

"The world is crying out for great leaders today and all we seem to get are crass politicians and business executives. In this important book
"Martin Kalungu-Banda has focused on one of the acknowledged world-class leaders of our time, Nelson Mandela, and through a series of stories helps us understand the crucial features of leadership. Leaders in business, government and all walks of life will find this book a source of profound yet practical insight."

- Oliver F. Williams, Center for Ethics in Business, University of Notre Dame, and
Visiting Professor, University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University

"Mandela is the greatest leader of our time. This rich collection of fascinating stories shows why and allows us to learn that leadership is not just about heroic acts but also hundreds of small ones taken every day."

- Justin Forsyth, Special Adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair

"In putting together this collection of stories about Nelson Mandela, Martin Kalungu-Banda has given us a unique opportunity to understand the man. Reading through them one can only agree with him that
'Mr Mandela has lived a life that is food to nourish our souls.'"

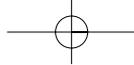
- Dr Caleb M Fundanga, Governor of the Bank of Zambia

" ... a collection of heart-warming reflections that cannot but inspire those who wish to discern the essence of true leadership."

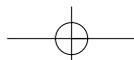
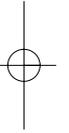
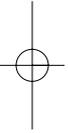
- Paddy Reilly, Director, Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Dublin

"This book brings to life a remarkable man whose thoughts and actions speak to our most burning contemporary issues and still inspire our desires, hopes and dreams."

- John M Mwanakatwe, Chancellor of the University of Zambia



LEADING
LIKE
MADIBA



LEADING LIKE MADIBA

Leadership lessons from
Nelson Mandela

Martin Kalungu-Banda

with photographs by Eric Miller



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INTRODUCTION



The world is in dire need of great leaders, ones who inspire people not through words but by serving them. Yes, the cutting edge is the old-fashioned idea of leadership through service. The whole human race, we could say, desperately needs these outstanding people who really attend to others and are beacons of hope in our search for a world society where justice, fairness, care for the weaker members of our communities, and love flourish.

The call for leaders who genuinely serve their people is obvious in social and political communities. We can see it equally in the economic sphere, in business organisations or corporations. The high turnover of staff in many work places suggests that people are looking for what Lance Secretan, a Canadian guru on leadership, calls 'soul space' – an environment where they will not simply be cogs in the wheel of production but can live full and happy lives.

While it is true that library shelves in management and business schools groan with books on leadership, and that nearly every day a new 'motivational' or 'inspirational' title appears in bookshops, I hope readers will forgive me for adding one more.

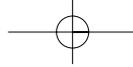
The main source is Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. What is so extraordinary about Mr Mandela (Madiba, as he is fondly named in South Africa) is the breadth of his appeal. Mandela crosses the boundaries of culture, gender, race, religion and age. He has done so in a society that was once more polarised than any other – one the world expected to explode along

racial and ethnic lines. That it did not was largely due to this extraordinary man and his unique leadership style. Mr Mandela's influence transforms ordinary people, events and actions into the extraordinary.

We know that great leaders can inspire others to greatness. I use the term 'inspire' to mean the ability to bring out the best in the people one is entrusted to work with. Inspirational leadership, like the yeast that imperceptibly causes the dough to rise and 'ripen', permeates society and its institutions in such a way that everyone begins to see their own uniqueness and take up their role in society. Inspirational leadership makes all of us dig deep into the innermost parts of our being to find the very best that lies there and make it available to ourselves and others. This, in my view, is what great leadership is all about.

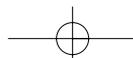
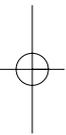
The stories told here show that Mr Mandela inspires the political leader as he does the boxer and the medical doctor; the footballer as much as the pupil and the government bureaucrat; the social activist and the prisoner; a neighbour, a religious leader, a farmer; the artist, the intellectual, the worker in an oil company; the businessman, the street vendor, the widow, the orphan.

This is not a history book. It is about a man whose legacy is his unquenchable passion to spend himself for the wellbeing of others. By so doing, Mr Mandela has lived a life that is food to nourish our souls. As he himself acknowledges, he is human; like all of us, he has made many mistakes in his life. But I choose to share with you the side of him that I think makes him one of the greatest leaders of our time and beyond – a man who has managed to inspire his people and the rest of the world by ordinary human actions. Through stories told about Mr Nelson Mandela and his style, we can reflect on some of the key qualities of great leadership.



The tales you will read come from ordinary men and women. A few were originally from newspapers, television and magazines. To me, it is not important whether these things happened exactly as they were told. What matters is that the narrators are all trying to describe and share the 'Madiba' phenomenon. They are a way for people to treasure and pass on what Mr Mandela has taught the world; what he has been to the world.

Their value lies in their ability to inspire those who share and think about them. To me, these stories about Mr Mandela have the power of myths: they start to affect people's lives and give birth to a new reality. They have the capacity to coax out the best in both the storytellers and the listeners. I hope you find this true as you read on.





BREAKFAST AT MR MANDELA'S HOME

Mr Mandela invites Peter, my work colleague, for a breakfast meeting. At Mr Mandela's home, Peter gets more than simply the breakfast he has gone for. He has a deep lesson on how to treat others. He learns that people matter as people before they have any titles.

When BP, the company I was working for, transferred me from Lusaka to Cape Town, I took time to talk with my new colleagues to learn what they were working on. One of the meetings I had was with a man called Peter. He was in charge of promoting the company's social investment in South Africa. As we introduced ourselves, we somehow came to talk about Mr Mandela. Peter exclaimed, 'I have to tell you about an experience I had with Madiba.' His beaming face assured me that I was about to hear one of the greatest moments of his life.

This was his story. At Mandela's request, BP started constructing a primary school in one of the high-density areas of the Eastern Cape. As the project got going, Peter received an invitation to meet Mr Mandela and brief him on the progress. 'This was a breakfast meeting with Mr Mandela. I can assure you, the days before the appointment were long as I was anxious at the prospect of meeting and sharing a meal with Madiba. Finally, the big day came.'

On the day, Peter dressed his best and asked one of the company drivers, Dumi, to take him to Mr Mandela's home. To Peter's amazement, his host was waiting for him in the car park. 'I felt both extremely elated and humbled that Mr Mandela was waiting outside for me. He warmly greeted

the driver and me. He then gestured that we enter the house. However, in the traditional way of corporate behaviour and protocol, the driver retreated quietly and remained in the car. Mr Mandela invited me to the breakfast table. Just before we started eating, my host seemed to miss something. He asked, "Peter, I thought there were two of you?" I responded, "No, sir. I came alone." "What about the other gentleman?" he insisted, and I replied, "No, sir. That one is just a driver. He will wait in the car." At that point Mr Mandela stood up and went out to where the driver was. He introduced himself to the driver and asked him to join us for breakfast. Mr Mandela then walked to the kitchen and said, "Dumi is joining us for breakfast. Can we have another plate, please?"

There was a long pause before Peter went on. "Then I realised what a blunder I had made. I could not look Mr Mandela in the face. After we had had breakfast and I had briefed him on the progress of the school, Dumi and I bade him farewell. Dumi started the engine and we drove out of Mr Mandela's premises. As soon as the gates closed behind us, Dumi parked the car by the roadside, got out of the car and walked round to my door, knelt down, and said, "Peter, thank you very much for asking Mr Mandela to come and invite me for breakfast. This is something I never expected could ever happen in my life. I simply do not know how to thank you enough for what you have done. I am sure..." I interrupted Dumi with a wave of my hand. "Oh, please don't mention it! It was the least I could do. I am glad you enjoyed the occasion." Even as I said these words I felt really stupid for lying and taking the credit I did not deserve. Even today I regret this with a deep sense of shame. A few days later I called Dumi and told him the true story and offered my apology.



I am not saying there should be no people who work as drivers, guards and servants. But when leaders learn to see the personalities that lie behind these seemingly humble titles, the people in those jobs do not just feel appreciated, they discover and walk into whole new horizons of their lives. They become great performers at what they do. They find personal fulfilment.

Food for thought

Peter's response – 'No, Sir. I came alone. That one is just a driver' – is typical of what we often feel and think about other people. We probably do not even see the person that lies beneath the task they perform. They are just drivers, servants, guards and maids. They are mere teachers and nurses. They are factory general workers, daily employees and cleaners. They are plumbers and refuse collectors. They are often nameless.

Great leaders do not see titles. They see human beings who happen to have certain titles in order to perform particular tasks. Leaders that touch our souls recognise and honour people simply as human beings and not the institutional tasks they perform. By recognising human beings, not titles, great leaders ennoble and enable others – drivers, factory workers, maids, guards, servants – to realise their personal worth and hence their potential. Imagine how inspiring the act of sharing a meal with Mr Mandela was to Peter's driver Dumi.

Great men and women make their greatness contagious. Conceited leaders strip others of their confidence and pride. They even rob weak people of the little self-esteem they cling to. They make their servants either go hungry or eat the leftovers outside the house. They say to those who look after their security, 'Guard, come here'. They ask, 'Where is my driver?' Old men and women become 'garden boys' and 'maids'.



A TRAIN TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Appreciating the human being in those who serve us is such a basic step, I must add another story.

This is what happened to one of the stewards on the Blue Train that runs between Johannesburg and Cape Town. At one time President Mandela travelled on the Blue Train. It must have been on the occasion of launching the luxurious train service. Years later, the e-tv channel showed a documentary entitled *Dugu dugu* featuring the Blue Train. Among the people interviewed on this programme was Khalim, a steward on the train. Khalim said the greatest moment of his life was when he was asked to be Mr Mandela's personal steward for this memorable journey. 'This has been the hallmark and fulfilment of my career. While I was serving Mr Mandela he made my work look very important. He talked to me as a person, not as a steward. He asked me about my parents, my wife and my kids. He listened keenly to what made me choose to work in the hospitality industry. He wanted to know what my views were on the future of South Africa. When he was leaving the train, Madiba said to me, "You are a wonderful host. Thank you very much for your great hospitality."'



I would not be surprised if Khalim retired and set up his own school for professional stewardship. In his mind he is the best, since he was found worthy of serving the best. And the best recognised his proficiency.

Good leaders show in practice that they recognise that every person has special gifts to use for their own fulfilment as well as for their community or organisation. In the same way, they notice and celebrate the giftedness of the whole group.

When individuals in a group share their talents consistently over a period of time, a general culture and routines emerge that enhance that organisation or community – this is what we acknowledge in saying that the group is effective and has special quality. A leader who recognises and honours that fact encourages the members to share their strengths even more.

Food for thought

As a leader, grow a deep sense of awe for each human being. Train yourself to honour and treat everyone you come across with utmost respect. Anybody who is likely to feel the effects of your position or office deserves your undivided attention. This is a matter for deliberate practice as well as spiritual disposition.

Have you ever felt what it means to be ignored by your boss or anyone else with a higher social status than yourself? Such an experience may not simply have hurt you, it may have also blunted your sense of personal worth. Just remember not to ignore anybody who might be looking up to you for help or recognition. Others feel as hurt as you do when they are ignored. We should be attentive to everyone we meet.

People will seek to associate with you if they know that you will honour their story and really listen to it.



'WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DISMISS US, MR PRESIDENT?'

When a new Head of State assumes office, it is taken for granted that those who worked with the outgoing leader will be immediately replaced. This was more fully expected in South Africa than anywhere else because of the apartheid system. The next story tells of how Mr Mandela continued with the staff he inherited from Mr de Klerk.

Let us picture how the staff in Mr Mandela's office reacted in the early days of his presidency. The white employees were understandably anxious, expecting to be dismissed. After all, one of the main objectives of the South African struggle was to fight apartheid – the obnoxious system which gave white people huge socioeconomic and political advantages denied to blacks. The new administration, they felt, would sweep whites aside in favour of those who had never had a chance before.

A few weeks after his inauguration Mr Mandela is said to have found himself in a meeting with his new staff. After complimenting the President on his election victory, the staff representative said, 'Mr President, I do not know how to put this. Our reason for requesting this meeting is simply to know why you are torturing us.' Mr Mandela was obviously shocked, and said, 'Wait a minute. Did I hear you say that I am torturing you? I clearly understand the meaning of the word 'torture', and it is a word I hope will never be used to describe how I relate with other human beings.'

The staff member hastened to explain. 'I am sorry, Mr President, may I say it again? All of us here, Sir, know that our jobs in here have to terminated.

What is troubling us is that since you took over you have not said anything to us.'

'Help me to understand,' replied Mr Mandela. 'What were you expecting me to do?'

'Mr President, we understand very well why you should have your own people around you. All we want to know is when the changes will be effected.'

With a huge smile on his face, casting his eye on everybody in the room, the President said, 'But you *are* my people. Since I came into this office, everything has been managed extremely well. I am pleased with the way you are all working. Unless you do not want to work with me, all I can say is that I find you very supportive and competent in your role. Maybe you would like me to request formally, "May I work with *you*?"' As the President paused to look at them again, one by one, there was total silence. The confused staff then heard the President say, 'Ladies and gentlemen, since we know that silence means consent, you will excuse me because I have to attend to my next appointment.' With that, Mandela walked out of the room, leaving his staff stunned behind him.



For most of us, it is very easy to flow with the prejudices around us. Mr Mandela could have fallen for the prejudice that those who worked with Mr de Klerk were white and therefore would not secure the interests of the new President and the new government.

There are so many areas where prejudice prevents people from relating to others as well as they should. It could be the sort of things they believe

about those whose culture is different from their own. Sometimes the issue is simply that they are in different age groups and take it for granted that they cannot connect with another generation. They may have prejudices about people of other religions, or box them into 'nationality' and 'race'. Sometimes people are also discounted for coming from particular parts of the world, or for being male or female, or working in a certain sector.

There is much to be gained in taking each person and each situation as unique moments that come to us with their own opportunities. Of course it is much simpler to write people off as Africans, Muslims, old, white, government bureaucrats, women, corporate sharks, not one of us. But by abstracting people into categories we lose their rich uniqueness.

Each person is special, and beyond measure. We may learn certain things about them but it would be folly to imagine that we know everything. Even the fact that we can trace a pattern in someone's behaviour does not entitle us to think we know the lot. The pattern we may have noticed is not hard information: it can be negated at any time by the choices of that person we think we know inside out. This is what makes any human being a mystery.

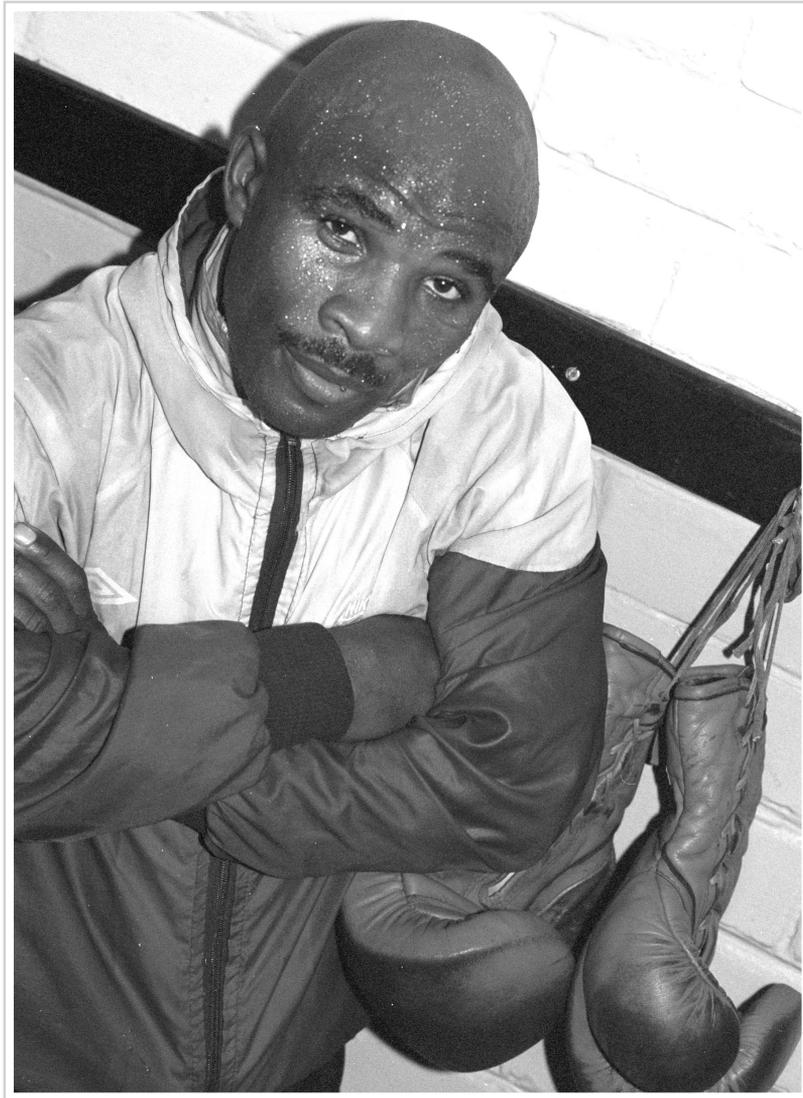
As with any mystery, we should not arrogantly attempt to 'read' people but continuously seek to understand them as they choose to unfold themselves to us. Our attitude towards other individuals then turns into humbly adoring the incalculable richness of their lives. We wake to the reality that human beings are a 'wonder-full' phenomenon to be experienced and not a string of statistics to be analysed. Human beings are wonderful also because they have the capacity to be filled with wonder at each other.

