



LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY

LEADERSHIP

WHY LEAD

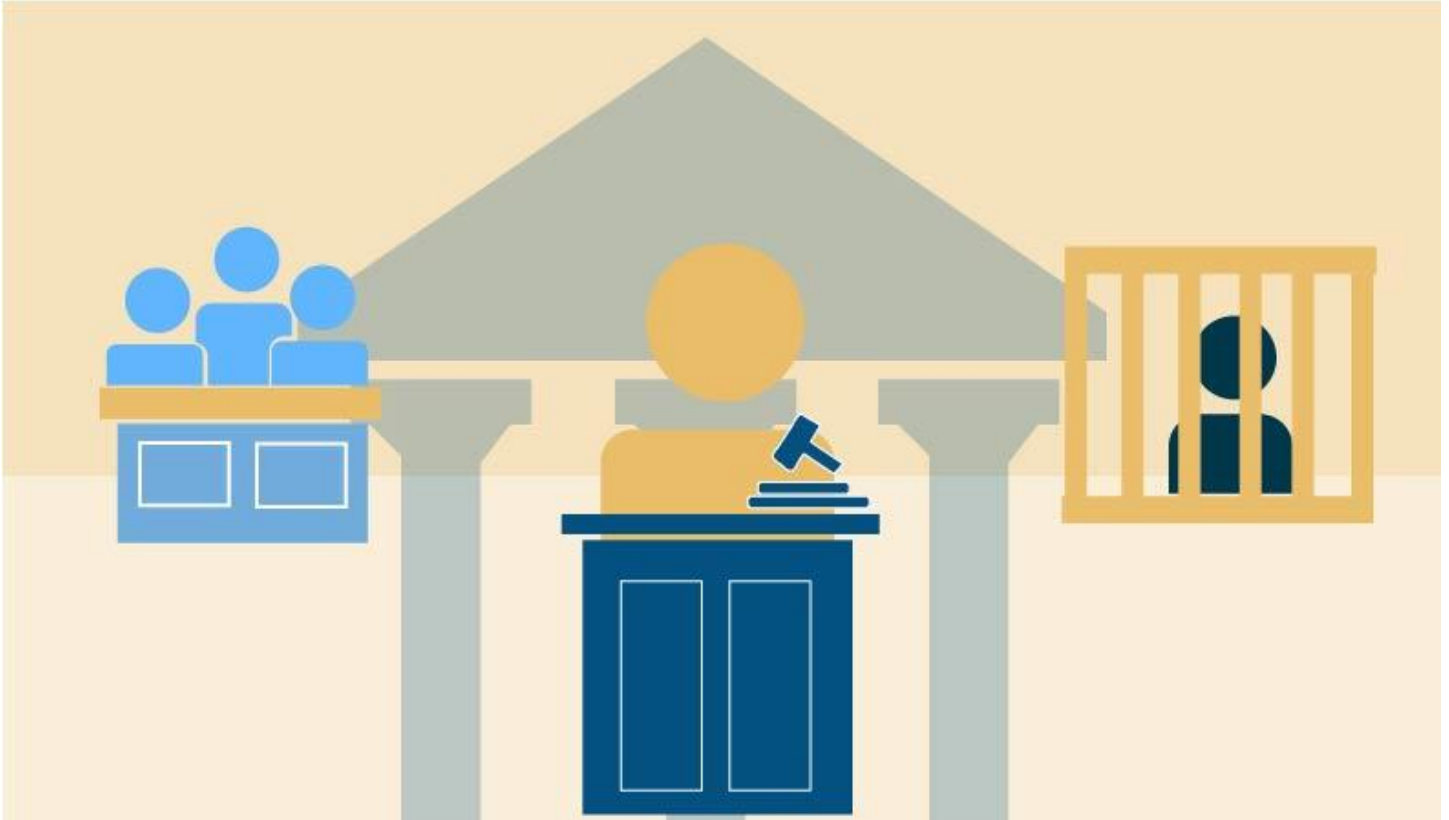
**THE ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP
FOUNDATION**

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OVERVIEW

In this book, we shall cover the concepts of leadership and authority, the difference between leadership and authority, expose you to the different types of authorities; and also show you how to lead with or without authority.

AUTHORITY



Many people tend to confuse leadership and authority and sometimes use the two terms interchangeably.

Let us look at the meaning of authority.

Authority is power entrusted for service;

Authority is a role;

Authority is a transactional relationship: trust and power in exchange of services;

One can lead from formal authority granted by an external body or Informal Authority is earned by providing a service that is does not exist but is needed, by representing the underrepresented or through affiliation.

There are different kinds of authorities,

There is **traditional authority**, which is tied to a *tradition* or *custom* like the *monarchs*.

There is **charismatic authority** that rests on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person.

There is also the **rational** or **legal authority** whose legitimacy comes from legal order or laws that have been enacted.

