# LEADERSHIP

## LEAD BY GURUPRASAD S

**SUBMITTED BY**

**RIDHI SINGHANIA**

SMALL BUSINESS UNIT ALONG WITH ANKIT, APURVA, AND RISHIKA

# UNDERSTANDING **LEADERSHIP** -



The four weeks that we spent at NID studying leadership, I would like to look at it as a workshop that involved thirteen individuals who have been working and living together for the past year. Over this period, I explored leadership through various lenses, in different contexts, by using multiple tools.

My understanding of leadership was extremely leader-centric. Humans like to operate in their primitive state where they seek direction and order, as it makes life easy. This makes the leader also operate in their primitive state, by employing the age old method of Carrot or Stick (otherwise known as Reward or Punishment). Is that the right approach to leadership?

The carrot and stick method is now failing. With every incident, the intensity of the "carrots" or rewards and the "sticks" or punishments needs to be amplified to create the desire result. Not the most sustainable way to practice leadership if you ask me - the carrots eventually loose their sweetness as the stick blows increase.

A sustainable alternative to this could be to create a leadership environment that caters to an individual's inner drive - this can be done through fulfilment of purpose, gaining of mastery, or exercising of autonomy. This is something I understood way later during the module.

# UNDERSTANDING OF **SELF**

When we look at leadership from a people's perspective, leadership can be defined as a relationship. A relationship essentially exists between you and another entity - person/ thing/ situation. For this, it becomes crucial to know the first part, to have self-awareness. This is what makes leadership, which is otherwise seen as an external function, a very intrinsic one. Developing sensitivity to the origins of our fears, inhibitions, and blocks can help us facilitate better and more informed decision-making. This is crucial for practicing leadership - Leadership starts by knowing yourself.

The process of knowing self had various tools acting as plug-ins to make the entire big picture.
This included the social identity matrix, work view, world view, energy matrix, and balance matrix.
It also made me evaluate my traits, skills, and leadership within a team.

What made this exercise impactful in a true sense is how all these tools worked together to inform me about myself.

An overview of the inferences can be seen below.
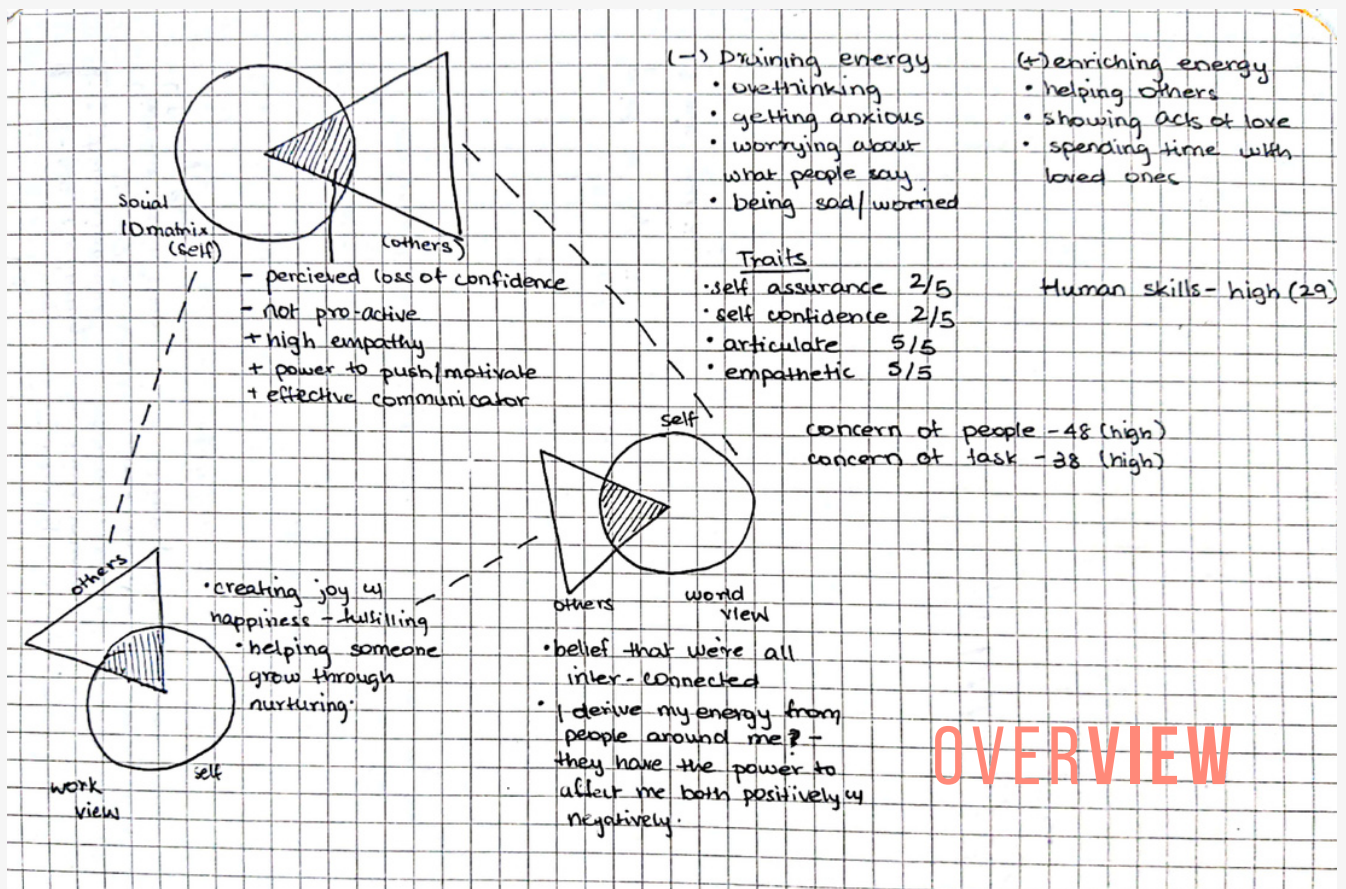
# WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF

