

New Breed of Leader

They cultivate eight qualities.



by Sheila Murray Bethel

THE WINDS OF CHANGE are blowing, and people hunger for a new breed of leader—authentic men and women who are physically strong, mentally quick, politically limber, emotionally stable, intellectually superior, and unselfish consensus builders.

Great leaders possess a strategic sense, an inherent understanding of how the framework of their thinking and the tides of time fit together and how their powers should be applied to achieve a larger purpose.

Eight Enduring Qualities

The eight qualities of New Breed Leadership (NBL) can help you to shape your leadership strength and to reinforce your ability to serve others.

1. Competence matters—Building purpose. Competence is doing the *right thing, the right way, at the right time*—and it tops the list of leadership qualities that matter most. When you know what you are doing, have the experience and knowledge to take risks and make wise decisions, have a deep sense of purpose and a healthy dose of charisma, you can lead people to positive results. When you recognize that *competence begets competence and knowledge shared is knowledge multiplied*, you say to colleagues, “We can learn and grow together.” You build a connection—a community of growth. When *vision and purpose* are backed by *competence*, you can move mountains.

2. Accountability matters—Fostering trust. Accountability generates trust. Leading is about the relationship between the leader and the led, and trust is at its core. It’s the contract you make with followers by holding yourself to account and following up with strong ethical actions. Your leadership deepens when followers know you’re reliable—a person on whom they can depend.

Accountability is about *doing what’s right*, even when no one is looking. It continually speaks to your *integrity* and *ethics*. Whether you’re leading at home, in the community or at work, even one example of accountability can set others on the right road.

3. Openness matters—Generating integrity. Openness involves candor and frankness. Its byproduct, integrity, is at the heart of earning the right to be called a *leader*. Integrity reveals your true intentions and greatly affects your followers and organization because it reflects on everyone associated with you. Transparent actions and policies are the currency by which you garner the loyalty and commitment of your followers. When words and actions match, credibility follows—and then you earn trust. Being an open leader enables you to lift everyone and everything to a better place because of the integrity it generates. It is vital for all leaders to embrace a level of openness that transforms ideas and processes, visions and strategies.



4. Language matters—Connecting relationships. The *power to communicate* is the key to forging productive relationships. Your words inspire or discourage, hurt or help, divide or connect, cause fear or give hope. String them together artistically and sensitively, and they unite your followers. You never know whom you’ll touch with your words or how you’ll influence their lives. When you speak in aspirational language, you lift minds and hearts. When you speak in clear, honest language, you build bridges. When you use words to reinforce the goals, values, ideas, and ideals in the minds and spirit of your followers, your communication becomes an art form. You serve your followers best when your mission is articulated by both what you say and what you do.

5. Values matter—forging community. Your principles are like a fixed beacon giving direction and purpose. *Values* is a subtle, intangible, and elusive quality with different meanings for different

people under different circumstances. You have values that give you a moral compass, a set of values that represent the organization to constituents. Our communities have certain values that make them different from other cities. Because of daily changes and challenges, closely examine these values that influence you and your communities. The authenticity you establish from a renewed set of principles gives you the credibility to guide others as they navigate daunting challenges.

6. Perspective matters—establishing balance. Fill your leadership toolbox with intellectual, emotional, and physical perspective. When you have the counterpoint of past and present to help you transition into the future, you are ready to be a *New Breed leader*. Your fresh, clear perspective—and the balance it generates—yields a sense of promise of a better life and a sense of progress that builds community and connection. As you learn from failure, you’re less likely to make the same mistake again. When you gain insight from success, you can preserve your strengths and build on them. A true-to-life perspective gives you the staying power to handle daily events.

7. Power matters—mastering influence. Power is the prime mover of people and events. You can’t lead effectively without it. Great leaders do not shrink from power, nor seek it unnecessarily. They know that having clout often intimidates others, so they use their power judiciously. They “pull rank” only in emergencies.

NBL is about influencing others to follow you. Those who make the greatest contribution use power wisely. They see that the highest and best use of power is to direct others and help them achieve their full potential. Of all the examples you set as a leader, the wise use of humble power has the most long-term impact. If you desire to be of service, your leadership acquires an aura of dignity, and your influence is greatly increased.

8. Humility matters—inspiring authenticity. Humility is earned, not claimed. The most humble and effective leaders don’t think about taking steps to be humble—they just are. Humility is a state of being that comes from deep within you. It’s how you feel about yourself, and how you value others. It’s an attitude that says, “The best way for me to be the best leader is to be the best servant to my followers.”

Humility is not weakness, and arrogance is not strength. Humble leaders score high on emotional intelligence.

They're comfortable with themselves, without a need to constantly talk about themselves or brag about what they have, what they do, or who they know.

Courage to Face Challenges

To increase your effectiveness as an NBL, have the *courage* to explore your attitudes and aptitude.

