

Business May Be Your Life – But – Life Is *Your* Business

Part IX: Inspirational Leadership®

Inspire. self – Others – the World: Part 1^{A,B,C}



James A. Cusumano, PhD

“Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

George Bernard Shaw

KEY CONCEPTS:

- Organizational leadership is rapidly evolving to a new way of *thinking and being* in order to manage the global challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex and interconnected society.
- Created and popularized by Dr. Lance Secretan, Inspirational Leadership®¹⁾ succinctly portrays and embraces this transition.
- Inspirational Leadership® is based on the CASTLE Principles, an acronym for *Courage, Authenticity, Service, Truthfulness, Love, and Effectiveness*. When internalized and practiced proficiently, these principles form the basis for creating an organization that is personally rewarding, commercially advantageous and socially responsible²⁾.

INSPIRATION

Have you ever worked with a person who inspired your professional and personal endeavors so deeply that you just might have considered working for minimum wage? I have. It is a most exhilarating experience, and it's as personally rewarding and professionally fulfilling as it gets!

My first job after graduate school was as a research scientist with Exxon. Prior to my full-time employment with Exxon, and during the summer of my last year as a Ph.D. candidate in physical chemistry at Rutgers University in New Jersey, I was accepted as a summer research associate working for Dr. John H. Sinfelt at Exxon Research & Engineering Co. I thought it would be good experience before moving to California after completing my studies. I had planned for some time to be in Silicon Valley where “all the action was taking place,” and I thought that some experience in R&D with a premier company such as Exxon would be a benefit. But my move to California was not to be for another seven years. I would be captured by the talent of the technical genius of John Sinfelt, who, equally

importantly was gifted with the capability of elevating the human spirit.

I didn't realize at the time that John is one the world's most accomplished scientists in the important field of catalysis. Catalytic industrial processes are directly responsible for more than 30 % of our annual global GDP – everything from fuels to food to fibers and pharmaceuticals. And beyond that, enzymes – natural biocatalysts – are the fundamental force that helped create life on our planet, and orchestrate all of our bodily processes from the moment of conception to the instant of death – and actually, for some time afterwards, as well!

John has been nominated several times for the Nobel Prize, and has won more honors in science than most in his field. When I entered his office for the first time and addressed him as Dr. Sinfelt, his immediate response was “Call me John, please.” I found him to be brilliant, yet humble. He could explain complex technical concepts so clearly and accurately that even a non-technical person could understand them. He was thorough, careful and deeply considerate of his co-workers. I suppose you could say that John was very comfortable with who he was and what he was doing with his life. He had a quiet passion for his work, and yet he could be as determined as a “bull-dog,” to reach his goals, once he had the internal commitment to do so. I learned so much from John, about science, about technology, about people, about life. But most of all, he inspired me to be the best I could be at everything I did.

What are the fundamental principles that underpin inspirational people like John? Are they born that way? Do they learn these principles along the way? What gives them purpose, passion, and more fundamentally, what causes them to bring out the best in the people around them – to inspire people to actualize their best personal potential? I have asked these questions many times, and I think one person who has found the answers is Dr. Lance Secretan, father of the Inspirational Leadership® movement.

Lance's qualifications are noteworthy. As a former CEO of Manpower, Inc., the world's largest employer, he helped lead that enterprise to a multibillion dollar FORTUNE 200 company. He is the author of 15 books on leadership, including his current best seller, “The Spark, The Flame & The Torch – Inspire Self, Inspire Others, Inspire the World³⁾.” His clients include 30 of FORTUNE Magazine's “America's Most Admired Companies” and 12 of “100 Best Companies to Work for in America.” His premise is that successful organizations have moved to a higher level of leadership – a quantum jump – from *Motivational Leadership* to what he calls *Inspirational Leadership*®. He maintains that this movement is a natural evolution of the human psyche to enable us to manage the global complexities and challenges of a diverse interconnected world. In broad terms, leadership has evolved from *Hierarchal* (boss-employee relationships) – developed at the inception of the Industrial

Revolution – to *Motivational* (create an environment with psychological and financial perquisites and rewards) – developed in the 1960s – to *Inspirational* (inspire the leader, inspire the employees) – developed over the last decade.

So, what is Inspirational Leadership®, especially as it applies to the corporate world? We can summarize the key aspects of Inspirational Leadership® by looking at what inspirational leaders do.

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERS:

- Build businesses that benefit all stakeholders – employees, customers, investors, suppliers, and society.
- Fervently internalize and pursue their company's purpose – vision, mission, values, goals & strategies – and enthusiastically and effectively communicate this purpose to all of the company's stakeholders.
- Create an environment that inspires employees to passionately direct their personal skills at the company's purpose.