## WHAT INSPIRES ME

- People's energy around me
- Mutual respect and care
- Clear goals and agendas
- Wicked real life problems
- Passion
- Food

## HOW I INFLUENCE

- By motivating
- By expressing my passion
- By making people feel seen and heard
- By instilling confidence
- By persuasion
- By making people feel like an important part of the project

## MY HINDRANCES

- Monotony of tasks
- Peer unresponsiveness
- Harsh Feedback
- Being too accommodating
- Tense circumstances
- Unresolved conflict
- People bad-mouthing me
- Overthinking

## MY ENHANCERS

- A good team-spirit
- Deep interest in the subject
- A good guide/mentor
- Conversations and Discussions
- Work-Play balance
- Being around friends

## I SEEK COLLABORATION BY

- Building a judgement-free atmosphere
- Being encouraging
- Scaffolding on other's ideas
- Spreading positive energy
- Making others feel like an integral part of the team
- Showing strong passion

## FEARS AND INHIBITORS

- Being lonely
- Judgement
- Hurting loved ones
- Letting others down
- Imposter Syndrome
- Not being good enough

Knowing all of this helped my identify various blocks that I otherwise couldn't see before . But what was truly pressing and needed attention were my **emotional** blocks as they affected me the most.

# PROBLEM STATEMENTS FOR SELF

1. How might I be more in control of the inner voice in my head to make it more positive?
2. How to not let what others think or say about me, affect my actions and thoughts?
3. How to gain better control over my emotions so that they don't overpower me?
4. How might I detach my self-worth from work and people?
5. How to reduce the need for and dependency on external validation, and the urge to be liked and remembered?

## INITIAL CHOSEN PROBLEM STATEMENT

How might I be more in control of my inner voice and make it more positive so that external components do not affect me negatively?

## BREAKING DOWN AND REPHRASING

**External components** - People, Situations, Opinions, Conflicts, etc
**Negatively** - Demotivation, not being proactive, loss of confidence, loss of self-worth, self-doubt, etc.

**How might I be more in control of my inner voice and make it more positive so that other people's opinions do not cause self-doubt in me?**

## IDEATION

1. Positive Affirmations
2. Put up a baby photo for kindness
3. Be around people who are your cheerleaders
4. Journal your thoughts and remind yourself about your achievements
5. Look at yourself from a 3rd person perspective - be more kind to self
6. Identify the rationale behind your inner voice
7. Create case studies - Document and reflect on real life incidents, past experience
8. Track habits and patterns
9. Meditation/dance every day - create a routine - feel more in control of yourself and your life.
10. Look at the mirror to bring yourself back to the reality

## SOLUTION

A worksheet that encompasses all the small steps that are needed for me to feel more in control of my own life and inner voice - tools that help me identify and correct my negative thought pattern, taking small steps and setting small goals, to see the effect in the bigger picture.