Food for thought

While we should seek to understand others, we should bear in mind that each person is a great mystery for us to approach with a deep sense of awe. We should try not to reduce anyone anywhere to the set of countable historical data we have gathered about them.

Many times when you feel the pressure to describe someone in general categories, you are most likely passing an unfair judgement on that person, who may not fit the generalisation.

Whenever you can, and this should eventually be always, treat people as special and unique individuals whose depth and breadth you cannot fathom. There is always something great about everyone. Take the time and the interest to know those you do not like. You will discover that there is no barrier to your finally liking or even loving them.



PRECIOUS THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

*This is a story about Mr Mandela and a boxer, Jacob Matlala;
of how a statesman has been inspired by a gifted boxer just as much
as the boxer has been inspired by the incredible statesman.*

Just before Mr Mandela retired as State President, a South African boxer of diminutive stature by the name of Matlala, also known as Baby Jake, fought an American boxer and won. It was the first time in history that a South African had beaten an American boxer on American soil. Newspapers throughout South Africa splashed the story and pictures of Baby Jake's victory across their front and back pages. It was obviously one of the greatest moments in the boxer's career.

A few weeks later Mr Mandela is said to have directed his security personnel to find out when Baby Jake would be at home. On an appropriate day Mr Mandela asked to be driven from Pretoria to Johannesburg, where Baby Jake lived. The President remained at the entrance of the famous boxer's house as he sent in his aide-de-camp with this message: 'Matlala, I am here to tell you that you won the fight in the United States by fluke. You are not the true champion. At the gate to your house is the real one you should fight if you think you are worth the title.'

You can imagine how these words infuriated Baby Jake, still basking in the glory of his historic victory. He shoved the aide-de-camp aside and charged towards the gate to confront the disrespectful challenger.

The visibly angry boxer flung the gate wide open. Lo and behold, and to his astonishment, it was the President, Nelson Mandela, with his hands in red gloves. Speechless, Matlala tottered towards Mr Mandela and threw his arms around him. In return, Mr Mandela emotionally clasped the small tough man and gently said, 'Matlala, I am sorry to visit your home unannounced. When I watched your incredible victory in the United States on television, I realised that writing to you or even talking to you on the phone would not communicate my deepest sense of appreciation for the honour you have brought to all of us in South Africa. You fought on American soil and emerged victorious. I just had to come here to say, "Thank you very much."' Then Mr Mandela humbly asked, 'Matlala, may I invite myself for a cup of tea in your home?'

That was how Mr Mandela spent an hour in Matlala's house, the two of them talking about all sorts of things. From then on, the story goes, Matlala's motto became: 'When I am in the ring nothing can stop me.' As he said, 'Not even a wall of steel can stand between victory and me. All I need is to remember that Madiba is watching me fight for honour. He came and drank tea in my home and I am simply invincible.'

Baby Jake was indeed unstoppable. In March 2002 he retired from boxing after yet another stunning fight. Mr Mandela was there to watch his hero.



When I heard this story I was not a boxer, and never became one. I was a teacher. I did not have to be a boxer to get inspired by the story. All we need is just to be human beings with some small capacity to reflect on life.

Trying to explain Matlala's wonderful experience only ends up impoverishing it, I think. But we should note that inspirational leaders do not do things that are outside the normal. They do what all of us can think about and do too. The vital point is that they do these simple things from the bottom of their hearts and they do them for others. Their level of sincerity makes all the difference.

There is a lot of wisdom in the saying that we must 'lose ourselves to find ourselves', or forget about ourselves in order to discover ourselves. I challenge today's motivational speakers who encourage us to first love ourselves before we can have the capacity to love others. They ask us to cosset ourselves with self-confidence: 'Believe in yourself,' 'You are the best thing that has ever lived,' 'Practise self-love.' This sounds very attractive initially. However, many people who have walked this path of 'self' talk end up feeling frustrated because they find that it does not automatically increase their confidence or self-belief.

A step I have learnt – and I think it works well – is to shift the focus from oneself by choosing to honour and serve others. Let other people's well-being and fulfilment be your first goal; in that indirect way you will grow your self-love, self-confidence, and self-belief. Concentrate on helping the people around you, and you will find your happiness and greatness. It is in this illogical way, strangely enough, that we discover ourselves, our purpose in life, and ultimately our own happiness.

Think of teachers. They draw happiness not from the self-talk of 'You are the best teacher that has ever lived' but from helping each of their learners to become the best they can possibly be. The same is true for doctors, whose mission is to ensure that their patients regain their health and that those who are well stay healthy. Good business executives don't focus on

their image as the best business leaders ever. Their greatness comes from caring for the needs of their customers and their staff. Civic and political leaders are fulfilled by ensuring that the people they are privileged to lead end up in a better situation than before.

Great leaders affect people across the artificial boundaries of their place in society. The interaction between Mr Mandela and a boxer touches the rest of us just as much as those in the world of sport, inspiring us with the model of Madiba's commitment to serving others.

Each time I tell the story of Matlala I hear it anew and it touches me more deeply. Others feel the same. Maybe this is the type of leadership that most of the world, and Africa in particular, yearns for. I do not think people are looking for leaders who will deliver goods and services to their door. All they need is the type of leadership that excites them enough to dig for the gold that lies within themselves. And there are many ways of leading. Each one of us in our own style has to find the spot where we can do the same ordinary things in a manner that touches others and moves them to do great things.

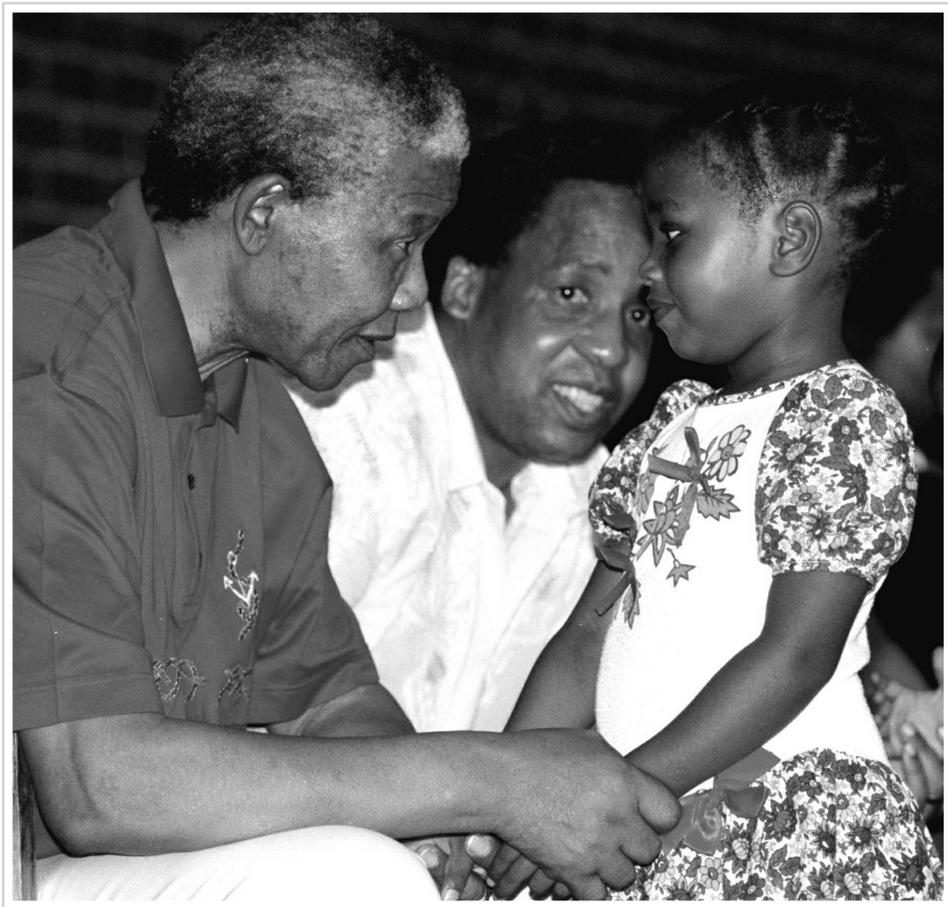
Food for thought

If Mr Mandela had invited Matlatla to his own official residence, the inspiring story would have been totally different – and maybe less inspiring. We all are capable of doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way.

Recognising other people for the good they do invites even more good works from both the person being recognised and the one doing the recognition. We grow our own goodness by recognising the goodness of others.

Quite often we are busy with everything except human beings. Inspiring others may take as little as paying a visit to someone who does not imagine we would ever think about them.

Instead of spending time in 'self' talk, just practise what you know great leaders do. Great leaders are people whose actions speak louder than their words.



MARK FISH AND MADIBA

This is a story about Mr Mandela and the professional footballer Mark Fish. Mark's prowess on the football pitch has greatly inspired Mr Mandela. In return, Mr Mandela's humility has not simply touched the soccer star – it has inspired his performance.

One day Mr Mandela walked unannounced into the change room where the South African players were dressing up for an international match. Mr Mandela was wearing a jersey with the same number as Mark's.

After greeting all the players and the coach in the change room, Mr Mandela went to Mark and said, 'I am very sorry to be a bother to you, Mark. I have always been amazed by how you play football. I find it fascinating watching you and your colleagues display so much skill and determination on the pitch.' Then he asked Mark, 'For me to have just a slight impression of what you go through when you are on the pitch, is it possible that you and I could exchange jerseys?' Almost not believing his ears, Mark hurriedly took off his jersey and gave it to Mr Mandela, who in turn took off his jersey for Mark.

Later, a journalist asked Mark how it felt to exchange jerseys with Madiba. Mark replied, 'Each time I am on the football pitch, I know that Madiba is watching me. I can never imagine delivering anything other than the utmost of my abilities for the man who thinks I am the greatest soccer player there has ever been. I feel his warmth each time I wear or even just look at the jersey I got from him. The words he used when he asked for my jersey re-echo in my heart all the time. I just have to be the best I can possibly be while on the pitch because I know who is watching me.'



We often do not imagine great leaders to be in the process of learning. Indeed, most leaders do not look as if they want to learn or have the time for it. They are either giving advice or opening a workshop for other people. We are surprised when we hear that a leader spent a day at a conference as a participant.

What the Mark Fish story shows is that great leaders also need to be inspired. Mark might think that it is Mr Mandela who inspires him and not the other way round – but it is clear from the story that Mr Mandela had long been inspired by Mark. I think that is what drove Mr Mandela to the change room.

Imagine what becomes of leaders who do not find anything to inspire them. My guess is that they soon dry up. They cease to inspire others because they have no replenishment themselves. We can only give what we have. So, to be leaders who inspire our organisations and communities, I am convinced we need clear sources of inspiration ourselves.

Inspirational leaders continue to be moved by the surprises and wonders of life – people and nature, and the interaction between the two. Such leaders position themselves so that they continue to experience the awesome character of the world that surrounds them and the profundity of human life.

They are always learning. Learning is about lending oneself, through practice, to the 'how' question: How can I hear other people better? How can I do this better? How can I understand this situation better? This style could explain why in spite of his age Madiba beams with the joy and vitality of

a 21-year-old. It could be his ability to be inspired by other people. The readiness to be inspired by a footballer.

Food for thought

You cannot inspire other people unless you get inspired yourself. What are your sources of inspiration? What moves you? What stories make you marvel at nature and human genius?

Great things and inspiring moments happen around us. The question is not 'How often do they happen?' but 'Have we developed the right lenses for seeing the wonders that happen around us all the time?'

When you feel so knowledgeable that all you want to do is impart what you know, it is a sign that you have stopped learning. But there is no such thing as standing still in learning. You are either learning or you are regressing.



SHARING THE CREDIT IS A MARK OF GREAT LEADERSHIP

In this story Mr Mandela shows that success is often the result of concerted effort by many people. When one is the leader of the team that has delivered a great result, one should not fail to acknowledge and honour the role played by others. Acknowledging and honouring their contribution is the magic that generates goodwill. And goodwill sustains the great result.

In 2002 I travelled with my wife Aggie for work in Johannesburg. One early morning I woke up in our hotel room and found Aggie searching for a television station where we could watch the news. As she pressed one button after another, she came across the SABC *Morning Live* programme. Vuyo, one of the presenters, announced that that day was very special because he was going to talk to the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, about a new CD to be launched. Again and again Vuyo announced how special that day was.

The hour finally came. Mr Mandela walked into the studio, and the obviously excited and enthusiastic Vuyo welcomed the limping but all-smiles former Head of State. Vuyo began the interview: 'Tata [Father] Mandela, how do you feel about the fact that this Saturday the nation will be launching the CD on which your greatest speeches have been recorded?' Mandela cleared his throat, his face sombre. 'Vuyo, I feel very bad.' Vuyo was visibly shocked. Mr Mandela paused. 'I feel very bad, Vuyo, because the CD does not give a fair picture of this country's history. You and I know that I am not the greatest of speakers among the men and women that waged the

struggle against apartheid. I am not even eloquent.' Vuyo recovered enough to ask, 'Tata Mandela, what situation would you have liked to see?' 'Vuyo,' Madiba answered, 'I would have been happier if my speeches were simply some among the great speeches that were made by our country's eminent personalities such as Oliver Tambo, Chris Hani, Walter Sisulu, among many others. By so doing, we would be painting the right picture of our country's history. Vuyo, the reality of our struggle is that no individual among us can claim to have played a greater role than the rest.'

After that, the interview focused on some of Mr Mandela's memories of the struggle and not least the contributions made by a cross-section of people.



Mr Mandela's response to Vuyo is consistent with the response he made to Oprah Winfrey while he was still in office. In tears Oprah put the question: 'Mr Mandela, when you were released from prison, people had already bought into the story that you were extraordinary. How was it to live in an environment where people treated and looked at you as some kind of divine being?' In his usual slow, vigorous voice Madiba replied, 'Oprah, what you do here is more extraordinary than my being in prison. I admire the contributions you make to society. As for myself, I have never for a moment imagined that I am divine. It was the men and women in the struggle that brought about the end of apartheid. The African National Congress is a mass movement. The liberation of the country was a product of concerted effort.' He went on: 'If there is any significant role that I played, it was that of being a vessel through which the struggle was presented to the nation and the world. The struggle had to have a symbol for it to be effective. The great men and women of the struggle chose that I be that symbol. If this was a good thing, praise must go to those who made the choice.'

Being praised for what we have done is such a sweet feeling. Then we know that our efforts are being recognised and appreciated by others. We all need that kind of feedback from those around us. But I suspect we are sometimes too eager to receive praise for ourselves. Then we end up forgetting those we worked with to achieve the very things we are being praised for. Selfishly we make ourselves the centre of a reality that is much larger and greater than us alone. We exaggerate our contribution out of all proportion. Without meaning to, we start radiating negative energies that repel others from wanting to cooperate with us.

Even without saying it, we send the message to others that we will rob them if they invest their energies, skills and initiatives with us because later on we will claim all the credit for ourselves. This just limits our natural ability to cooperate with others and so perform the many miracles that make human life a joy.

The paradox is that the more we acknowledge and celebrate the capacities and contributions of those around us, the more we deepen the strength and prowess of our own character. We become poised to do greater things because others feel confident enough to win with us. Mr Mandela seems to have learnt that very well and early enough. What is strange is that he may have learnt this important lesson in a place where, from our narrow perspective, there seemed to have been no need for human beings to rely on the voluntary cooperation of others – in prison.