Just how do these leaders do this? Can Inspirational Leadership® be learned? The answer to the second question is, “Absolutely!” As to the “how,” Lance summarizes the important elements in what he calls the **CASTLE Principles**. CASTLE is an acronym for *Courage, Authenticity, Service, Truthfulness, Love, and Effectiveness*. When followed faithfully, he maintains that “These principles are the path to becoming free of living small, uninspiring lives, enabling us instead to live bright lives as a flame that lights the way for others, making a difference and lifting their spirits.” He and his colleagues at The Secretan Center, Inc. have developed an effective organizational tool that accurately measures the degree to which employees feel that their company is practicing the **CASTLE Principles**. In this article, the first of two parts, we take a brief look at the first two of these principles – *Courage*

¹⁾ **EDITOR'S NOTE** – This is Part IX in a series of articles based on the author's experience as an entrepreneur, having founded several successful businesses, including *Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*, a billion-dollar public company. His business experience base spans “5 lives” – A multimillion record sales recording artist; R&D Director for Exxon; Chairman & founder of 2 public companies; CEO, founder and Executive Producer for Chateau Wally Films; Chairman & Owner of Chateau Mcely, an international award-winning luxury hotel & SPA. This article is extracted from his latest book, presently in preparation and entitled, “My Little Book of Business – Tales of Purpose, Passion & Enterprise.” Parts I–V of this series deal with “Creating A Fulfilling Life.” Part VI addresses “Building A Successful Business,” and the current series focuses on *Conscious Capitalism and Conscious & Inspirational Leadership* as a means to lasting fulfillment in life and success in business.

²⁾ The author may be reached at Jim@ChateauMcely.Com.

³⁾ Part 2 of this article on *Inspirational Leadership*® appears in the next issue of LEADERS Magazine.



Figure 1: Inspiring people often requires more courage than that for climbing high mountains



and Authenticity. The remaining principles are covered in the next article in this series.

COURAGE

Inspiring leaders practice mental and moral courage, always following their basic personal values and the values of the organizations they lead. This becomes part of their operational fabric; they know that most people have a disdain for cowards and admire leaders with courage. And this admiration almost always flows from a deep-seated trust in the courageous leader.

Lance Secretan is a certified ski instructor, and as such, he often uses skiing as a metaphor and tool for teaching Inspirational Leadership®. It is an integral part of some of the courses he teaches at the Secretan Center high in rugged Rocky Mountains of Colorado. He regularly accomplishes what many ski instructors say is impossible – he enables leadership students of intermediate skiing ability to overcome their fears so that they ski moguls during their first half day and double-black diamond runs (“experts only” terrain) by the end of the first day. He does this by gaining their trust, expertly evaluating their true capabilities, which are generally much beyond their internal perception, and challenging them to personal feats they never thought possible. This is primarily because as with many leaders, they have reached a plateau in their perception of their potential, and they continue to coast. They fail to realize that they can do much better.

Some months ago, during a leadership course, Lance and a group of executives were at the top of a 3,800 meter mountain in Colorado. The weather unexpectedly changed to a snow storm with nearly zero visibility. Lance told the skiers – all with early intermediate skills – that the only way off the peak, which he knew like the back of his hand, was for them to trust him and descend single file, following the backs of his skis. They did so, and all made it down safely without incident. The skiers trusted Lance because he had already demonstrated that he cared for them and would not put them in unnecessary danger; they saw his commitment throughout the week’s course to help them grow as leaders; and because he never accepted any of their unjustified fears. Caring leads to trust where it is possible to let go of uncertainties. This leads to change, and in change there is power.

As Lance reminds us, “It takes little courage to cling to the stillness of the status quo – it is movement and change, which involve letting go of the familiar while embracing the new, that requires courage. In this way, we sacrifice what we are for what we can become – and that takes courage⁴.” He quite rightly points out that it takes courage to do those things that we admire in great leaders: being vulnerable; admitting a mistake; the ability to apologize sincerely;

showing others that we care for them; listening to understand, and not just to hear; empathizing; abandoning flawed decisions; changing ways that no longer serve us well; and standing for integrity. Doing any of these inspires those around us.

I have been a high-altitude mountain adventurer for many years and have found that it takes at least as much courage to inspire people as it does to conquer challenging peaks (see Figure 1). As author and poet, Maya Angelou has often said, “One isn’t necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can’t be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.”

AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is alignment of what we do with what we think and say. This builds trust in those around us. One of the hallmarks of authenticity is the ability to admit mistakes. So often in the corporate world, there is a tendency to not accept responsibility for mistakes. There is fear of reprisal, punishment and the appearance of incompetence.

