

universal appeal. Who couldn't agree? The concept of "leadership" is somewhat like that, and many have injected their own values in to it. But leadership is more than a Coke commercial.

**Interaction is Communications**

So, we come back to "whose values." All leadership must involve interaction with followers. And, interaction implies communication. What is it a leader must communicate? It is essential that the leader communicates content, and that content must include that leader's gifts, attributes, and capacities. Those things add to the credibility of leadership.

Discussing leadership requires understanding specific context and the scale of issues involved. Effective leadership has consequences; good leaders understand those consequences and communicate them effectively to their followers. Are we jumping off yet another bridge, they might ask? and they must be told the truth. Remember, "excusez-moi, excusez-moi," says the only sheep making its way away back from the cliff edge through the doomed flock? Who's the leader now?

Admittedly leadership is harder than it used to be. Followers are getting smarter and, more often than not, they have at their disposal similar information from which to form their own opinions and, in growing cases, their own course of action. This ups the ante where true leadership is concerned.

**Living with Paradox**

In a pluralistic democratic society, dialogue and consensus-building takes time.

Dissent, which some people have forgotten is a hallmark of democracy, requires leadership. And leadership is also, paradoxically, used in the suppression of dissent. There's indeed a balance in all things so let us not forget that without intelligent, relentless questioning, democratic leadership is blind. Without reasonable questioning, our leaders are ill served. Good leaders surround themselves with diversity of thought, building the questioning process into the team.

Today, in paradox, you can find examples of leaders both "empowering their followers" and of "going it alone" against the wishes of the majority of their followers. You can find national and local leaders who are "continual learners" and at the same time, leaders who have had enough learning and who say "it's time to act."

Leaders can appear inclusive leading up to their decisions, but often their decisions for the good of society appear exclusive. Leaders make hard decisions. Again, however, good leaders communicate and work toward the followers' comprehension; they weather the questions, and move us all forward.

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In today's complexity, where there are virtually no black and white issues, leadership operates in the gray zone. Leadership must consider both following the market forces and the democratic institutions that regulate the market for the good of the people, the good of the environment, and more and more, for the good of the world.

In a pluralistic society, leadership requires all of this flexibility—the skills of ethical decision-making and choosing the "best" decision based on available information. With all variables weighed, the moral fitness of a decision is the goal, and over time, is clearly seen.

All of these things, and more, are part of the leadership equation—knowing yourself; your gift, attributes, and capacities; your ethics and values; and especially how well you communicate them. ▲

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## Corrections & Comments

**Dr. Bernard Hoeter's article on Mentoring and Coaching in the Spring 2003 *Scrivener* generated spirited response.**

1. Dr. Hoeter points out that two significant typos must be corrected. His text should read as follows.
  - The word "mentor" originates from Greek methodology. Goddess Athena spoke through Mentor, a respected **Ithacan** [not Italian] nobleman, to give advice to young Telemachus, son of Odysseus and Penelope, whose father was roaming the Aegean seas in search of his homeland.
  - Coach emanates from Mediaeval student **slang** [not slag].
2. Dr. Hoeter notes that Ithaca is one of the Ionian Islands west of the coast of the Mainland of Greece; in ancient times, it was said to be the Kingdom of Odysseus.
3. A female Notary questioned Dr. Hoeter's use of the name Odysseus instead of Ulysses. He clarified for her that Odysseus is the Latin version of the Greek name Ulysses, and is generally accepted as the name of the husband of Penelope.
4. This note was sent to Dr. Hoeter by a Notary who reads *The Scrivener* regularly.

...a "coach" in England is often called a "crammer"—a person who prepares students for their entrance examinations at Public Schools...Public Schools in England are usually Private Schools. ▲