentoring, those being mentored tend to take on the attributes of the mentors. Tange (2010) concludes that discipleship is God-centric while coaching is client-centric. Coaching and biblical discipleship are therefore diametric approaches to leadership development. The Holy Spirit remains the best coach and mentor.

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