You may have worked for a boss who does not acknowledge your contribution. When your work reaches your boss's desk it becomes his, and other people will never know who really produced it. In male-dominated societies, outsiders may never know the contributions of the female spouse because the male takes all the credit.

Great leaders honour their co-workers and their sources of information. They create the space for others to be acknowledged. Other, lesser, leaders end up losing their band of real supporters and their sources of information.

Food for thought

Quite often it takes more than just ourselves to achieve the success we claim to have made. Our success is a result of many people's contributions: those of our parents and other family members, fellow workers, peers, teachers, and advisers. It could be of those who clean our homes and offices, or those who have sat listening to our bubbly stories of 'how things are working' in our lives. Believe it or not, it may also be of those who do not believe we are capable of anything worthwhile, so that we set out to prove them wrong.

By learning to appreciate all who contribute to our success, we unlock the powers of goodwill and smooth our way to life's greatest moments. There are such things as blessings even when you subscribe to no religion.

Take time to honour all those you know are part of whatever form of success you have achieved. This may take the form of a telephone call, a visit, a simple gift, or supporting any of their causes.

When we initiate or support something, we may be tempted to behave as if our contribution can never be repaid or appreciated enough. What price do we put on the contributions we make to our organisations and society? How often do we refer to the past to justify why we are not doing our utmost at present?



LEADERSHIP CALLS FOR COURAGE

When everybody was afraid of disagreeing with President George W Bush's foreign policy towards Iraq, Mr Mandela referred to the leader of the world's most powerful nation as 'someone who did not want to belong to the modern age'. This is a story of Mr Mandela's courage in raising a prophetic voice against those perceived to be most powerful.

On 12 September 2002 I read a headline in *The Post*, one of Zambia's leading newspapers: 'US threatens world peace, says Mandela.' The article began, 'Nelson Mandela has condemned United States intervention in the Middle East as a "threat to world peace."' Mr Mandela is quoted as having called senior advisers to President George W Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney 'dinosaurs'. He concluded that the advisers did not want Bush to belong to the modern age.

In another story, Gray Younge wrote in the *Mail & Guardian* of 20 September 2002 that Mr Mandela 'is annoyed at how the US is exploiting its overwhelming military might'. Younge quotes Mr Mandela speaking about the US: 'They think they are the only power in the world. They are not and they are following a dangerous policy. One country wants to bully the world.'

These statements came at a time when the US was trying to justify its intention to attack Iraq in order to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. The US argued that Hussein was a menace to world peace by allegedly supporting terrorism and being in possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Mandela was speaking just a few days after the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on the US on 11 September 2001, when the whole world had been shocked by the gruesome deaths of innocent people. Even a year after the event, sympathy was expected for the US and its people. The US government assumed that the rest of the world would support its plan to attack Iraq.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US has been left as perhaps the most powerful nation in the world. Those who do not agree with them prefer to remain quiet rather than be seen to be in conflict with such a superpower.

It is in this setting that Mr Mandela told the world, through the media, that the US was a threat to world peace. In the South African *Sunday Times* of 15 September 2002 Mr Mandela was quoted thus: 'The US has made serious mistakes in the conduct of its foreign affairs, which have had unfortunate repercussions long after the decisions were taken. Unqualified support of the Shah of Iran led directly to the Islamic revolution of 1979. Then the US chose to arm and finance the Mujahideen in Afghanistan instead of supporting and encouraging the moderate wing of the government of Afghanistan. That is what led to the Taliban in Afghanistan.'

Seeking to explain where Mr Mandela got the mandate from to criticise US foreign policy, Younge wrote in his story, 'Towering like a moral colossus over the late twentieth century, his voice carries an ethical weight like no other. He rode to power on a global wave of goodwill, left office when his five years were up and settled down to a life of elder statesmanship.' And that is exactly how millions throughout the world received Mr Mandela's words and took them to heart.



It was very courageous of Mr Mandela to have spoken against the US when all those who were opposed to the US policy on Iraq opted either to keep quiet or speak so softly that nobody would notice their dissent.

Courage to stand up for what one holds to be true is one of the distinguishing characteristics of great leaders. The courage to say what we think when it is a minority view or when it is being championed by the poor and the less powerful is a rare phenomenon. We all find it easier to speak in favour of the acceptable position even when in our hearts we would disagree. It is less stressful to flow with the majority, the powerful, the most popular, although deep down we may know that we should swim against the tide.

The point of the story is not whether Mr Mandela was right or not. It is to show how vehemently he opposed the mighty US government because he believed that their intentions were wrong. My guess is that, for Mr Mandela, whether the US was all-powerful or not was never the issue. He simply felt compelled to stand for what he believed to be the truth. His courage to speak out included disregarding the names and numbers he was facing.

Standing by what one believes to be the truth may appear to contradict the notion that great leaders ought to be great listeners. It is not a contradiction. Standing by one's principles is the result of a dialectical relationship between listening to the views of others (including the empirical evidence available) and examining the principles one holds sacred.

Great leaders do indeed listen. In choosing where they will stand, they must first suspend their overall judgement. They must silence their initial

opinions so that they can include other people's views in their reasoning. They have to see reality from the perspective of others.

In his book *Higher Ground Leadership*, Lance Secretan makes the point that, to listen truly, we must learn to be silent (as he says, the words 'listen' and 'silent' even have same letters!). This silence is not just a question of not speaking. It includes, and more importantly, the silence of the mind, making every effort to hear people from their point of view, to become conversant with what is going on in their hearts and minds and circumstances. This is also known as empathy. It is only after we have listened in this way and weighed what we have learnt against our moral values that we earn the right to take a position that we can stand by and champion as leaders.

You and I know of leaders within our communities or organisations whose truth depends on who is stating the case. Like reeds in turbulent waters, cowardly leaders change sides as those they fear or look up to change their positions.

Great leaders often earn respect even when history later proves them wrong. I think this is because their mistaken position was decided on principle and then held with the courage to stand up for what they believed regardless of how unpopular it made them.

Food for thought

Courage is a gift that nature bestows on all of us when we are willing to use it. It usually means aligning our words and actions as much as possible with the way we think we should behave. Quite often courage demands that we publicly show where we think the truth lies. Courage has to do with identifying and living the fundamental values that lie in the deepest recesses of our hearts.

Courage demands that we strive to stand by what we believe to be true without being influenced by the names and numbers on either side of the argument.

Courage does not mean we are never scared. It is a matter of acknowledging our fears and at the same time choosing to follow what we consider the right course of action. Great leaders all have this courage.



THE PROBLEM MR MANDELA HAD

Nomhle, a nurse, says what impresses her most about Mr Mandela. For her, it is the fact that Mr Mandela, while serving as State President, spent a lot of time learning how not to use power.

I will always remember 9 August 2002, Women's Day in South Africa. At the invitation of our friend Bebe Oyegun, who was one of the main speakers for the occasion in Cape Town, my wife and I attended the Women's Discussion Forum held at Century City. One other participant was Nomhle Nkumbi-Ndopu, a professional nurse and a vibrant, brilliant speaker. She spoke about how men have run the show in politics, business, and every other spectrum of life that has power or monetary value.

Nomhle argued that although men are so dominant they often misuse their position because they do not know how to use power constructively. By using it selfishly, men tend to end up working against their own personal interests.

Then she said, 'I, at least, know one man who has reflected hard on power and has been using it in the way I think it ought to be used. This is a man who does not use power to crush or dominate others. This is a man for whom power is only useful if it makes human life better. For this man, power is a double-edged sword that can do harm as much as it can do good. This man is Nelson Mandela.' She paused. 'I once heard Madiba say this about power and himself: "The problem I have is *not* how to use power. My biggest problem is how *not* to use power."'

Her conclusion? 'It's mainly an issue for men at present, because very few women have real power. But most of our leaders need to understand this fact about power if our organisations, our nations and the world are to become better places for us all. They need to learn that, more often than not, those with power – positional power – can be more powerful if they learn how *not* to use it. Many men need to unlearn their bullying tactics to get what they want. They need to learn how to use conversations – genuine conversations – to achieve sustainable results.'

There was utter silence in the conference room. Maybe the story meant a range of things to all of us there. It could be that we realised we would act very differently from Mr Mandela if we had a fraction of his power.



An honest search in our hearts could reveal that with such powers we might choose to settle scores with all our perceived enemies. People sometimes fantasise about having extraordinary forces to silence their opponents or whoever do not regard them as highly as they would like.

The reality is that to some extent we are likely to get into situations where we have more power than others. We might find ourselves dominating because we are the breadwinners at home, or supervisors of a number of people at work, or we are religious leaders in whom people place a lot of trust, or we are in a powerful government position.

The desire to flex our muscles is very tempting. And most people readily use such power because it is so easy: 'Crack your whip and all will oblige.' When we have power, it is easier to decide to use it than *not* to. Not to use power is something we do not do naturally – we have to learn it.

Using power, for most people, often means deciding as you are expected to; applying the rules and regulations as they are written or known; meting out the exact punishment as the offences are thought to deserve; proving to the wrongdoers that they are indeed wrong; using one's prerogative to reward those in favour.

For leaders with a lot of political and economic responsibility for others, power may often mean imposing the sanctions that would make others realise who the boss is, who the victor is.

By contrast, Mr Mandela has worked hard to learn how *not* to use power like a boss. Where he could punish, he tried to understand the position of the one at fault. He practised restraint, when he could have used power to settle scores with those who had treated him and his colleagues as if they did not matter. When he was in such a strong position that he could push others to comply with him, he preferred to consult, persuade and even plead in order to settle matters. Instead of intimidating people with his power, he chose to bargain and quite often to forgo the short-term 'sweet victory'.

If all those who are called or think of themselves as leaders learnt how *not* to use power, our homes, our work places and our world could be friendlier, happier and even maybe more peaceful.

Food for thought

'Hit back,' 'Revenge,' 'Put them in their place,' 'They should know who is in charge.' What do these phrases mean to you? How often have you used or simply wished you could use them? Some people say that the more we learn to dislike these phrases, the more we learn to use power for building rather than stunting others.

Power is an instrument, not an end itself. It must be used only in order to bring about greater good. Power is different from force. It is most useful when it turns into service.

Many leaders have so much power, they can be tempted to become autocrats and run the whole show themselves. They need to restrain their use of power partly so that others can develop.

Power is one of those strange realities of life: we often have it when we do not make use of it. We are most powerful and effective when we do not achieve things through positional power.

SPEAKING IN SILENCE

This is a story about the power of silence. To communicate to others, we do not always need to talk. Sometimes our silence speaks louder than our words. Mr Mandela expressed his deep anguish at the loss of one of South Africa's ministers simply by his presence and silence.

When I was based in Cape Town a workmate of mine at BP Africa, Feryal Domingo, described how touched she was by the reaction of the people to Mr Mandela's presence on one particular occasion. This was at the funeral of Steve Tshwete, who had been Minister for Safety and Security.

Feryal said that as she watched the live broadcast there was an announcement: the helicopter that was just landing in the centre of the stadium where the funeral was being held had brought Mr Mandela. When Mr Mandela emerged from the helicopter the whole packed stadium went into a wild frenzy of mourning and wailing. The crowds turned towards Mr Mandela and stretched their hands towards him as they sang songs of lamentation.

As Mr Mandela walked to take his seat, the wailing and mourning grew to a level where the voice of the dignitary who was giving a speech from the podium could hardly be heard. After the former President had sat down, the master of ceremonies explained to the speaker, 'It is not that the people do not like your speech. It is just that they were acknowledging the presence of our former Head of State and the father of our nation.'

Feryal concluded: 'By the time I finally stopped watching the funeral broadcast, Mr Mandela had not said anything. In fact, I think that Mr Mandela did not have to say anything to communicate something. He did not have to put his pain into words. He did not have to say, "What a sad day this is for South Africa." His presence and his silence said it all.'



When leaders have stood for a genuine cause, they do not need to utter a word for people to hear them. All they have to do is just be there. Mr Mandela had simply to be present at the funeral to share his grief with the rest of the country. He did not have to say anything.

I guess some leaders want to speak on every occasion in an effort to make up in words what they ought to show in action. When leaders rule by action their acts symbolise their message, and their followers nourish themselves by living with the stories of how their leaders have acted in various situations. Through their actions, great leaders share their beliefs, philosophies, passions and wisdom.

Like other great leaders we know, Mr Mandela does not have to utter words in order to be heard and to give to others. Such personalities seem to have a magnetic pull – people are drawn to them and light up when they share the same space with these authentic leaders. Great leaders sow their energies in the air for other people to breathe and experience a personal renewal. Their energies and optimism are infectious. It is in this sense that great leaders share their life with everyone around them.

We have seen the power of action in this story of the funeral, together with the force of silence. Choosing when to be silent is a skill that we develop

by learning to be empathetic, dedicating our full and undivided attention to whomever we meet.

Attentive silence is also a way of respecting others. Think about it. How many times have you left a discussion with your leader or supervisor, or even a friend, feeling you had not been listened to? All that happened was that the person who was supposed to hear you ended up loading you with his own stories and perspectives. You introduced your thoughts and then your companion stole the show – ‘I’ve had an experience like that before’ – and on they went to reduce your account to just one of many of their own. By the time you left, all you had done was listen to their long tale. Your story was forgotten, treated as unworthy of attention.

Great leaders use silence to bring the story of other people to prominence. They keep quiet and let the silence speak for them. In that silence, they let those they are listening to find their own strength and courage – and sometimes their grief too. Their silence is their ever-replenished gift that they give to anybody who calls upon them. Speech is not everything. Sometimes, and quite often, silence offers more than many other forms of giving we know.

We live in an era of consultants. We often feel the pressure to provide answers when someone seeks our help. We feel that if we do not provide solutions to those calling for our help, we may be thought of as ‘not worth consulting’. The many people who call for our help do not need our answers and solutions. They need our silence so that, through that silence, they can hear their problems freshly. What is strange about this is that even those looking for solutions do not always believe that what they need, more often than not, is someone who can give them undivided and unbroken silence.

In the grace of the listener's silence, the person seeking answers begins to hear their own inner voice. This is the beginning of solutions to their own problems. What the person seeking solutions requires of you (as the listener-consultant) is your silence and your questions. These are basic, uncomplicated responses such as: 'Tell me more about what is going on in your mind now' and 'What feelings are you experiencing as you think about this?' 'What do you think explains all this?' 'What else happened?' 'What do you think you must do next?' 'What can you do differently?' 'What could you do if you realised you were powerful enough to change the current situation?'

At first this may sound like a very frustrating way of giving help. It may even seem like someone trying to mimic a third-rate psychotherapist. Although people may often appear as if they are dying for our help and our answers, they do not need our parochial solutions. The pleasant reality is that the lasting solutions are best worked towards by the person who is wrestling with the problem. Our leadership lies in helping others find answers to their own problems. This is not the end of consultancy; but it increases our respect for those who seek our help, and increases their respect for themselves.

What is it that makes some people attract followers or friends more than others? I think the magic is partly one's ability to honour the stories of other people. We all want to be in the company of those who hear us. We want to associate with those who find our lives interesting and want to hear what we have to say. We do not attract people to ourselves by putting our story before the stories of those we want to be close to us. Yes, it is that simple. Let other people's concerns come before yours and you will have a lot of people seeking to associate with you.

Food for thought

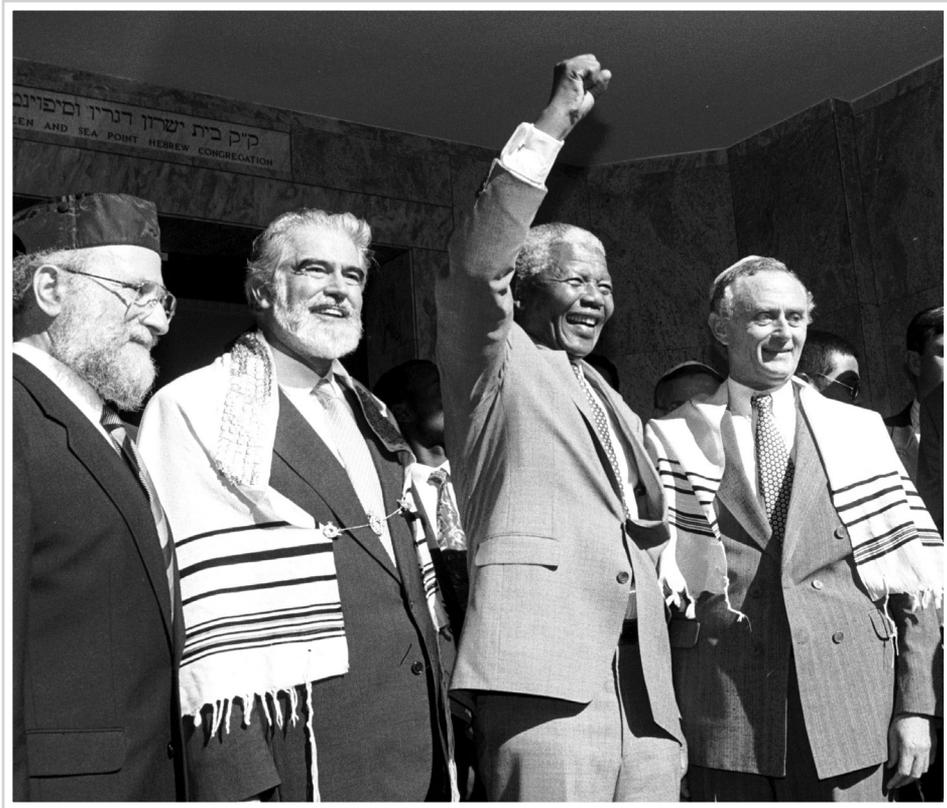
Have you ever reflected on the idea that you may be speaking too loudly for people to hear you? Or that sometimes you are heard best when you are silent? There are times when the best speech we can give is our silence.