# SOLUTION - WORKSHEET

TELL RIDHI SOMETHING SO SHE HAS THE STRENGTH TO GET BY TODAY...

**MORNING ROUTINE**

☐ MAKE BED

☐ PRANAYAM

☐ BREAKFAST

☐ WORKOUT

TO-DO

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

THIS IS WHAT I DID FOR OTHERS TODAY

THIS IS WHAT I DID FOR MYSELF TODAY

THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE SAID ...

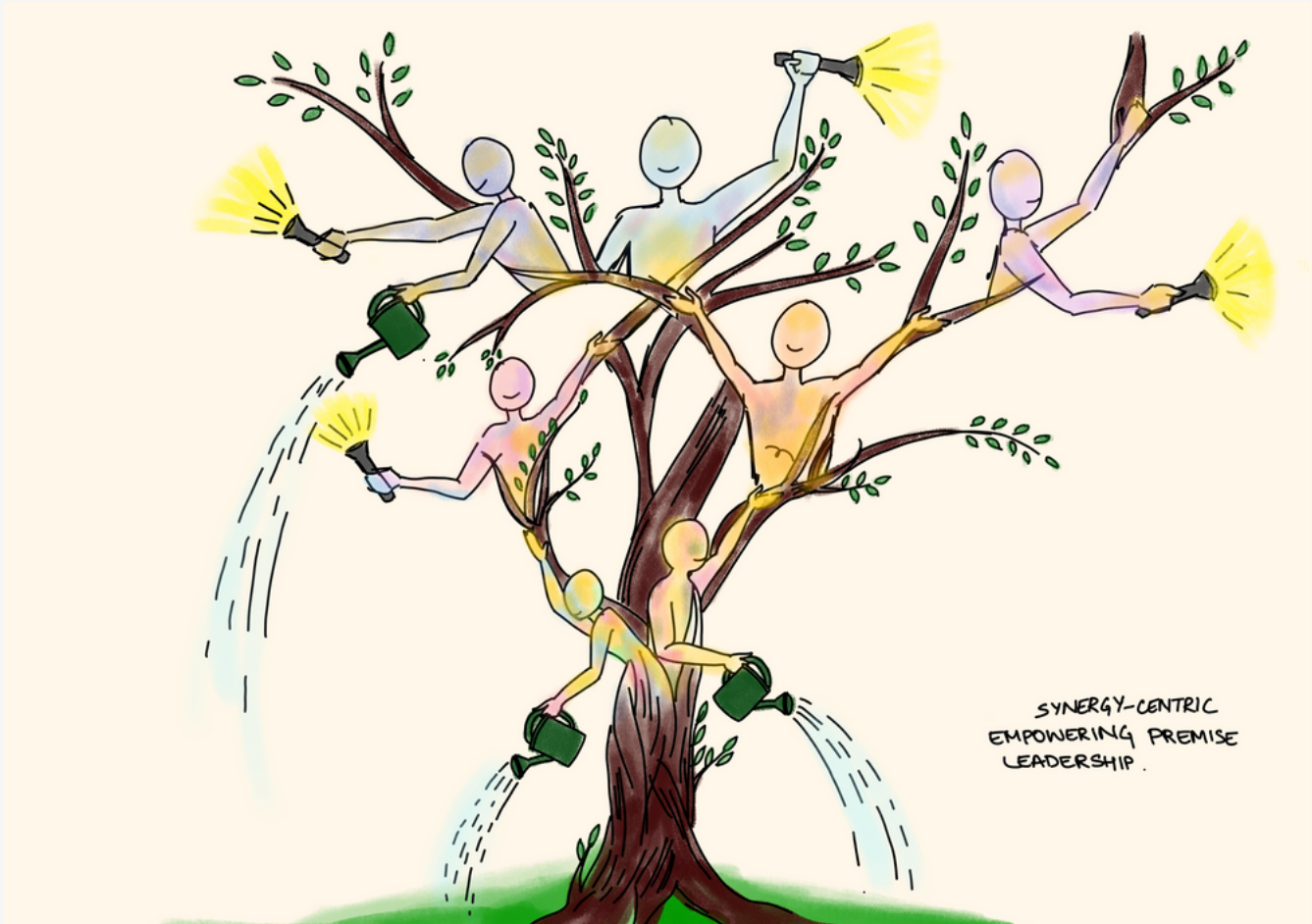THIS IS HOW IT AFFECTS ME...