With authority, every role in any organization, community, position or family carries distinctive expectations. The purpose of authority is to provide protection, direction, control, create norms, order, security and sometimes representation

Let's have a look at what each of these expectations mean;

Direction- *where the team is headed and what is the vision.*

Protection- *offer protection from external threats.*

Norm- *provide values that will ground the team's activities.*

Order- *resolving conflicts and keeping things calm.*

SCENARIO

Jane founded Fashionista Inc, which specialized in custom made clothing, from alterations to newly made men's suits and shoes. As the CEO of the company, she hired half a dozen people to work for her. When she started out, she laid out all the responsibilities and roles. She also defined the problems, made all the decisions and instructed her employees on tasks to undertake. Her employees, trusting her judgement, made sure to comply with the set rules and guidelines, and also follow her vision. As their boss, that's the way it was.

Being CEO, Jane was the authority figure in the company. She was responsible for providing direction, protection, norms and order for her employees.

Authority figures are also the people you recognize as experts in various fields or knowledgeable for example parents, teachers or police officers among other when faced with a routine problem, are experts who come up with a solution.

For instance, James, a car mechanic exercises his authority by telling Job, one of his customers, what's wrong with his car and what he's going to do to fix it. It's not a complex situation.

James is an expert, and because of this, Job granted him the authority to determine what his car's problem was and how to fix it or Daniel, a doctor who writes a prescription for a patient. In this case, James and Daniel both hold positions of authority as experts.

The expectations of someone in authority can sometimes be impossible to meet.

LEADERSHIP



In this section, we will provide you with an understanding of leadership; what leadership is about and what it takes in exercising leadership.

Leadership is a behavior or an activity not position or a role.

Leadership is a practice

Leadership is an activity of mobilizing people to make progress to address their most difficult issues.

Leadership is about pushing against the resistance with both courage and skill to minimize the chances of being taken out of the game.

There are no leadership positions; instead there are positions of authority and one can lead with or without authority. Leadership from a position of authority is particularly dangerous. Leadership does not depend on a particular personality characteristic.

The foothold of leadership is the ability to hold onto one's sense of purpose and to connect others to the purpose. Purpose makes leadership meaningful. We need to stay grounded in the purpose that holds us steady through ups and downs of doing an adaptive work. Connecting others to purpose is essential in order to generate the energy, passion and commitment required to face, diagnose and address the tough adaptive problem. In exercising leadership what is hard is getting people to do what's necessary to solve the problem. Understand that the solution to a complex problem is going to require adjustments in the habits of people involved with the problem. Issuing a command and telling people what to do will not change people's understanding.

Leadership require building capacity in people to resolve conflict of values, bridge the gap between aspiration and reality, face harsh reality, question their own privileges and manage losses, renegotiate loyalties, develop new skills and capabilities to continue to adapt to a changing and complicated environment.

WHY LEAD



When we talk about leadership and authority, it is important that we do not forget that leadership is an activity not a position or a role. There are no leadership positions. There are positions of authority. Authority, as we defined earlier in the session, is power entrusted for service.

The main difference between authority and leadership is that authority figure is expected to provide direction, protection, control, order or reduce conflict and maintain norms. On the other hand, exercising leadership will raise difficult questions, confront challenges, surface or sustain conflict within productive bounds and challenge the norms.

According to Ron Heifetz, professor at the Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, “... *to lead is to live dangerously because leadership counts, when you lead people through*

difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear - their daily habits, tools, loyalties and ways of thinking - with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility “

This begs the questions:

why lead?

Why put yourself in situations where people depend on your decisions?

What if you're wrong?

What if people get hurt?

Are you sure you can handle the responsibilities of exercising leadership?

If you were to ask the question on how to succeed as a leader, the internet would be awash with prescriptive answers. Say for example you Googled a simple query, “*How to succeed as a leader*”, then click on the I am feeling lucky button, you will receive more than 170 million search results.

Traversing over the endless digestible list, you’ll find blogs and articles explaining what it takes to be a successful leader, tips and tricks successful leaders do and how to replicate their results. However, according to Ron Heifetz, the word leader is often not used correctly, while it should be, the exercise of leadership.

In this context of exercising leadership, leadership is then about raising issues or asking questions that disturb people and force people to come to terms with points of view or problems that they would rather not consider. Leadership is about mobilizing people and organizations to address their most difficult issues and challenge the status quo.

Leadership is about pushing against the resistance with both courage and skill to minimize the chances of being taken out of the game. To practice adaptive leadership, one has to

help people navigate through period of discomfort or disturbance as they sift through what essential and expendable during the process of testing the solution.

RECAP

We have learnt that authority is power entrusted for service. Authority carries distinctive expectations and people in positions of authority is expected to provide direction, protection, create norms and order. Leadership on the other hand is a behavior or an activity not position or a role; leadership positions do not exist. Leadership is about mobilizing people, holding unto one's sense of purpose and connecting others to that purpose