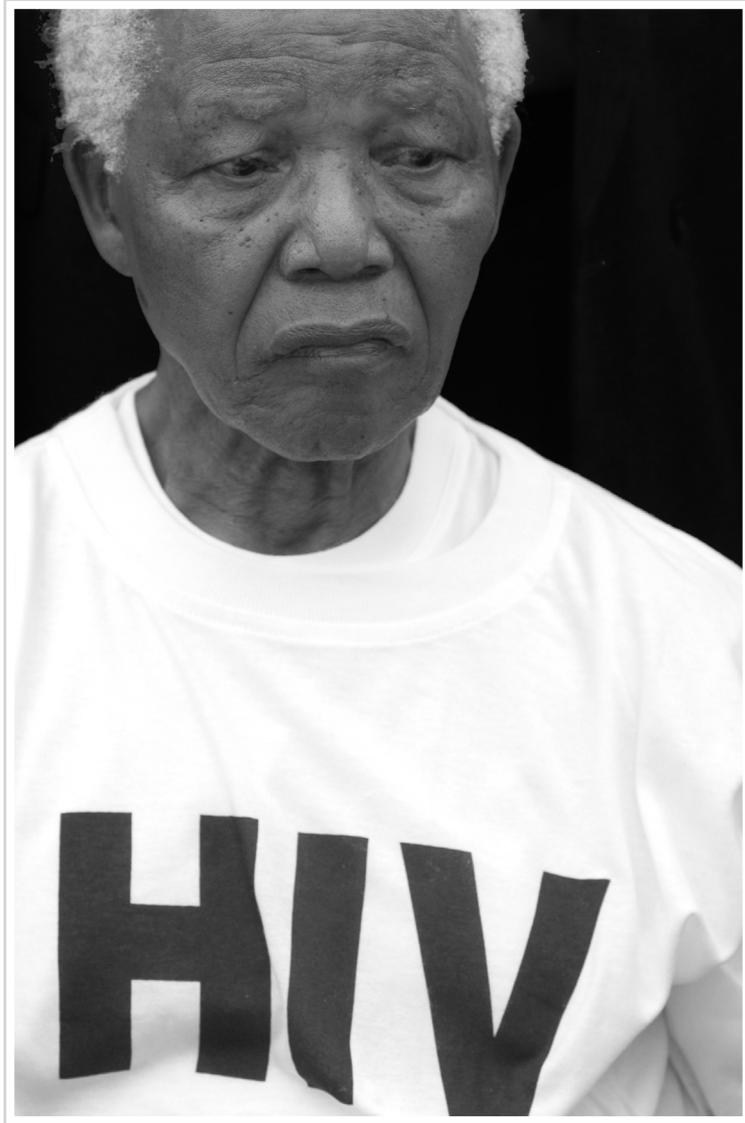
Taking time off from the hustle and bustle of life to be in silence is a natural, powerful way to renew our inner richness and strength. Some people call it meditation. If we are to avoid becoming hollow or empty as we live with others, we need moments of silence every now and then to replenish ourselves.

For our very presence to produce the results we want, we must dedicate the time we have agreed to give to people entirely to them. Agreeing to be with someone when we cannot give that person our undivided attention is not only disrespectful, it is also a sure way of telling them that they should not count on us.

Lead by action, and you will inspire people more completely than by simply giving directions. Leadership through action leaves a deep and lasting impression on those you are privileged to lead. Besides, words are not always essential for making people see what we truly believe in. It is said that when St Francis was commissioning his disciples to go out into the world to convert people to Christianity, he said to them, 'Go and preach the Gospel. Where necessary, use words.'

The gift of words will take leaders part of the way, but it is their ability to lead by example that will win the hearts of people. When people know that their leader strives with them and for the common good, they are more likely to give undivided loyalty and support.





'MY SON DIED OF HIV/AIDS'

Through his life as a freedom fighter, Mr Mandela has given greatly to his country. He has also taught us about humility, resilience and forgiveness, for example, after serving 27 years of imprisonment. Even after his official retirement Mr Mandela has continued to travel the globe, lending his voice to just causes. As if this were not enough, Mr Mandela gave his very own pain to the world in order to help us de-stigmatise the worst pandemic ever to have hit the human race: he announced publicly that his son had died of HIV/AIDS.

In mid-2005 the BBC carried Mr Mandela's announcement to South Africa and the entire world that he had lost his son to HIV/AIDS. The footage showed him visibly grieving as he implored us all to take the devastating effects of the pandemic seriously. He asked the world to unite in order to beat the disease. He stressed that HIV/AIDS did not respect the boundaries of status, gender, race or age.

A few minutes after I had watched the news item, I got a call from my work colleague Susie. 'Martin, are you anywhere near a TV? Just watch the BBC news. I cannot believe that this man Mandela continues to give to the world everything he has.' I wanted to hear her own thoughts first, so I simply said, 'What has he done this time?' Susie told me, adding, 'Just think, he is speaking out in a society where HIV/AIDS is a big stigma. He must have faced a lot resistance even from his immediate family when they heard he was going to speak publicly about why his son died.'

Throughout the day, the BCC repeated the news item of Mr Mandela mourning his son and talking about HIV/AIDS. He really looked heart-broken.



As I have said, great leaders lead by example. They do not just invite people to do things they are not ready to do themselves. In this particular case, Mr Mandela has shown that when leaders are fully committed to their calling, they give all they can to those they are entrusted to lead.

In spite of all the pain and loss that has already come with HIV/AIDS, especially among the poor communities of Africa and other developing countries, there is still a serious lack of leadership in the effort to beat the disease. What the world needs is good brave leaders like Mr Mandela speaking out about his son, to demonstrate by their own action how we should be completely open on the subject. Secrecy arising from a fear of stigma is one of the problems hindering our efforts to beat HIV/AIDS. The mere fact that Mr Mandela came out in the open about his own son, as an example of the premature loss of life that comes with the pandemic, has contributed immeasurably to the cause. He has encouraged a lot of people to be brave enough to speak out and seek or offer help.

Dr Kenneth Kaunda, first President of Zambia, had led in the same way almost twenty years earlier. In September 2005 I had the opportunity of asking him what made him talk publicly about the cause of his son's death. He said, 'My wife Betty and I made the decision to publicise what killed our beloved son Masuzyo. This was not an easy decision for us. Not at all. When we were convinced that this was in the interests of our country, I called a press conference and made the announcement. My wife and

I were worried that many of our countrymen and women knew very little about the scourge of HIV/AIDS then, in 1986. The few that knew something thought wrongly that this illness affected only certain sections of society. By telling the nation what our son had died from, we hoped our people would take the necessary measures to protect themselves and their families. I am pleased that a few people heard me and started taking HIV/AIDS seriously.'

Food for thought

To be a powerful leader, whatever the sector or organisation you are in, become a role model. You must lead by example for people to take your leadership seriously.

To show that you undergo pain and suffering is not weak leadership. It proves that you share in human experience and know the real cost of difficulties. Then people around you will believe you when you say, 'There is hope. We must emerge victorious.'

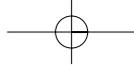
Africa is in danger of decimation. We need leaders who will give us hope and help us get rid of the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. It is not a shameful disease. It is not a curse on anyone. It is a pandemic we have to beat through collaborative effort.

IT IS MORE PAINFUL TO TAKE REVENGE THAN TO FORGIVE

We are all invited to keep trying to live lives that offer forgiveness as a gift to others. While forgiveness is a value much talked about, practising it is another matter. My friend Thabo and Joe Seremane share what they have learnt about forgiveness from Mr Mandela.

On the day Mr Mandela turned 84, Thabo, a worker at one of the insurance companies in Cape Town, shared this reflection with me. 'The first time I seriously thought about forgiveness was the day after Madiba was inaugurated as State President. Like most South Africans who could afford it, I rushed into the street early in the morning to buy a newspaper so that I could read about the ceremony. I could not believe my eyes when I read that among the guests that Madiba had invited was a man who had guarded him on Robben Island.' Thabo looked at me. 'Do you understand what I am saying?' I nodded, and he went on. 'Mandela invited his gaoler as one of his guests! I have learnt that even though revenge looks attractive on the face of it, it leaves more pain than forgiveness does. Even as a selfish move, making the effort to forgive is more satisfying than avenging oneself. Being able to forgive is not a point of weakness as many people think. It takes enormous strength. It means getting beyond the temptation to see another person suffer as you may have suffered.' Thabo added quietly, 'The few times I have tried to practise forgiveness in my relationships, I have experienced a new level of freedom and peace.'

On the same day Joe Seremane, of the Democratic Alliance (in opposition to Mr Mandela's African National Congress) said, 'I know it has worked for



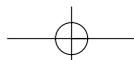
Madiba, but I cannot understand how a man who personally suffered so much can champion forgiveness and reconciliation to the extent that he has done. Madiba does it with so much ease that, in spite of my scepticism, I feel invited to try exploring the extraordinary power of forgiveness.'



Forgiveness is one of the most powerful and healing gifts we have. In most cases, the forgiven and the forgiver shift from nursing the wounds or misdeeds of the past to engaging with people in a creative and liberating way. Forgiveness is said to release energies that would otherwise go to managing the bottled-up anger. What often stands between people and this great energy of forgiveness is the failure to overcome the urge to get back at someone. Most of us seem to be easily persuaded by the falsehood that an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth would settle the scores. As the saying goes, 'An eye for an eye will render the whole world blind.' The courageous ones among us who have tasted the sweetness of forgiving others can testify that they feel deeply liberated by their own action.

I often wonder what the role of forgiveness is in the life of a leader. Wouldn't forgiveness for someone in a responsible position be an invitation for people of ill will to get away with their bad intentions? Would it encourage fraud, for instance? Does it negate the value of punishment? Isn't the world full of people who are willing to overexploit those who can forgive? Imagine a Head of State who forgives those who steal the country's resources, or the corporate leader who forgives an accountant fiddling the figures in order to swindle the company.

Quite often the confusion arises when forgiveness is isolated from the ethical call for human beings to be responsible for their actions. Those who



simply want to be forgiven without taking responsibility for their actions do not deserve the benefits that come with forgiveness. Forgiveness does not just mean avoiding punishment or restitution.

Forgiveness is a spiritual gift. Even if there were no physical prisons, our consciences could well imprison us for going against our basic human values. Forgiveness caters for our general human need to reconcile our actions with our values – a transcending difference between ourselves and the animal world. In this light, punishment and forgiveness can, and quite often should, go together.

Most people who think that revenge will 'square things' find themselves still burning with anger even when they have carried out their acts of vengeance. Peace of mind and heart is not attained that way. Forgiveness is what we need for our inner being. The forgiver experiences sympathy for the one who has expended energies on an unworthy cause. Whether the process of reconciliation leads to imprisonment or restitution or reparation, or none of them, it improves the life of the forgiven and the forgiver too.

Punishment is most effective when it is seen as an opportunity for the transgressor to begin restoring what was lost. There are times, though, when we should forgive even when the wrongdoer does not repent. This may sound too pious, but those who have experienced the power of forgiveness say that it is just a fact of life that gives immeasurable reward once accepted and practised.

In her book *A Return to Love*, Marianne Williamson says that forgiveness does not just mean pardon. She describes it as choosing to forget the mistakes or weaknesses of others. For her it is a deliberate choice and one that we should all make. I agree, but would add that the choice should be

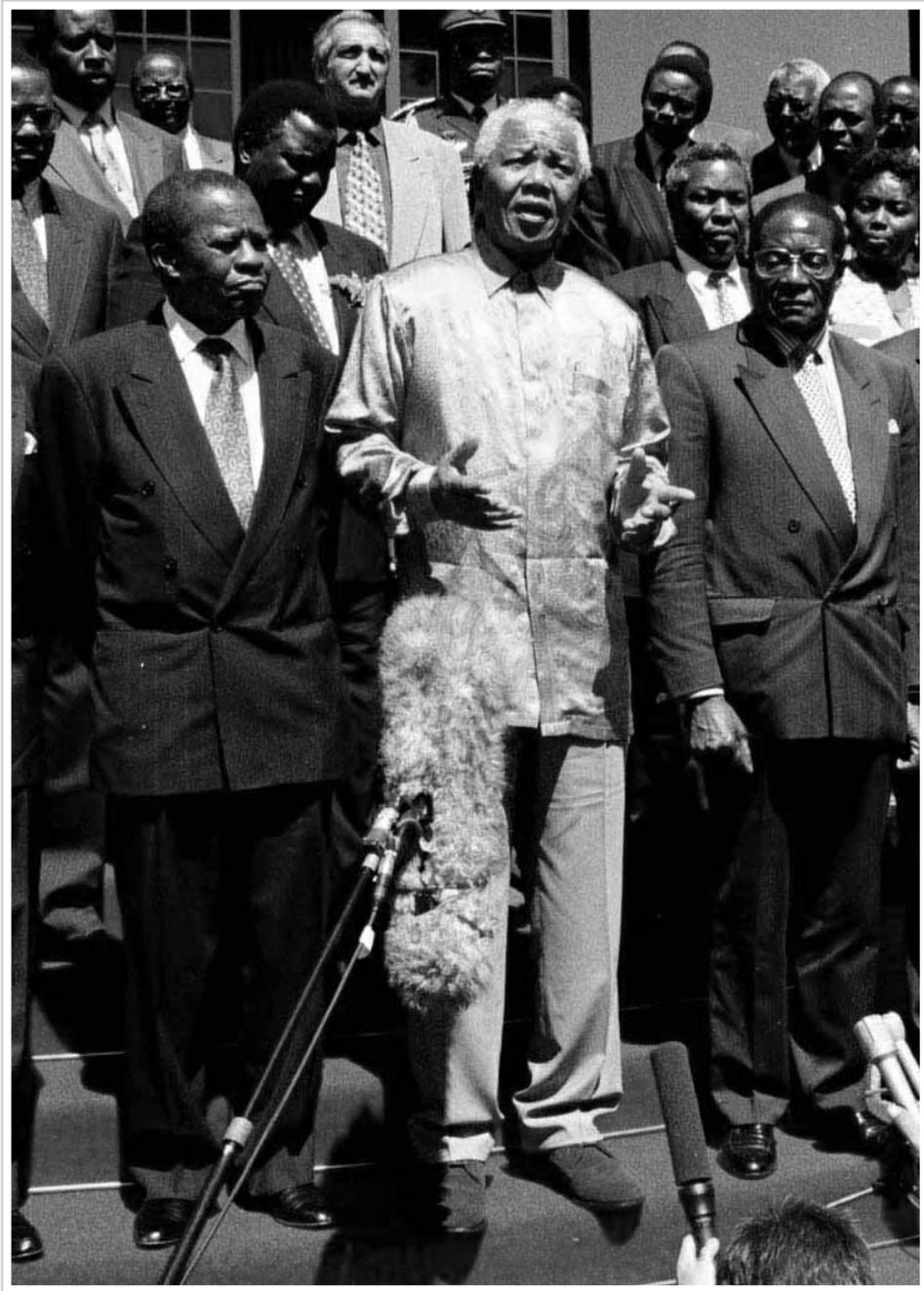
informed by two realities. The first is that we all have serious personal weaknesses that need forgiving. We want people to focus on the good we do, not on our flaws, and should treat others the same way. The second reality is that we will not improve the world by concentrating on each other's mistakes. It will become better when we learn to notice each other's strengths and help each other to realise our potential. The world we yearn for will come about because we allow the little flicker of light in each one of us to grow and shine.