TODAY WAS A GOOD DAY BECAUSE...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT - 3 STRIKES

✕ ✕ ✕

# SELF LEADERSHIP MODEL

**SYNERGY-CENTRIC EMPOWERING PREMISE LEADERSHIP**



SYNERGY-CENTRIC EMPOWERING PREMISE LEADERSHIP.

This style of leadership seeks to move management and personnel interaction away from controlling activities and toward a synergistic relationship. The authority figure attempts to promote innovation, empower employees, and assure the well-being of those around them. This style of leadership creates a premise such that everyone who is a part of the team is empowered to take up the role of the leader as and when there are contexts that are apt for them. Revolving around empathy, nurturing, transparency, and the ability to have each other's back, this leadership style focuses on the personal growth of everyone in the team, in turn making them want to commit to the collective growth of the organization.

- **VISIONARY INSPIRATION**
- **EMPATHY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**
- **COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING**
- **NURTURING POTENTIAL**
- **ENERGIZING COMMUNICATION**
- **AUTHENTICITY AND SELF-AWARENESS**

# TEAM LEADERSHIP MODEL

**ADAPTABLE-INFLUENCE LEADERSHIP**
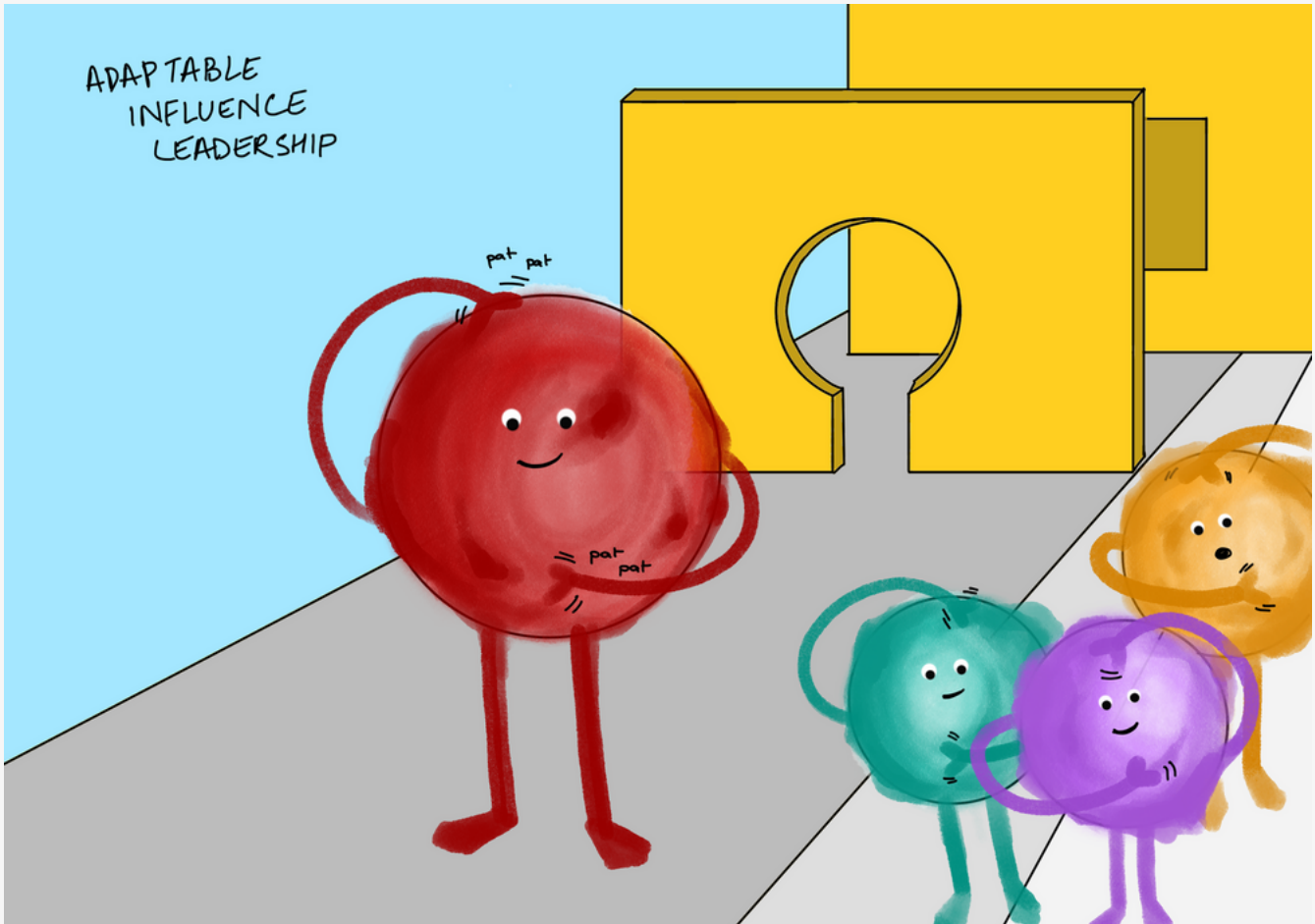


The Adaptable Influence leadership model is designed for individuals who possess qualities such as intelligence, knowledge, observation skills, confidence, sense-making abilities, proactiveness, and the drive to create an impact even in challenging situations. This model aims to enhance the leader's strengths while addressing potential pitfalls such as being strong-headed and dogmatic. It encourages adaptive thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and strategic decision-making.

- **SELF-AWARENESS**
- **ADAPTIVE THINKING**
- **STRATEGIC VISION**
- **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
- **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**
- **ETHICAL LEADERSHIP**
- **LEARNING ORIENTATION**

# LEADERSHIP THEORY

**ADAPTABLE SYMBIOTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY.**

Based on the concepts of adaptable influence leadership and heart-centric empowering leadership, we can derive a leadership theory that integrates both approaches. Let's call it the "Adaptable Symbiotic Leadership Theory." This theory emphasizes the importance of adaptability, influence, and heart-centered empowerment in effective leadership.