As you review these statements, ask yourself: *Where do I need to change, grow and stretch to reach my full capacity?*

1. The courage to seek the truth. Do I seek unpleasant truths, even when they may conflict with my beliefs or threaten my physical, intellectual, or emotional security? I recognize that my personal freedom depends on my ability to seek and find truth.

2. The courage to lead an ethical life. In a cynical, dissolute world, it takes courage to be ethical. I resist the temptation to be less than ethical, even when "everyone is doing it." I regard honest people as heroes, not fools.

3. The courage to be involved. Apathy and indifference are devastating. Despite occasional compassion fatigue, I remain committed to making a difference and getting others involved. I refuse to look the other way.

4. The courage to reject cynicism. Cynicism is a protective refuge, but one I resist vigilantly. I know that trust and optimism are impossible if I give in to the cowardice of cynicism.

5. The courage to assume responsibility. I alone am responsible for my actions. I refuse to waste time making excuses, harboring unrealistic hopes, or placing blame. I share responsibility and accountability with others, and back them up 100 percent if things go wrong.

6. The courage to lead at home. I know that my home and family are my most powerful legacy. I mentor my children, giving them equal love and discipline. I'm there 100 percent for my partner. I honor my parents and older relatives.

7. The courage to persist. I have the courage to delay gratification, to endure the long haul, and to make sacrifices. I visualize next year and anticipate the results of my actions. I summon my inner resources to stay on track, keeping my eye on the big picture.

8. The courage to serve. In an ego-driven society, I have the courage to put myself second in service to others. My job is to provide satisfaction, solve problems, fill needs, and find answers in a way that empowers others. **LE**

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ACTION: Be the New Breed of Leader.

Authentic Leadership

It's the new leadership challenge.



by Tony Tiernan

CRISES GIVE LEADERS A mandate to drop the distractions and irrelevancies, and re-focus on the core task: to make meaning. That is a great gift.

Meaning is value. Often we define *value* only in financial terms or, even more narrowly, in terms of the return we deliver to shareholders. That narrow definition drives two key distortions in our behavior as leaders. First, it can cause us to violate the value-creating identity of our organizations as we scramble to maximize short-term returns, or modify business strategy with each swing of the stock market.

Second, it can lead us to think in terms of "human capital" instead of human beings. We can deploy the former, but we have to lead the latter.

Organizations are crucibles in which we forge and find meaning. People experience meaning—and are moved to action—as social beings, not as cogs in a system of inputs and outputs.

Given meaning, people can—and often do—work magic. So if we want our people to be extraordinary, to transform our organizations, to redouble their efforts and increase their commitment in tough times, we need to give them meaning.

You do that by uncovering and operationalizing your unique value-creating identity. And it requires a new kind of leader—the authentic leader.

What is authentic leadership? AL is about your ability to build and effectively communicate *organizational identity*—a shared understanding of who you are, the difference you're trying to make, and the unique value you create. If you lose your sense of self, you lose the power to create meaning—the force that attracts and binds the right people (and right customers) to you.

What is identity? Identity is the sum of *what the organization does* (problems it solves and needs it addresses) and the *way it operates* (meaning and purpose that drive the business, the difference it seeks to make, its relationships with customers and employees, and the

value it delivers). By uncovering that unique value-creating identity, helping your people to find themselves in it, and showing them (by storytelling and example) how to use it to make decisions and guide behavior, you help them connect their individual stories with the organizational narrative. *You make meaning.* And that makes authentic the story that you tell to the world.

Why does identity matter? A strong sense of identity and purpose enables focus. For many leaders, particularly those in professional services companies where the "product" is the people—and the brand is communicated through their interactions in the marketplace—identity serves as the guiding compass that keeps the company on track, its talent on board, and its clients bound to the organization.

Companies that struggle most during a recession are those with blurred identities—or unclear expertise. If you use the recession to demonstrate what your company stands for, you'll find that, when recovery comes, you've built a magnet that attracts the *right* clients and *right* employees. *Identity*—built, communicated, and sustained through

AL—is key to creating long-term results.

When evaluating the authenticity of *your leadership*, ask four questions:

Do you really know your business? Beyond knowing the goods or services, you must know the *difference* you want to make, the *meaning* you stand for, the *values and beliefs* that guide you, and *stories* you want told about you.

Is your identity entrenched in your core business processes? Knowing your identity is not enough. You must operationalize your identity to guide how you develop customers, talent and ideas.

Does your culture support your identity? Identity goes beyond providing a strategic focus—it is what keeps your policies and ways of treating people unwavering, even in tough times.

Do you clearly communicate your identity? You must effectively deliver meaning to the marketplace, or the meaning is lost. Your identity should be evident in behavior, and translated into compelling *benefits-based messages*.

Leadership is about creating meaning—a strong identity that keeps an organization focused, its expertise current, and its offering relevant. **LE**

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ACTION: Create meaning and identity.



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