Food for thought

Revenge does not improve life for anyone. It wastes life energy. Forgiveness, on the other hand, brings peace and strength to the forgiver and the forgiven, catering as it does for the mind and heart.

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful gifts of healing at the disposal of human beings. Make use of it as much and as often as you can.

Until we try it, forgiveness does not appear very attractive. When we experience its power, either because we have been forgiven or we have forgiven, we will begin to see it as a great gift we can offer any time.



WHEN BILL CLINTON BECAME SPEECHLESS

Bill Clinton, the former United States President, is one of the most eloquent leaders of our time. He has a reputation as one of the few US Presidents who managed to describe the mood of their country precisely, whether in times of sorrow or joy. This is a story of how Clinton was at a loss for words in the presence of Mr Mandela. Maybe that was the best way he could describe the Madiba phenomenon.

A Kenyan colleague of mine, Mrs Ichoya, told me of her experience when she was with Nelson Mandela. Soon after Mr Mandela assumed office he visited the United States as a guest of President Bill Clinton. He and Clinton were to address a meeting where Mrs Ichoya was one of the guests. As soon as Mr Mandela walked into the conference room with President Clinton, the atmosphere changed totally. Everybody felt a sudden sense of awe at being there with him.

'We were all stunned by the fact that we were looking at the man who had spent 27 years in prison on account of his beliefs. It was a joyful as well as a defining moment for all of us.' Suddenly she was asking herself some hard questions. 'Who am I?' 'What do I stand for?' 'What will I be remembered for?' 'What have I given to my community?'

She went on. 'Maybe what touched me most during that experience was not what Mr Mandela said but the reaction of President Clinton.' Clinton, she said, was ordinarily a very confident and eloquent person. On that day,

however, he appeared as if in a trance. Standing to introduce the guest, he said in a grave, faltering voice, 'I do not know what to say. I just cannot bring myself to believe that I am standing next to the greatest man of our time.' After a long pause, while holding Mr Mandela's hand, Clinton continued, 'I am so struck by President Mandela's presence that I cannot find the right words with which to address you.' He paused again. 'May I simply invite the President to address us.'

Mrs Ichoya could not recall what else went on that day – but it was an extraordinary event for her, an unbroken moment when she sank into the depths of what matters in human life. Even President Clinton's loss of speech was apt, to convey how significant the moment was. 'The whole episode of being in the same room with Mr Mandela was so breathtaking that words did not matter. Each time I tell this story I re-live that special experience. And somehow, each time I remember it, I get a new impetus to search for meaning in my life.'



One does not need to rule one of the most powerful countries in the world to be considered a great leader. That status fits anybody who is serious about bridging the gap between words and deeds; who is willing to live and, if need be, die for what they believe in (as Madiba promised from the dock at the start of the Rivonia trial in 1964, and put his life on the line). This is why Mother Teresa, for example, did not have to rule a country to be a leader for the many people worldwide who believed in her and her works. It was the congruence of what she professed and what she did that made her a world leader.

That congruence makes a leader someone whom people can rely on. We need to match our actions to our words: 'I will meet you at 12:00 hours' or 'I will read your work' or 'I will prepare your accounts this week' – and we do. Soon enough, word goes around and everybody knows that what we say will happen. This makes for charismatic, inspirational leadership.

It takes discipline and constant practice to become reliable in performance. We can learn from conjurers, from great sports people, from musicians. By the time they appear in public they have practised for many hours, many months, many years. In the case of leadership, we have to learn how to make our ideas come true, and know what promises we can reliably make. At first this learning process means a lot of guesswork. Do not feel bad about it – everyone starts like that, as you hear from people who later become great chief executives or statesmen.

If you persevere, what you are practising eventually becomes second nature. You will start to look like a miracle worker. But the bottom line is still: lofty thought and sweet words are only of value if they are backed by action, especially action to serve others. We may not be as famous as Mr Mandela and Mother Teresa, but we will have moved closer to our own greatness if we genuinely try to serve others. Mr Mandela, at some point in his life, came to know that his calling in life was to fight with his comrades for a free South Africa. And when the fight with the regime was over he dedicated himself to serving the nation (and the world) through the power of forgiveness and reconciliation.

I believe that there must be something that each one of us can do with distinction in order to serve others. This service could lie in how we treat people at work and the way we cater for our family's needs. It could be how we behave with other road users as we drive and the way we treat those that

we compete with at school or in business; in how we engage our employees; in how we respond to those different from us. It definitely is by learning and constantly living the reality that other people do matter.

Food for thought

What touches people most is not our words but our actions when they represent the values we hold dear, the things we are willing to die for.

We are seldom aware of the immeasurable power that resides in all of us, the power to affect others and to perform miracles of all sorts. Many of us pass through life as giants who carried themselves as weaklings because we allowed the gap between our words and our actions to widen.

As you carry on learning how to make your values and undertakings so reliable that others start to bank on them, even if you are shaky in the beginning, what you are practising will in time become part of your nature. If this new nature is positive, you will have become an inspiration to people.



MANDELA OR COCA-COLA?

Many people would agree that the name 'Mandela' is world-famous now, a household word loaded with great value. One research project compared the fame of his name to the world spread of the Coca-Cola brand image.

On Sunday, 21 July 2002 I sat in my living room to watch the 8 o'clock news on South African television. One of the items covered a continuation of the celebrations of Mr Mandela's eighty-fourth birthday on 18 July. The newscast reported that Mr Mandela was 'one of the world's most popular personalities. In fact, Mandela is the second of the two best-known names in the world, after Coca-Cola.'

A professor of anthropology from the University of the Witwatersrand appeared on the screen. According to him, global studies are sometimes done to ascertain which names are most generally known. 'Yes,' he said, 'Mandela now really is one of the best-known names in the world. The fact that his name comes second only to Coca-Cola, whose many years of successful marketing have given it the recognition that it has in the world, speaks for itself on how Mandela has become a world icon of struggle, forgiveness and sheer dedication to making the world a better place for all.'



It might sound unrealistic of me to invite you to emulate Mr Mandela in being dedicated to the cause of a nation and the world. After all, humankind does not often produce such people. Mandelas are one in a million or more.

Yet, while many of us cannot dream of living a fraction of Mr Mandela's life, and people around us do not expect us to do so, there is something great that each one of us is meant to accomplish. As has often been said by all sorts of people, there is something in the world that can only be best done by each one of us. There is a cause waiting for you.

Mr Mandela could use the circumstances of a prisoner's life to find what his cause was. In fact he would have found his calling wherever he was, because he has always been a well-informed and committed man with great powers of reflection. But many people are too drowned in the din and bustle of daily living to discover their cause. They end up spending their time chasing one exciting moment after another. They do not pause to reflect, and so the potentials of their life keep on eluding them. Sooner rather than later, they become exhausted and disillusioned.

If this is our state, things get even worse when circumstances thrust a position of responsibility on us. Because we have not had the time to consider our role in life, we end up occupying offices for the sake of filling space. The most we can give under these circumstances is our own lack of enthusiasm. We share our dullness about life and end up detracting from the world's vision of a better human life for all.

Let us use some of the early mornings or late evenings to reflect in silence on what our lives are for. It is these thinking moments that enable us to see our role, as Mr Mandela has done for years, starting long before he became one of the world's great names.

Food for thought

As a leader, your name and image must be consistently related to a set of values. This is what makes a leader principled and effective. When people think of you as a leader, they must immediately grasp what you stand for. These are the values that will help you lead the group to navigate the various ethical conundrums that always confront any organisation or community.

To be part of the process that brings positive change in your organisation or community, your message and what you stand for need not be advertised. Just live the things you believe in. The story we live will package and sell itself. This is because passion and enthusiasm, courage and determination, commitment and kindness are infectious.

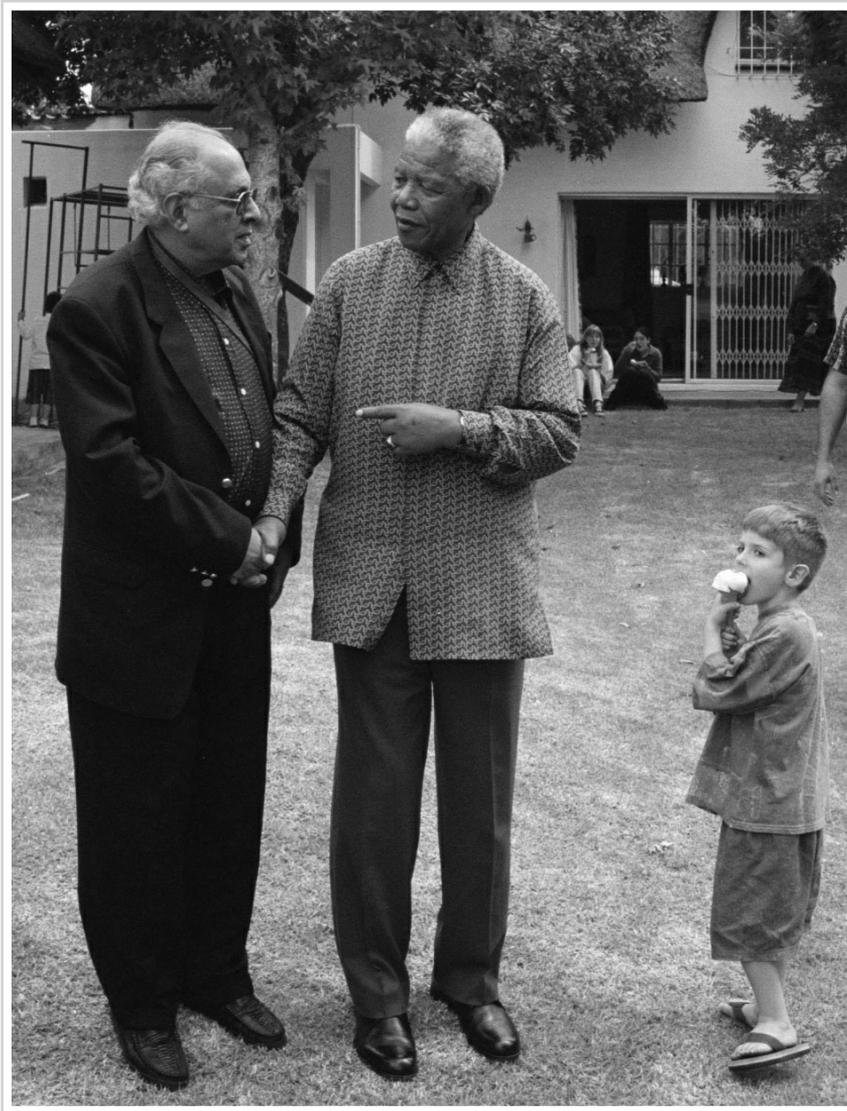
Leaders should continually try to gauge what impact they are having. If it looks positive, it should be fostered and consolidated as well as possible. If negative, find ways to adapt or discard it.

There are some basic ways for leaders to assess their impact. They need an ability to get honest feedback. It is good to find time and an appropriate place for reflection. They should create an environment where people feel free enough to speak their minds even in the leaders' presence.

Some people are so well respected that truth does not reach them. When we show that we 'know it all' or that we do not take kindly to criticism, people tell us what they think we deserve: half-truths and outright lies.

When you hear people say 'Please offer me constructive criticism' they are most likely saying 'Only say the things I want to hear.' Who determines whether criticism is constructive or not?





‘UNLESS IT IS MADIBA
WHO IS SICK’

This is a saying among some doctors in Cape Town. I learnt the story from a doctor friend of mine there. It shows how individuals are willing to sacrifice their own interests for a leader whose vision they have bought into.

In November 2001 my work took me to Cape Town. Our family moved, and soon we got invited for a cup of tea in a friendly home. Our hosts, a husband and wife, were both medical doctors from Zambia doing their postgraduate studies at one of the major hospitals in the city.

With them we drifted into discussing problems of the African continent. We agreed that part of the solution to poverty, civil wars and under-development in Africa lay in the quality of leaders there.

One of these qualities our little group identified was the ability of a leader to sacrifice their interests for the sake of those they serve. At that point one of our hosts talked about what went on in the hospital where he worked. ‘People in this part of South Africa are passionate about sport,’ he said. ‘Rugby attracts huge crowds. If it were not for their commitment to serving lives, some of the most hardworking doctors I know would rather ignore hospital calls when there is a game on.’ He laughed. ‘When there is an important rugby match in town or on television, doctors whisper to the nurses on duty, “Even if I am on call this weekend, please say I am not reachable. I am not reachable unless it is Madiba who is sick.”’



It seems to be true that people will make any sacrifice once they buy into a leader's vision. Even though the story about the doctors was told as a joke, it showed that Mr Mandela had a special place in their lives.

This reminds me of a conversation I heard at work in BP Africa. One of the staff, responding to a colleague who wanted to know the company's criteria for supporting social investment, said, 'Our company's social investment criterion is that proposals for funding have to fit any of these four themes: HIV/AIDS, road safety, environment, and enterprise development. I know you are interested in the proposal you recently received. The answer is no. We do not get involved in brick and mortar projects.' The questioner retorted, 'But we have just completed building a school that is to be officially opened by Mr Mandela in the Eastern Cape.' The other man replied, 'The policy is that we do not get involved in the construction of infrastructure ... but ... ah ... ah ... unless of course we are asked by Mr Mandela ... tell me who can say no to Madiba.' Everyone in the room agreed!

Once leaders show that they are faithful to their cause, they will generate an immense capacity for sacrifice and commitment in those they lead. It is these levels of dedication that enable people to make phenomenal strides. Extraordinary performance requires extraordinary types and levels of stimuli. All of us are capable of responding to such stimuli – and of generating the commitment in others too. What is it about great leaders that enables them to elicit such enthusiasm from those they are entrusted to lead? Surely it is their own agenda. Although leaders all seem to have a vision to which they invite others, often the real source of inspiration is the people they serve. Through listening and asking ques-

tions, leaders come to learn about the needs of their community or organisation. Then they dedicate their time and the resources of their office to realising those needs.

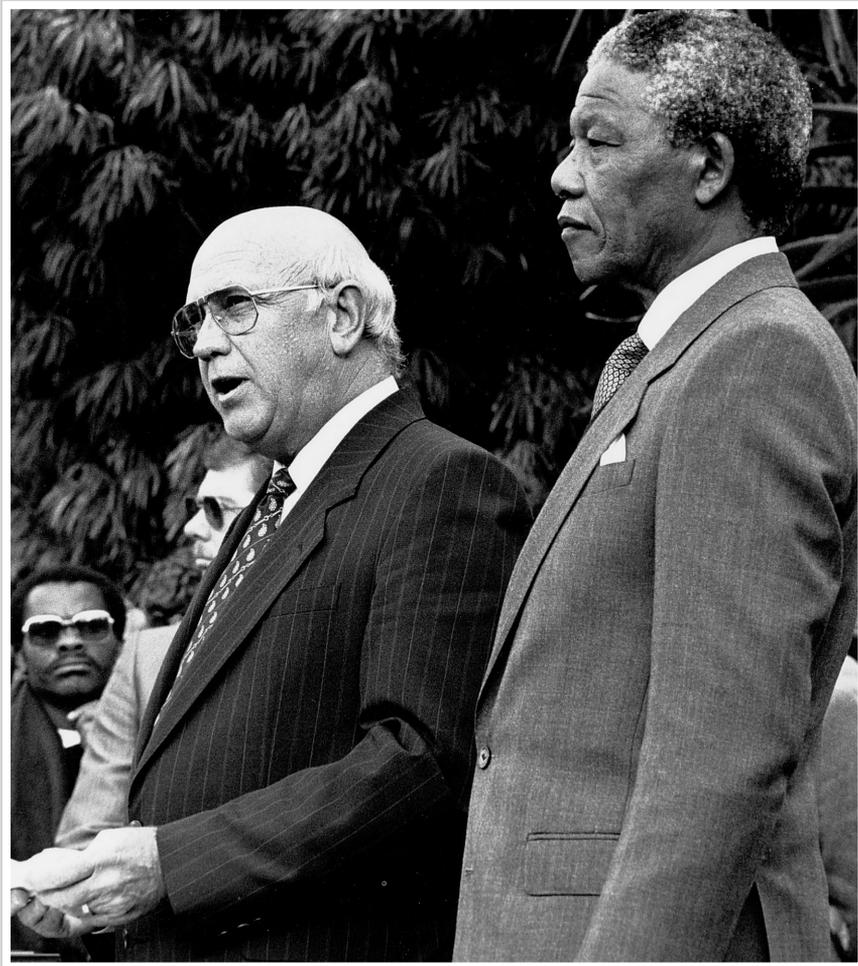
Lesser leaders do not evoke such commitment. Sometimes this is because they champion their own agenda as if it were that of the group, mistaking their personal interest for group vision. When great leaders have real insight on a topic, they are impelled to explain that vision until those they lead accept it and make it their own. Yet even while they argue for it, they should listen to the contributions of their followers and be ready to improve the original ideas. It is then that people will wholeheartedly give themselves to a leader's cause.