By integrating the principles of adaptable influence leadership and heart-centric empowering leadership, the Dynamic Empowerment Leadership Theory offers a holistic framework for leaders to effectively navigate complex organizational dynamics, foster collaboration, and empower their followers to achieve sustainable success.

Leaders should be able to adjust their approach and style based on the needs of the situation and the individuals they are leading.
Effective leaders understand the power of persuasion, negotiation, and effective communication in influencing others positively. They also recognize that influence should be used ethically and responsibly for the collective benefit.
Communicate openly, transparently, and frequently, ensuring everyone is informed and on the same page.
Encourage a participatory culture by involving team members in the decision-making process.
Demonstrate empathy by acknowledging and validating their emotions, fostering a safe and supportive environment.

- **INSPIRE AND INFLUENCE**
- **EMPATHY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**
- **COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING**
- **ADAPTABILITY**
- **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

# MY REFLECTIONS

### WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT DESIGN AND LEADERSHIP TOGETHER?

When we talk about leadership as a function, it is the ability to guide a person/group of people towards a particular goal. When we talk about design, it is a process that helps an entity to go from their current state to a desired one - design in its essence does exactly what leadership also does. This way, leadership and design go hand in hand.
Just as there is an understanding to who or what a designer is like, to understand leadership, it is important to understand -

### WHO IS AN IDEAL LEADER?

With time, the way people perceive and practice leadership has been continuously changing. It began with the idea that leaders are born, later moved to leadership because of dominance due to the accumulation of power, and then there was a time when certain traits were given importance while choosing leaders. There also came a time when leadership was based on skills and the ability to influence. Eventually, in the nineties, leadership was also considered a mindset or behaviour. Slowly the association of leadership with a leader is fading. Leadership is now being viewed as a function, a process, an environment, or a situation - expanding the idea of a leader beyond a human.

### WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOURSELF WHEN WE TALK OF LEADERSHIP?

When we look at leadership from a people's perspective, leadership can be defined as a relationship. A relationship essentially exists between you and another entity - person/ thing/ situation. For this, it becomes crucial to know the first part, to have self-awareness. This is what makes leadership, which is otherwise seen as an external function, a very intrinsic one.
Developing sensitivity to the origins of our fears, inhibitions, and blocks can help us facilitate better and more informed decision-making. This is crucial for practicing leadership - Leadership starts by knowing yourself.

### WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO KNOW YOURSELF?

If leadership's crucial element is knowing of self, then is it even difficult? You probably know yourself the best! But here is where there's also a catch-22 situation. When it comes to matters about self, we fail to be objective. We have a certain idea or a thought about ourselves and that is what we consider to be true. However, there is a huge gap between what we think we are (what we want to be) and who we really are.

# MY REFLECTIONS

This gap is an accumulated result of our entire life so far - every word of praise on an achievement to every bully's rudeness - people in your life influenced it.

This gives rise to another pertinent yet difficult task, opening your book of life and spreading all pages across open. We are a result of and are shaped by our life experiences. These experiences also shape the way we look at everything around us, including ourselves. It forms the base for our social identity - and depending on how it benefitted us or harmed us, we choose to retain or let go of that identity. It also greatly affects the way we look at the world and our philosophies associated with it, or our worldview. Along with that it also impacts how we perceive work, or anything that we do, or our work-view.

These are things that make up our core or our inner loci - this is what guides our thoughts and actions. It is what grounds us, and makes us "us".

Doing this isn't easy. As a researcher trying to know more about myself, I examined myself critically and validated it from those around me. This is where I also realised that tools do not work in silos. There were a few tools that I had used for exploration and a few for confirmation. The tools when structured and used well, inform each other.

This will help you see the difference between how you try to project yourself vs how people around you perceive you. However one mustn't blindly accept everything that is given to them as criticism. Like with every research, noise is bound to creep in (bias, misconception, projection of insecurities). This is why self-awareness is important.

Using this data from your research, along with your self-awareness will help you seek your way of leadership.

## IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT THOUGH?

People around you are only able to see your actions on a daily basis, and to a certain level comprehend your thoughts and perceive your energies. This is still only the external aspects that they are exposed to. However, upon sharing your inner loci with people around you, you put context to all those thoughts and actions. It helps one understand your POV and where you are coming from, keeping in mind how you operate.

In the bigger picture, this also helps any team function better. If there is a problem that one person in the team is facing, the entire team can work on it together and the result is multiple brains working on a solution together, keeping in mind how the person functions and what would work for them.

This is something that was observed in practice as well when the thirteen of us did this activity.
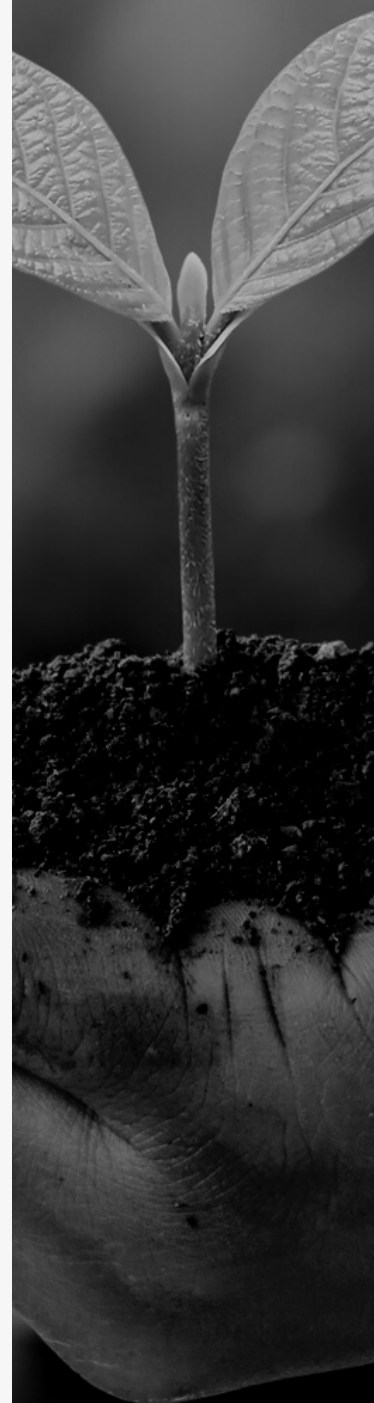
# MY REFLECTIONS

## BUT CAN LEADERSHIP BE DESIGNED AND FACILITATED FOR OTHERS?

If there is so much emphasis being laid on the importance of knowing of self for understanding leadership, can it even be facilitated for some other function apart from self? Well, yes. The research carried out on self was at the end of the day, a research project. By changing the entity to be studied, the process can be modified and adapted to study any other person, team, function, policy, process, or an organisation too.