Two tragedies come to mind which illustrate the power of authenticity in corporate leadership. The first is the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear accident which occurred in 1979 near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It is the most significant accident in the history of the American nuclear industry.

Figure 2: Management at the Three Mile Island nuclear accident showed poor authenticity



The plant was owned and operated by General Public Utilities and Metropolitan Edison Company. Through a series of human errors, a partial core meltdown occurred in one of its pressurized-water nuclear reactors, releasing 13 million curies of moderately potent radioactive gases and 20 curies of especially dangerous iodine¹³¹ isotope. A curie is a unit of radioactivity equivalent to the amount of radioactive material that decays at the rate of 37 billion disintegrations per second. It is approximately equivalent to the radioactivity of 1 gram of radium.

Information released by the operating companies was confusing and often incorrect and misleading. To this day, the potential health impact on living species is still debated. As a consequence, the incident created a huge negative reaction that gave birth to a strong anti-nuclear movement, which led to the decline of the American nuclear industry. Although the impact of this accident was not minimal, as the plant owners contended, it is now generally thought that the impact on them and the nuclear industry could have been exponentially less negative had they been forthright with the public, admitted certain wrongdoing, even if it had resulted in litigation (see Figure 2).

Contrast the TMI incident with handling of the disastrous Chicago Tylenol® murders, which occurred in 1982. Seven people died after taking the pain-relief drug, which someone had laced with potassium cyanide. The management team at Johnson & Johnson, the pharmaceutical firm that

manufactures Tylenol® took immediate responsibility for working openly and accurately with the authorities to determine how this could have happened. Although one man was charged and imprisoned for trying to extort \$1 million from Johnson & Johnson, he was never found guilty of poisoning the victims by tampering with bottles of Tylenol® in various Chicago pharmacies.

Johnson & Johnson became a textbook case on how to deal with a corporate disaster, and the company received significant positive coverage by the media for its handling of the crisis. The *Washington Post* reported that “Johnson & Johnson has effectively demonstrated how a major business ought to handle a disaster. This is no Three Mile Island accident in which the company’s response did more damage than the original accident.” The newspaper applauded the company for being honest with the public. In addition to instantly issuing a recall on Tylenol®, Johnson & Johnson established direct links with the Chicago Police, the FBI, and the Food and Drug Administration⁵.

Does authenticity in leadership pay off? At the time of the crisis, the Tylenol® share of the analgesic market collapsed from 35 % to 8 %, but it rebounded in less than a year, which was credited with Johnson & Johnson’s prompt, honest and aggressive actions. The company reintroduced Tylenol® with a triple-sealed, tamper-proof packaging and coupled with price promotions, within a short time Tylenol® became the most popular over-the-counter analgesic medicine in the U.S. In contrast to the TMI incident, the success of Tylenol® after such an incredible crisis was the result of a management versed in authenticity⁶.

The **CASTLE Principles** are a proven means of inspiring employees, and for that matter, all stakeholders. As a consequence, they also lead to a powerful competitive advantage for the companies that practice them.

In Part 2 of this article, we examine the practice and impact of the remaining principles – *Service, Truthfulness, Love, and Effectiveness*.

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¹ The term *Inspirational Leadership®*, a register trademark by Lance Secretan, is sometimes used in the literature interchangeably with the term *Conscious Leadership*.

² Much of the substantive content of this article is based on the *CASTLE PRINCIPLES*, which have been developed by Dr. Lance H. K. Secretan. See for example, “ONE—The Art and Practice of Conscious Leadership,” *The Secretan Center*, 2006.

³ Lance H. K. Secretan, “*The Spark, The Flame And The Torch*,” *The Secretan Center Inc.*, 2010; for release in the *Czech language in May, 2011*.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 112.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago_Tylenol_murders.

⁶ *Ibid*.

About the Author: James A. Cusumano is Chairman and Owner of Chateau Mcely (www.ChateauMcely.Com), chosen in 2007 by the European Union as the only “Green” 5-star luxury hotel in Central and Eastern Europe and in 2008 by the World Travel Awards as the Leading Green Hotel in the World. He is a former Research Director for Exxon, and subsequently founded two public companies in Silicon Valley, one in clean power generation, the other in pharmaceuticals manufacture via environmentally-benign, low-cost, catalytic technologies. While he was Chairman and CEO, the latter – Catalytica Pharmaceuticals, Inc. – grew in less than 5 years, to a \$1 billion enterprise with 2,000 employees. He is co-author of “Freedom from Mid-East Oil,” recently released by World Business Academy Press (www.WorldBusiness.Org) and can be reached at Jim@ChateauMcely.Com.