In crisis moments, however, a leader may fairly push for implementation of their plan. Their justification is twofold. In crises we may often race against time, mainly to save human life and property, or the natural world. Also, given the race against time, leaders by virtue of their office may be the best informed and therefore the best suited to make urgent decisions. This leeway only applies for real crises, though. For the rest of the time, leaders should be guided by consensus on crucial matters. In other words, they should argue on merit in a consultation that graduates into general agreement about their vision. This fosters sustainable development and avoids paternalism.

Food for thought

People are often willing to sacrifice for the sake of the common good. If, however, they see that they are the only ones doing so while their leaders lie back and wallow in extravagance, they will withdraw. That is a natural impulse, and it may be for self-preservation. This does not mean that leaders should not claim the resources they need to do their job well. People know the difference between necessity and extravagance.

Inspirational leaders are like yeast that permeates ordinary flour and water, making them rise into a good dough. This is a lot of what leadership is about: imperceptibly raising others to realise their own greatness and the esteem they deserve. A lot of the effect is gained simply by listening to people with respect.



MANDELA THE ARTIST

When we learn how to cleanse and elevate our thoughts, we become able to transform anything we touch or do, giving it new value. Mr Mandela's paintings may not be Picassos in beauty and depth, but they fetch high prices. Of course it is mainly his fame that drives their market value, but they are also treasured because his perspectives are so genuine and so deeply felt.

One Sunday afternoon my young brother Sampa gave me the amazing news that paintings by Mr Mandela were being sold in London. 'I could not believe my eyes,' he said, 'but the BBC news showed the paintings on display in a London gallery.' I could not believe it either. 'Just wait for the next newscast,' Sampa said. 'You will see I'm right.'

As we waited, he told me that some people had persuaded Mandela to recollect and paint his memories of the many years he spent as a prisoner on Robben Island. It amazed us that, although these paintings really looked amateurish, people were willing to buy them at incredible prices. Some were fetching as much as £10 000.

Sampa was also fascinated by the fact that many of Mr Mandela's paintings were in very bright colours: 'I think the bright colours that he uses in his paintings may be showing us part of what gives him such a positive outlook on life in spite of the painful and humiliating prison conditions he underwent. He must be seeing things from a completely different perspective. He must always be looking on the brighter side of life.' He warmed to that idea. 'How else do you describe a person who sees hope where things look hopeless or sees freedom where there does not seem any?'

Then the BBC news hour arrived, and there was the story just as Sampa had said. To my brother's pleasure, on the screen came Mr Mandela's artwork. One of the paintings depicted his vision of a liberated South Africa. Through prison bars, Mr Mandela saw a beautiful South Africa represented by the stunning view of Table Mountain. Between himself and Table Mountain was the magnificent calm Atlantic Ocean adorned with a rainbow.

As Sampa said, 'It seems whatever Mr Mandela touches he transforms into something valuable. He is a magician in his own style.'



Yes, some leaders bring magic to our lives. We are all capable of being magicians, although only a few people manage to discover and play out this magic. We are all capable of giving a new value to everything we touch in spite of the fact that we rarely see ourselves as being as gifted in that way.

As I see it, to have such a magical effect we must be people of goodwill, burning with the desire for others to become better off. This makes us attend to their needs, giving us the power to create and re-create the value of everything we do. Anyone with that attitude emits a lot of positive energy in which unlimited possibilities can be born. Those around us sense where these energy fields are and are drawn to them, to the general benefit.

For me, goodwill is more to do with thinking than feeling. We do not depend on our emotions to tell us whom we should wish well. If this were the case, people would not manage to bless those they do not like. What allows us to wish our enemies well is the power of reason. We must be able to say to ourselves, 'I do not like that person and I would rather see him suffer than be happy. Yet I know this is not helpful in the long run. This

person, like me, deserves to be happy in life. I therefore choose to wish him well.'

A second requirement to make us special for others is that we live as we say we will. 'I will see you tomorrow' means that you will be there as you promised. 'I am going to hand you the report on Monday' – and you do. 'I will apologise for my action' – and you do that too. Your reliability not only makes you special, it also makes you powerful. Soon enough, those around you realise that what you say comes to pass, and they begin to treat you with extra respect.

A powerful person of goodwill has the charisma to attract and inspire others. A powerful person without goodwill just generates fear in others.

Mr Mandela's paintings may be amateurish, but they fetch more money than some of the works of the world's best artists. It is not the paintings as such that sell but their spirit and what they represent. Nobody doubts the fact that Mr Mandela will use the money realised from these sales to send orphans to schools and spread education on HIV/AIDS. We know that Mr Mandela is using the trust created in his name to help others. In this way, goodwill has assumed a monetary value.

Also, although modern times tend to play down the spiritual side of our lives, there is a deep longing in each one of us for something nonmaterial yet fundamental. When we admire other people, we want them to share their special flair for life with us or we just want to capture whatever we can that comes from them. Look at how fans fight to touch or get autographs of those they admire. We go out of our way to buy and collect artefacts such as paintings by those who represent the world we dream about. Some people are willing to pay huge sums just to connect with this intangible

world. In each one of us there is a longing for a much more meaningful life than we often live, and so we value anything that connects us more profoundly with people, our communities, and the natural world.

When we convince people that we are seeking the wellbeing of others as much as our own, we will not only have the power to transform our ordinary activities into extraordinary ones but also gain an extra ability to enlist the enthusiasm and dedication of others to our cause. The ability to influence and cause transformation could be called charisma. Whatever you call them, they are often the best way to solve life's difficulties and afflictions. Until you try silently to wish everyone well that you come in contact with, you may never know that you are a magician.

Food for thought

It was Oscar Wilde who first wrote, 'Two men looked out from the prison bars. One saw only mud, the other saw stars.' We create our own reality by choosing the lenses through which we see the world around us – our families, work places, and our wider community. This choice and these lenses often determine the attitude we have towards them.

We are all magicians. In our hands lies the power to transform whatever we touch into something valuable. All it takes is to wish others well and continuously seek alignment between our words and our actions. Finding time for quiet moments at regular intervals allows us to work on this alignment.

A Catholic priest, John Powell, once said that most of us go through life exploring and using only one-tenth of our capacities. Try to venture into the other nine-tenths. Whatever your age, there is always scope for you to find and use the rest.



WHEN OFFERING AN APOLOGY MAKES US GREATER

*Like the rest of us, Mr Mandela is capable of making mistakes.
This story tells how Mr Mandela apologised to a community that he
felt he had judged unfairly. Offering the apology did not diminish the
statesman. It made him even greater.*

A story is told about Mr Mandela's reaction to a Muslim community after the terrorist attacks that took place on 11 September 2001 in the United States. It happened when he visited a mosque in Durban. As he addressed people there, Mr Mandela castigated the Muslim community for preaching hatred and misusing the name of Allah. He condemned the false religiosity of those who confessed their faith in Allah and yet had no compunction about carrying out attacks that cost thousands of people their lives. Although the people did not respond there and then to Mr Mandela's comments, possibly out of respect for the elderly statesman, they were visibly upset.

A few weeks later Mr Mandela went back to the mosque in Durban and again addressed the Muslims there, but now along these lines: 'I have come here to offer my sincere apology for what I said the last time I came here. I made a mistake in condemning the Muslim community as a whole. I know many good Muslims. The fact that some people who profess their faith in Islam have committed atrocities does not give me the right or even the excuse to condemn Muslims wholesale. Please accept my heartfelt apology for what I said.' The excited and relieved congregation rose as one, and gave him a standing ovation.

This story reminds me of an apology that I witnessed in 1991.

When Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the founding President of Zambia, reintroduced competitive party politics and called for national elections, he faced a formidable unforeseen challenge from the newly constituted Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD). Dr Kaunda, who I guess was facing the toughest rival in his political career, was desperately seeking people within and outside the country to give him the support he needed to win.

Mr Mandela flew to Zambia to meet Dr Kaunda. While he was there he addressed the press, asking Zambians to vote for Kaunda. Many Zambians, and members of MMD in particular, were very annoyed by this appeal and disappointed with Mr Mandela. The reality was that Dr Kaunda had become so unpopular that people could not understand why Mr Mandela was asking them to vote for him.

Elections took place in November 1991, and Kaunda lost. On his next visit to Zambia, Mr Mandela addressed the press again: 'The last time I was here I requested the people of this country to vote for Dr Kaunda. I was wrong to have chosen sides when you were going for elections. I know that Dr Kenneth Kaunda was the head of state when Zambia sacrificed immeasurably for the liberation of my country. I made it appear as though it was only Dr Kaunda and not the whole country of Zambia that helped in our struggles. While there is room for us to single out the great leadership that Dr Kaunda offered, it was not for me to determine who was to be elected. I am very sorry for having spoken in the manner that I did.'

Many of us understood why Mr Mandela had spoken as he did. He wanted to show appreciation of someone who was not only his personal friend

but who, through his office, had faithfully committed himself and the country he was leading to the liberation of South Africa. I asked several Zambians what they thought of Mr Mandela's apology. They all said they were deeply touched by his humility. One added, 'When Mandela gave his support to Kaunda, I was upset. I was upset with him because he failed to see how angry we were with Kaunda. However, I feel very bad and deeply humbled that Mandela had to give a public apology. I know that even in his mistake, Mandela meant well and wanted the best for Zambia. I loved him even more as I listened to his apology.'



We often associate saying sorry with defeat and poor judgement. The higher people are in authority, the harder it becomes to apologise. They imagine that others will think they are not good enough for their position if they return and admit they were wrong. Some of them may unconsciously see themselves as infallible.

Great leaders, whatever their sector, teach us that it is dangerous for anyone ever to think they could reach a stage when they would not have to apologise for having spoken or acted wrongly. We all should strive to do what is right, but our human limitations inevitably make us misjudge situations at times. Always being right is not important. The main thing is to admit when we realise we are wrong, and renew our desire to do better next time. If we are in earnest, we will be relieved to note our mistakes and will not find it difficult to apologise for them.

Apology comes from strength, not weakness. Cowards shy away from admitting their errors and make frantic efforts to cover them up. In doing so, they end up expending more energy in a very unproductive way. More

often than not, the cover-up involves a dubious process that makes it more difficult to repair the damage.

Courageous men and women not only face their mistakes. They perceive them as an opportunity to do better next time – the opportunity to grow.

I believe that people who learn to apologise are not only inwardly more at peace with themselves, but attract the trust and admiration of others. I am sure that in both Durban and Zambia, Mr Mandela emerged more popular than before. This is because people know deep in their hearts that you need more courage and strength to say 'I am sorry' than to put up a show that you are always right.

Let me end with the story of a famous Catholic archbishop in Cologne, Germany, who was arrested for drunken driving. Next day the newspapers splashed the scandal on their front pages. Then the archbishop faced the press. Most people were expecting him to give some plausible explanation such as 'The police were simply malicious and bent on tarnishing the name of the Church.' Instead the archbishop said, 'I am very sorry for my behaviour. I especially request forgiveness from the young people of our country whose dreams about an exemplary life may have been shattered by my irresponsibility. If there is any sensible explanation I can give you, it is just to say that I got too carried away with drink when I knew I would be driving. If you can find it in your hearts, I ask for your forgiveness, and please give me the chance to do better next time.' In a survey conducted a few months later, the archbishop's popularity had soared even higher than before.

Food for thought

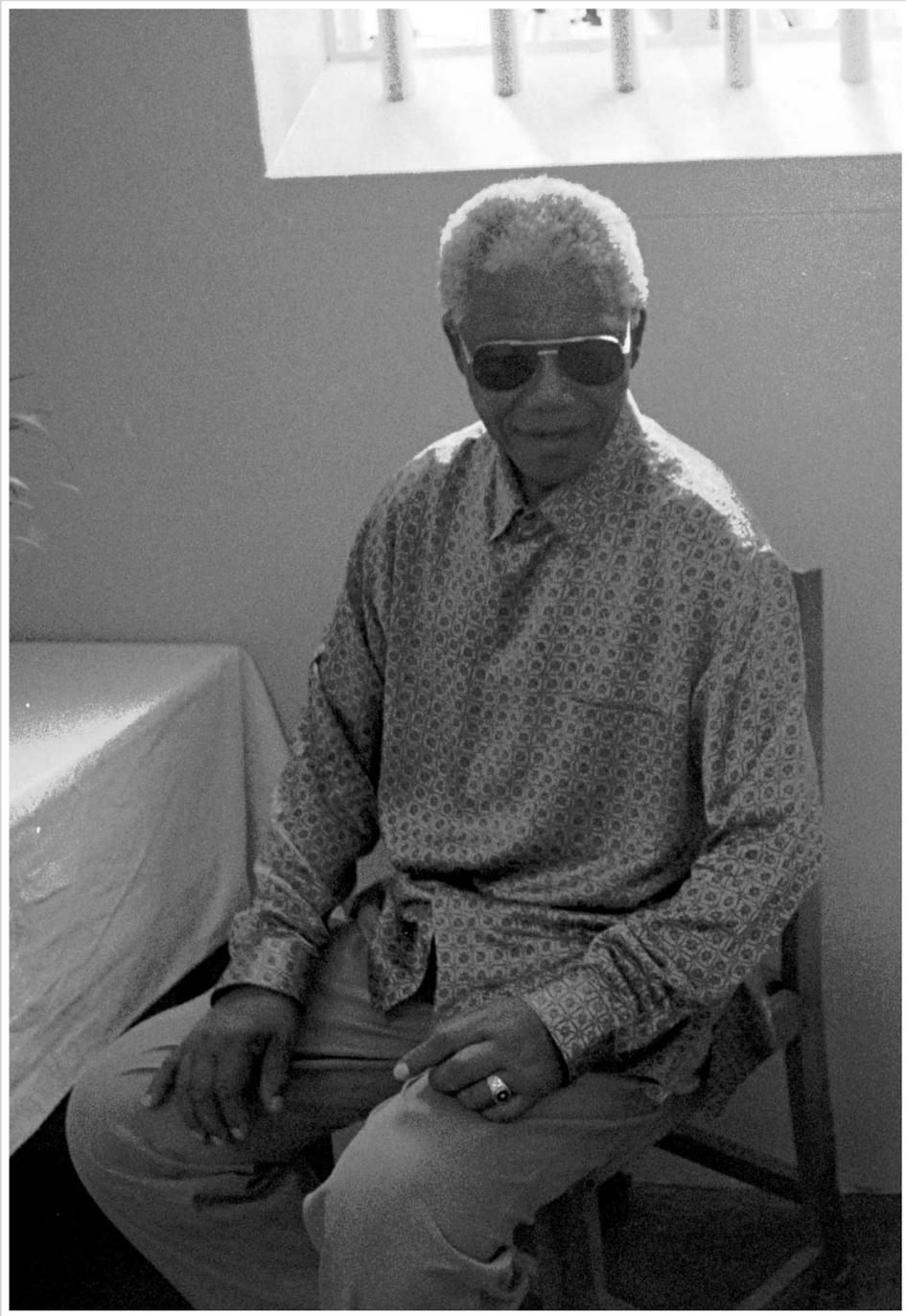
Some leaders mistakenly believe that for them to be considered great they must be associated with doing only the right things. Of course we should always seek to do only the right. However, this is different from considering ourselves infallible. Sometimes, and quite often, our greatness lies in saying, 'I am sorry, I got it wrong.'

Individuals who learn to offer an apology for the mistakes they commit are not only more at peace with themselves but also attract the trust and admiration of others. People know deep down in their hearts that you need more courage and strength to say 'I am sorry' than to put up a show of always being right.

Great leaders admit their mistakes. Instead of making people lose faith in their leaders, admitting mistakes and limitations has the effect of attracting others to work with them and come to their aid. By being able to say sorry for their mistakes, leaders send the message that the search for truth is a common enterprise and not owned or controlled by the one in front.