The research process would still more or less remain the same - getting to know how the individuals in the space operate (the inner loci), their goals, and their existing relationship with each other. This would result in creation of a model that is perfectly tailored for them.

It is not as easy as it sounds - since leadership as a function is extremely intrinsic, the research tools need to be tailored perfectly to account of all the bias and insecurities that can be projected in various forms. The research subject might feel a gaze of scrutiny and critique, but that can be softened by the researcher's empathy and sensitivity.

Another big question that came into the picture while studying a small business from the leadership lens as a part of this module was -

## WHO IS THE VILLAIN? THE LEADER OR THE DOMAIN?

While studying a salon for this exercise, mid study the team came to a conclusion that it is the current leader who is at fault for the pitfalls of the salon - he is selfish and self-centred, cannot give up any control, and is constantly micro-managing. If he is replaced, all would be well. Or so we thought. Upon zooming out, we noticed that this was actually a pattern. Most salons functioned the same way, across the globe. As a skill based industry, there is immense competition and as an artist (hairdressing is an art!), one has to build their own base of loyal clients or patrons.

It was realised that often it is the domain that attracts a certain kind of leaders and leadership styles. The garment industry is known for the harshness of leaders, and the spa and salon industry is known for self-centred leaders. But should the leader be termed as toxic in this situation? If all the leaders predominantly function in that way, then it is the domain that is toxic and needs a leadership reformation.

## LEADERSHIP AND ME

Throughout my life, I looked at leadership in a very competitive light. It was always a fight for power that everyone wanted. Everyone wanted to be the leader - the one who leads and everyone else follows. This created an unhealthy relationship between leadership and me - I would be very hesitant about taking up leadership roles.

# MY REFLECTIONS

However, after a new perspective to the subject, I now think that there is a little more to it - Leaders also create leaders. They inspire and empower people to become leaders themselves, making the system a self-sufficient one. This is what helped me develop a new equation with leadership. Intelligence is a known factor that is essential for leadership, but something that often goes unnoticed, and can be a game-changer is emotional intelligence, empathy and sensitivity.

All my life, I have been a very people-centric person. I thrive when I am helping others. However these are the very people who also have a lot of control over me - I seek validation from them, their opinions have a huge effect on me, etc.

Hence, my leadership model also revolves around people. It is like a plant growing into a tree - the intention is to nurture and empower others to grow, to be able to create a premise where they feel empowered to take up the leadership function as and when the context is apt for them. To be able to come from a place of care and love for others and the desire for them to grow.

Growing up, I always thought I wasn't an effective leader because I couldn't lead my team continuously throughout all situations - only now I realise that as individuals, we all have our own competencies. As a leader, I am someone who creates a space of nurturing, care, and love that enables my team to rise up to the occasion.

## HOW DO I PRACTICE LEADERSHIP IN DAILY LIFE?

Leadership isn't something that is restricted and limited to a boardroom in an office - you and I are constantly either leading or being led. Even both simultaneously at times.

Someways in which I follow Leadership on a daily basis is by doing the following things -
- By building and sharing compelling narratives
- Practicing Empathy
- Directing attention and focus of myself and others where I need it
- Sharing alternate perspectives
- Reflecting on a daily basis
- Actively communicating to resolve conflicts
- Creating interest and excitement through effective dialogue
- Listening to understand and not respond
- Caring

Practicing leadership in your everyday life might sound like a daunting process if your understanding of leadership is superficial and fuzzy. However, it is very simple in actuality. To be a good leader and practice leadership, one must just practice being a good human. It is the smaller things that add up to the bigger leadership mindset - eventually making it the default state that one would function in.