Showing that they are not always right is not a sign of weakness in leaders. In fact, it helps people see the leader as one of them.

Saying sorry is an act of humility. Humility attracts and inspires. Arrogance does not.



THE MADIBA PARADOX

One day at a time. This seems to have been the magic that Mr Mandela and his comrades used to survive the inhuman treatment they were subjected to while serving their prison sentences. They learnt to live in the moment while keeping an eye on their long-term goals. This is what I call the Madiba paradox.

At a gathering of friends, I overheard this conversation:

Chileshe: 'What do you think made Mandela and some of his comrades pull through the more than 27 years of isolation, torture, and humiliation as they served their prison sentences?'

One answer came from Teddy. 'Come to think of it, the guys had no choice but to be in prison. I think we have given them the credit that all of us would deserve given the same no-choice situation.'

Chiku added this: 'My view is that Mandela and some other prisoners were destined to survive the ordeal. Nature somehow picks on certain people to be the beneficiaries of its gifts. Those guys benefited from nature's gift of survival and their own circumstances. That is the only reason to explain why men such as Biko and Sobukwe who were equally or even more gifted than some of the survivors did not live to see their efforts bear fruit.'

Lungelwa chipped in. 'You know, guys, we are wasting time analysing all this. The fact is that those people pulled through. Whether they planned their survival or not is of no consequence.'

Another question from Chileshe: 'I accept all this, but let me ask the question another way. Imagine yourselves in the shoes of those men who spent most of their lives from one prison to the next, and finally on Robben Island. How would you have spent each day of the 27 years?'



What enabled Mr Mandela and his comrades to survive the extraordinarily long nightmare of prison life? My guess is that they learnt to keep their goals in mind while living each day as best they could.

I am grateful for the great insights of Lance Secretan (*Living the Moment*) and Marianne Williamson (*A Return to Love*). Both authors value 'living the moment' not only as a survival technique but as a way to reinvent the past and create a better future almost effortlessly.

In prison, Mr Mandela and his friends must have learnt how to 'live the moment' in order to survive each day. We know that they recognised their past but they did not get stuck in it. They clearly remembered the goals they were suffering for, but did not spend their time dreaming about what might come the next day. Tomorrow took care of itself.

If they had focused on their past they might have simply blamed themselves for getting involved in what led them to prison. If they had put their main energies into fantasising about what lay ahead, they would have been frustrated by the future that was nowhere in sight year after year. This view of past and future could have broken their morale, and the recent history of South Africa would have been very different.

Mr Mandela and his colleagues appear to have had the wisdom to learn to live the moment. Of course life was tough and they would have wavered at times – even the best people do. But broadly, each day that came was for them another opportunity to live, share and learn. They sang and they studied. They worked in the lime quarry, employing life strategies even in that grim place, and cleaned their cells. They attended to each other as some among them became sick and frustrated. They taught each other law, economics, and philosophy. They gave each day the best shot they could under the circumstances. It was one day at a time, and each day was valuable in itself.

Marianne Williamson calls each day a *gift*. Unlike the past and the future, she says, the present is indeed a *present* that must be treated as a special opportunity. When we give our very best to the present, the best possible future we can have is guaranteed.

Many people do not live like this. They get angry with themselves about their mistakes and failures and become freshly upset remembering what wrong they think other people did to them or the misfortunes they think they did not deserve. They miss the opportunity to be happy and grow because they wait for better days ahead, fantasising about when they might get the perfect job or make their fortune, or how they will dedicate themselves entirely to their families, or what they will enjoy after their present troubles are over.

We may sometimes live in this inadequate way. Then we are failing to acknowledge that we cannot change what happened in the past. And if we just dream of better days to come, we are postponing our future. We can only touch the life we want by living it *now*: caring for our families today; listening to the needs of our employees today; confronting issues we would

rather postpone today; beginning today to learn skills we would otherwise just dream about indefinitely; being happy today.

When we invest all we have in the present, we live our lives to the full on a daily basis – and paradoxically this is the way to create a substantial future, maybe without even realising it. It sounds too simple to be true, but consider how prisoners from Robben Island have had the energy to work miracles. They did not waste themselves on the impossible tasks of rewriting the past or living in the future.

Putting our energies to practical use makes us effective. When we acknowledge things in our past as they happened (whether done by us or to us), we can then choose the way we want to be, and go ahead – setting ourselves to tell the truth, to be faithful, to be punctual, to meet deadlines – day by day.

Unlike what many motivational books want us to believe, learning this new style takes effort and of course commitment. For many it is a gradual lesson, one step at a time, until it becomes second nature. Through successes, failures, and above all the willpower to start again and again, we will develop the good habits we need.

Food for thought

Somehow all of us, at one time or another, find ourselves in little prisons. They could be at places of work, in families, schools or colleges, or in the company of friends. It is not always easy to step out of those situations, but the Robben Islanders have shown that we have all the power we need to stop being convicts and become free people who happen to be in a given space.

Have you worked out what keeps you going during the toughest of moments? Living a day at a time is what enables some people not only to survive the most difficult periods of their lives but also to create the cradle from which a new and richer life grows. These difficulties could be learning a new subject in school, learning new skills at work, recovering from physical injury, living through an emotionally trying patch.

The way of human life seems to be that, to reap from our past, we need to sow continuously in whatever our present may be. The past is gone and we have absolutely no control over it. The future is beyond us. It is not in our hands either. The only way we have control over the past and the future is to learn from the past and to begin to act differently and better each day.

One of many things that our busy generation has lost is the opportunity for 'idle moments'. We seem to be running from one job to the next as we make our living. Open time spent in silence helps us to recreate our inner energies. These energies give us the power to re-invent our lives.

Remember the Madiba paradox and learn to live with it. Things are not always smooth. Life is a mixture of joy and pain, success and failure, vision and disillusion. As leaders we have the task of helping others to live successfully with these contradictions. We must firmly believe and show through our actions that current difficulties have to be confronted while we keep an eye on the end goals. This can be done by enquiring honestly into the circumstances we face, and sharing our fears and frustrations as well as the sources of hope and inspiration.



RESPECTING OUR OPPONENTS

This story is about the power of honouring the good in other people. Whether we like other people or not, there is always something great about them. Mr Mandela never failed to recognise and honour the positive qualities of Mr Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a major political opponent.

Readers will recall that Mr Mangosuthu Buthelezi was one of Mr Mandela's arch-rivals in the first free elections in South Africa. He was also an opposition leader with less than seven per cent representation in parliament. Yet in his first cabinet Mr Mandela appointed Mr Buthelezi to serve as the new South Africa's first Minister of Home Affairs, to the amazement of many people.

Later on, whether deliberately or not, Mr Mandela planned a trip overseas to coincide with that of Thabo Mbeki, who was then his Vice-President. This meant that the two top national leaders were going to be out of the country at the same time. In a surprise move Mr Mandela appointed Mr Buthelezi as Acting President of South Africa.

When Mr Mandela was asked why he appointed his rival to such a position of authority, his response is said to have been, 'Is it not true that, although he is in the opposition, Mr Buthelezi is one of the capable leaders we have in this country? The fact that Mr Buthelezi and I disagree on a number of issues cannot blind me from seeing and appreciating many of his great qualities.' He added, 'We in South Africa and the world out there must know that this country has many more capable leaders besides my African National Congress colleagues and myself. And this is good for our country.'



Great leaders are those who rise above narrow perspectives and embrace what many of us would be blind to. They do not think they are the only ones suited to rule. In fact they may not consider themselves as the best people for the job. This should not be taken as lack of confidence or a poor self-image. The reality is that they are so self-aware in relation to the task before them that humility becomes their natural response. What great leaders are called to, what we are all called to, is much wider than the scope of private life.

Their role is seen as the privilege of serving others. In that spirit, they soon wake up to the fact that if they have a quality to boast about, it is their realisation that they are surrounded by talented men and women whose potential they should tap. Such leaders know that individual interests are most effectively realised through collaborative effort and the harnessing of every available talent.

Valuing merit wherever it is found enables leaders to rise above the temptation to annihilate those opposed to them. Think about it: there will always be people who disagree with your leadership style. We evade the situation if we try to silence, humiliate or vanquish those with opposing views. We should try to understand the other perspectives and identify the positive elements they contain. Then we must make an effort to acknowledge, privately and publicly, what is praiseworthy in those contrary ideas and the people who hold them. Surprise your opponents by believing in them!

Great leaders seem able to embrace the good side of those whom many of us would consider our enemies. Mr Mandela's story chimes with the one

about Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, who appointed one of his fiercest critics as Defense Secretary. When his colleagues wondered if it was foolish of him to appoint an apparent enemy to such a sensitive position, Lincoln is said to have responded, 'I know he does not like me and I also do not like him, but show me who among us is better than him for the job.'

Great leaders seem able to distinguish between their personal wishes and what is right to do. They appreciate and make an effort to live with the fact that right actions do not always make us feel comfortable. If what is right also feels good, this is simply a bonus. However, the bottom line is to do the right thing regardless of personal preferences. They lose the satisfaction of working only with those they like, but find immense fulfilment in knowing that they are working in the best interests of those they serve.

Food for thought

Doing the right thing is not always pleasant, yet we must go ahead and do it. This is not the same as denying our feelings. Great leaders learn to acknowledge their feelings and then they exercise choice when 'feelings' and 'what ought to be done' are running in different directions.

When we realise that everyone has many gifts, known and unknown, and that these can work for us, we will welcome the talents of others.

It is wrong to think that nothing good can come from those opposed to us. Those who try to see good even in their opponents open up new possibilities in life. They also allow nations, organisations and families to create the essential bridges needed for developing shared understanding and forging bonds that guarantee peace and happiness.



IT IS MORE JOYFUL TO BE PROCLAIMED
THAN TO PROCLAIM ONESELF

One day, soon after becoming President, Mr Mandela sneaked out of his official residence in order to go and greet people in his neighbourhood. A surprising encounter led to more surprises for those he met.

A tale is told about how Mr Mandela, as the newly inaugurated President of South Africa, went to greet his neighbours. Late one afternoon, the President called his bodyguards and warned them, 'I want to be on my own for an hour or two. If you follow me or alert anybody else, you are fired.' The bodyguards, knowing that this contradicted their job, were in shock. Mr Mandela kindly suggested, 'Get into the kitchen and request a cup of tea from our friends in there and make yourselves comfortable. I will be back soon.'

Somehow, the President managed to sneak out of his residence unnoticed. He walked a short way and turned in at a neighbouring house. He rang the bell and a white woman in her mid-sixties opened the door slightly. Peering over the security chain she asked, 'Yes, can I help you?' The visitor replied, 'I have recently moved into the neighbourhood. I thought I could take time to introduce myself to my new neighbours, and ...' The woman cut him short and shouted to her husband, 'Honey! Honey! There is a black man at the door who says he is our neighbour and wants to introduce himself to us.' The husband hurried to join her, peeped through the crack of the door, and asked angrily, 'What do you want?'

As Mr Mandela humbly repeated, 'I am very sorry for disturbing you. I have just moved into this neighbourhood and I thought I ...', the 'man of the house' realised who he was talking to, flung the door wide open, and dashed to embrace his visitor. 'Mr President, forgive us – please come in.' After that, they all needed a cup of tea.



Some people, especially those in what they consider a significant position, cannot forgive others who do not recognise them or simply fail to notice them. They are quick to put others down by saying, 'Do you know who I am?' Behind this question is the silent comment, 'If you knew what position I held, you would not treat me like that.'

What is sad about this attitude is that positions are seen as more important than people. This is putting values upside down. Human beings are all worthy of the utmost respect, whatever their place in society, and should be treated accordingly.

The world is full of titles. Ordinarily, there should be nothing wrong with them. Titles such as Mr President, Your Royal Highness, Managing Director should just imply national or organisational values. Along the way, though, the titles have often been given an overbearing life of their own. Society in general sometimes does this, and sometimes the titleholders themselves. If we have a title and this conceited attitude, then it is like wearing coloured glasses that prevent us from seeing the world as it really is.

Admittedly, it is difficult to train ourselves to attend to all people equally. It is easier to categorise them in classes and treat them according to the value we attach to those categories. One way to learn how to treat people

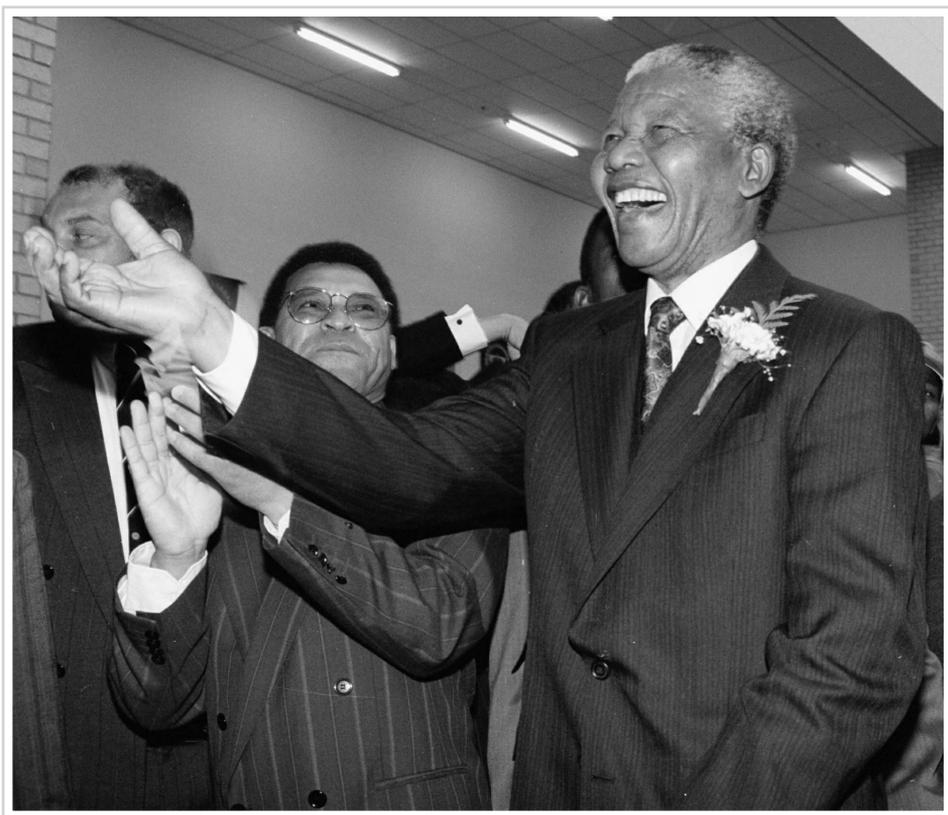
with utter respect is to restrain ourselves from making people treat us in accordance with the title we have. The title exists, but it is for our task in society and not a personal adornment.

Food for thought

Even in our time when we tend to be afraid of strangers, often for good reason, we still need to be courteous and attentive to the people we do not know. This is the attitude that will enable us to meet someone who could be an angel in our lives. It does not matter whether we recognise the angel or not. The point is that we will certainly reap the benefit if we treat everyone with complete respect. This is not religion. It is simply good human practice.

Inspirational leaders break protocol. Yes, you read correctly! Inspirational leaders realise that most of what is termed protocol is what strips leadership of human emotions, laughter, spontaneity, fun, and warmth. Then those who are the leaders are at risk of being so formalised that they become more like robots than human beings. Robots do not inspire. Human beings do.

Titles are meant to stand for something much more general than the title-holder: the spirit of a nation; the aspirations of an organisation; the values of a family unit; or simply a common heritage. When people wear their titles as if they owned them by right, others have very good reason to wonder whether they should be in the positions represented by those titles.



DON'T STOP DANCING'

Mr Mandela does not allow his painful past to control his present moments. He can joke about his time in prison. He also allows other people to make fun of the time when he languished there. Some people say that he has danced away the pain and sorrow of his life as a prisoner.

On Wednesday, 20 March 2002 the *Cape Argus* captured a story for its front page headed 'Madiba keeps dancing'. It read, 'When Nelson Mandela was diagnosed with cancer, a fellow pupil of his 8-year-old grandson wrote to him in a letter: "I'm sorry you're ill, but don't stop dancing."'

The story continued, 'Opening the RIHS Early Childhood Development Centre on Tuesday, the former President shared this story to show how to turn adversity into victory ... The 83-year-old said people often asked him why he was so active. Tongue in cheek, he blamed his secretary, Zelda la Grange. "She says: You have been loafing for 27 years. Now you must do some work."'



Yes, it is true that there are living examples of how human beings have turned adversity into victory. However, I am deeply challenged to know that a man who was imprisoned for 27 years seems to have done away with all the bitterness and anger that comes from such incarceration. He is so free from his past that he can make jokes about it. He can even allow his secretary to make fun of his long years in prison as a time of loafing.

Usually when leaders pay such a price, as Mr Mandela did, for helping their people attain their goal, their followers are expected to be eternally indebted to them. We hear how founding leaders cling to power, forcing those they lead to go on showing how grateful they are for being liberated. Some leaders tend to enslave those they help in the course of their leadership. It is as if the world can never repay what they did for those they had to lead.

When people use the past to justify their present position instead of working for the present, they do not just lose sight of reality; they also begin to work against and destroy the very place they created for themselves in history.

What a contrast to see Mr Mandela, so alive in the present moment that he dances. Dancing in most African societies is an expression, of the highest order, of the individual and group feelings or state of being at the time. Dance is used, in a way words cannot capture, to express deep-seated sorrow, and anger and frustration – and to celebrate life. Mandela takes every opportunity to express himself in dance. People who have been in the same space with him say that as he dances you feel the vibrancy of his life. His excitement about life becomes infectious. You cannot help joining in the celebration. I heard it said, 'When Madiba engages in that dance, he is totally consumed by being alive. Life glows in his eyes. His face beams with incredible joy. There must be something fundamental he celebrates.'

Food for thought

It is said that the courage to look back and laugh at our past is the fertile soil in which our humility and magnanimity grow.

In what ways do you express your most deep-seated emotions? Take time to reflect on what gives you cause to celebrate life.

Work, performance of any kind, and any achievement are part of being alive. We work in order to sustain and enhance our life. We seek to excel not because this is important in itself but because life is better as a result. Leaders must celebrate individual performance and talent – but they must also celebrate life itself. A good leader will participate in rituals, symbols, practices and ceremonies that honour life and people.

MAKING ONESELF DISPENSABLE

Great leaders take time to wind themselves down, and out of power. They leave space for someone to take over from them. It is this willingness of great leaders to make themselves replaceable that guarantees a stable 'change of guard'. Through knowing when and how to leave, great leaders guarantee sustainable progress for the society or organisation they serve. Mr Mandela worked to allow Thabo Mbeki to surface.

It is said that as soon as he was inaugurated as Head of State, Mr Mandela started preparing the people of South Africa for the fact that he would not always be their President. He constantly alluded to the fact that his political party had a rich reservoir of capable people to run the country's affairs.

I understand that Mr Mandela stopped chairing cabinet meetings two years before he left office. His then Vice-President, Thabo Mbeki, took over. In some forums Mr Mandela actually said that Mr Mbeki was a more capable administrator than himself, and that many great ideas that he championed came from his Vice-President.



Great leaders do not see themselves as indispensable. They are very well aware that their role is to sow the seeds that will be nurtured by others. Great leaders make themselves expendable by clearly showing that other people can also champion the causes they serve. Great leaders are willing to quit the centre stage so that others can grow.

Leaders who do not accept that they must create space for their successors often end up in a miserable position. They do not know when to quit. When they finally go, they often are not sure what to do in their forced retirement. They are likely to sink into depression as they find they have no one consulting them and no one to give instructions to. Because they have not found a different cause to live for, they quickly lose their self-esteem.

Some people, speaking from personal experience, say that it is as important to invest time and energy in preparing to leave office as it is in taking up new responsibilities. In fact, as Mr Mandela shows, retiring can also mean taking up new causes.

Food for thought

Are you leaving enough space for other people to grow? It is only when we allow them to develop well enough to replace us that what we serve will continue growing and bear fruit.

Acknowledging the contributions others make to our success while we are still in office does not take away anything from us. In fact, it makes our role even easier and smoother.

Many great leaders are not experts in any particular discipline. They are ordinary people who have learnt to inspire experts to achieve even greater things.

THE MIRACLE OF ROBBEN ISLAND

One of the greatest miracles of our time is that the survivors of Robben Island talk of reconciliation and forgiveness. Many talk of love.

Some have shared ceremonies and meals with their gaolers. Mr Mandela and his fellow former prisoners have proved that we human beings can perform feats we often do not think we are capable of.

One Saturday morning my young brother Sampa, my sister-in-law Esther and I visited Robben Island, now a famous world heritage site. We wanted to see and touch the prison walls that had incarcerated Mr Mandela and his colleagues for so many years.

An exciting 30-minute boat cruise took us to the Island's harbour. There a large black and white photograph caught our eye. It showed what could have been the first prisoners on Robben Island. This immediately set a solemn tone to our tour. Then the lady who was to be our tour guide, whom I will call Ntombi, set off on the bus with us and at once pointed to a building on our right. 'This is the building where prisoners came to meet their visitors for a maximum of thirty minutes. Visits were allowed only every three months, and that was for the lucky prisoners. With their legs and arms in chains, prisoners would be made to walk in small steps from their cells to the visitors' block.'

The next major landmark was the little house where Robert Sobukwe, another legend of the prison, was made to spend many years of his adult life in solitary confinement, with no one to talk to.



Then we saw the lime quarry. Prisoners were taken there each day. The glare from the white rock was terrible, and so was the dust. People were not given any protection from this. Many of them suffered permanent injury to their eyes and lungs. 'Remember when Madiba was released from prison,' she said, 'he had difficulties in seeing. He had to undergo delicate medical treatment. It was partly because of this lime quarry.'

To raise our saddened spirits, Ntombi smiled and invited us to get out of the bus at this point. We were to set foot in what she called the University of the Robben Island Quarry. 'I may have said it in a joking way,' she told us as we stood at the caves there, 'but I truly believe this was a university. Here in the caves prisoners educated one another. After a while some of the warders started to help them. They let the prisoners stop digging so that

they could run classes. If they saw a senior officer approaching, they signalled for the prisoners to get back to work. Lessons would resume as soon as the officer left.'

A great highlight for us was the maximum security prison where Mr Mandela and his comrades spent most of their prison years. Here we were handed over to another guide. I will call him Sizwe. This man led us inside and told us about life there. Apartheid ruled even in prison. Coloured prisoners received less food than the whites. Black prisoners not only got the smallest portions, they were even refused bread and other foods that the prison authorities deemed 'not part of the eating culture of black people'.

Prisoners could receive only one letter in four months. Letters were screened before they were handed to prisoners. Parts of the letters that the prison officials thought should not be read by prisoners were cut out. Sometimes prisoners had letters from their spouses denouncing them for abandoning their families. Sizwe explained this: 'When we were released, we learnt that these letters were fabrications of the apartheid system. Our families never wrote them. They were meant to break us down, and sometimes these tricks worked. Imagine receiving a letter from your wife telling you that she had decided to marry somebody else because it was clear you would never come out of prison and that she needed someone to help her look after your children.'

Sizwe had been on Robben Island for six years before the apartheid regime ended. As he joked, talking with us in 2003, 'Originally, my prison sentence was scheduled to go on until 2006. This is why I am still here. I want to make sure I complete my sentence.' We all laughed with him. But when we entered the section where Mr Mandela and others were kept in individual cells, I stood before the one where Mr Mandela

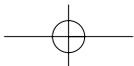
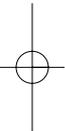
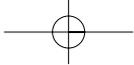
spent eighteen years of his life, and the idea was beyond my comprehension. My brother and I took pictures of this room. As I looked at the bucket that Mr Mandela used as a toilet and the humble bedding he slept on, still on display to the public, I could not grasp how forgiveness was possible. I could not imagine myself surviving eighteen years in such a room. It looked so small that I wondered whether Mr Mandela, given his height, could stretch himself fully as he lay on that cold floor. I could not imagine anyone surviving in such a lonely cell for as long as Mr Mandela did.

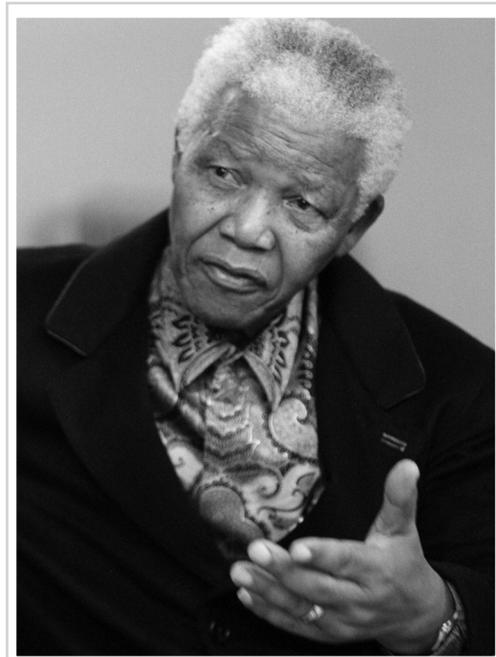
Through my visit I came to learn that the miracle of Robben Island was that people could emerge from such terrible levels of misery, pain and torture to preach reconciliation and love. To appreciate the marvel, you have to see the prison, walk in and out of the cells, shake hands with someone who lived there for years, and hear the appalling story of how prison officials and the architects of apartheid could resort to treating fellow human beings with such excruciating cruelty. I find it incredible that the Robben Island prisoners have conducted themselves as they have done, converting their anger and pain into the raw material from which the Rainbow Nation (as South Africa is sometimes called) is being woven.

As we left, Sizwe said to us, 'You have witnessed the inside story of Robben Island. Go and tell its message to people out there – about freedom and reconciliation. Say that every human being, whether white, black, or coloured, is sacred. Together we can overcome our problems and coexist splendidly. This is the new meaning of Robben Island.'

Through the men who languished on Robben Island and the families that gave them unflinching support throughout, we in our age have witnessed how the human spirit can choose to triumph against all odds.

Many tales about Robben Island prisoners will continue to be told. We can even talk about their weaknesses. Whichever way the story goes, the triumph of goodwill over cruelty, forgiveness over prejudice, courage over fear, and love over hate will forever remain a towering experience in human history. This is what Mr Mandela symbolises and what, after all, all human beings are meant to be – miracle workers who can transform evil into good, injustice into fairness, malice into forgiveness.





A LAST REFLECTION

If there is anything I have been trying to share with you through the Mandela stories, it is these four lessons:

- 1 Great leaders are the servants of those they are privileged to lead. This is true whether we are talking about people in government, business, civil society or the family. The cutting edge in leadership thinking and practice is still the old-fashioned concept of serving others. A good servant is one who truly asks, 'How may I serve you?' This is the daily spirit of real leadership.
- 2 Leaders lead by example. They do not ask people to do things they are not prepared to do themselves. Leading in action, they win the support of those they serve – and they bring out the very best in everyone they meet. Remember St Francis of Assisi saying, 'Go and preach the Gospel. Where necessary, use words.'
- 3 Leaders notice and honour the good in others. This empowers people to become better at what they do. It opens the floodgates of goodwill; and goodwill is essential for sustained success in any environment.
- 4 While leaders do not court trouble, they learn life-changing lessons from painful experiences. The Robben Island prisoners have taught us and the rest of the world, in a language that cannot be ignored, that when human beings make up their minds they will achieve whatever they want regardless of the cost and the obstacles. The term 'impossible' disappears from their vocabulary.



HOW TO LEAD LIKE MADIBA

Great leaders create trails that we can follow to find our own greatness. This does not mean we become their clones – that would be impossible, and anyway it would mean losing the rich variety of our personalities. But these great people inspire us as role models and their example helps us see what to aim for as we nurture our own style.

This book offers ten main guidelines for growth, which I would call the Madiba path to leadership. Here they are again:

Cultivate a deep sense of awe for human beings.

Leadership is about people, and every single person matters. Mr Mandela, like Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, did not have a business plan to begin his mission. He just had a deep-seated respect for people.

Train yourself to treat everyone you come across with the utmost honour. Anyone who might experience the effects of your position or office deserves your undivided attention. This should be a deliberate routine as well as your general disposition.

What is your basic attitude towards others, those you know and those you do not know? What are you doing to deepen your respect for them?

Allow yourself to be inspired by the giftedness of other people.

In a practical way, show that you recognise that every person has special gifts to use for their own wellbeing as well as for their community or organisation.

Equally, you should notice and celebrate the talents in your organisation or community. When the members share their abilities consistently, the giftedness of the group will start to emerge. Your honouring this capacity helps it to spread.

Leaders who do not have clear sources of inspiration often fail to inspire their organisations and communities. What inspires you in your life? What do you honour in others?

Grow your courage.

Great leaders have courage. This does not mean absence of fear but learning how to recognise your fears, face the harsh realities of your situation, and nevertheless choose to follow what you consider the right course of action. At first this is not easy to do. Repeated practice will help you build courage as one of your virtues.

Courage in leadership also means choosing to restrain the full use of the power you have been given, which implies trusting the loyalty and ability of people around you. This will enable those people to grow.

In what ways are you learning to face realities, practise right action regardless of fear, and stand up for the truth as you see it?

'Go and preach the Gospel. Where necessary, use words.'

Lead by example. You should not ask of others what you are not ready to do yourself. Leading by action, you will inspire people more than by simply telling them what needs doing. Your active role will leave a deep and lasting impression on those you are privileged to lead.

While a gift for words will help, it is your ability to lead by example that is going to win you the hearts of people. When people know that you strive and make sacrifices with them for the common good, they will give you undivided loyalty and unflinching support.

How are you working to bridge the gap between your words and your actions?

Create your own brand of leadership.

A leader's name and image must be consistently related to a set of values. This is what makes you really effective. When people think of you as a leader, they must immediately think of your principles. These are essential to guide your organisation or community through the various ethical conundrums they will inevitably have to face.

Consistently try to gauge the kind of impact you are making. If it is positive, do what you can to grow and consolidate it. If negative, find ways to adapt or discard it.

Three things in particular will help you to assess your impact: creating an environment where people are free enough to speak their minds even in your presence, encouraging your colleagues and mentors to give you honest feedback, and finding time and place for regular reflection on your own.

What values describe your brand of leadership? How are you working to increase candid discussion with yourself?

Practice humility.

Great leaders acknowledge their failings. Instead of making people lose faith in you, admitting your mistakes and limitations will draw people to help and work with you. By being able to apologise for your wrongs, you send the message that the search for right thought and action is a common enterprise. It is not owned or controlled by you or any other leader.

Showing that you were wrong is not a sign of weak leadership. In fact it strengthens your bond with people by showing you are one of them. Saying sorry is an act of humility. Humility attracts and inspires. Your arrogance does not.

Is humility a virtue that you value? In what ways are you growing more humble?

Learn to live with the Madiba paradox.

Life is a mix of hope and hopelessness, joy and pain, success and failure, vision and disillusionment. You as a leader have the task

of helping others to live successfully with these apparent contradictions. This is what Madiba has done. You must firmly believe and show by your actions that current difficulties have to be confronted no matter how painful they may be, while you sustain a belief that victory will definitely come. You can ride this paradox by honest inquiry and sharing fears and frustrations, on the one hand, while believing firmly in the unlimited human spirit and genius to find solutions.

How honestly do you confront brutal facts in your life and your organisation? How are you growing your capacity to stay hopeful in the midst of adversities?

Surprise your opponents by believing in them.

There will always be people who disagree with your leadership style and what you do. Do not seek to silence, humiliate or vanquish them. Try to understand their point of view and deliberately work at identifying the positive elements there.

You must make the effort to acknowledge, privately and publicly, what is praiseworthy in those who oppose you.

How well do you treat people who do not agree with you? What are you doing to try putting yourself in their shoes? Can you learn to pay back evil with good?

Celebrate life.

Activity and achievement of any kind are signs of life that affect

life in turn. We work in order to enhance our life. We seek to excel for the same reason, not just to look good. In this spirit, we should celebrate not only individual performance and giftedness but life itself. You as a leader must participate in practices and ceremonies that honour the life of the people you are privileged to serve.

What rituals and symbols do you use to honour life and people?

Know when and how to make yourself replaceable.

Great leaders know how to move themselves from centre stage. They know also when it is time to go. They prepare for it and make sure they have a successor who will build on what they have achieved. They enable other people to emerge as potential candidates. This is what sustains the leader's legacy while guaranteeing a smooth transition. It is not about cloning themselves; it is recognising that they cannot lead forever and that they must create the conditions for fresh leadership to emerge.

How are you preparing yourself and the people around you for your exit from leadership?

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