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Challenges in Leading and Managing People in Institutions of Learning in Cameroon

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Abstract: Challenges in leading and managing people in educational institutions are worthwhile indicators that require constant checks and adjustments. These verifications are necessary because humans are complex beings and whose thinking faculties are not fixed and often guided by situational and environmental factors. Consequently, they must have divergent views which may pose unpredictable problems to administrators. Only very smart and ardent leaders maybe quick to detect, withstand and overcome such inevitables. The need for such challenges to be identified and controlled before they galvanize subordinates into negative behavioral tendencies cannot be under-estimated. This paper therefore examined possible challenges which may manifest as impediments or hindrances to the effective leading and managing of people in educational institutions in Cameroon. A number of challenges were examined and discussed in the paper. Suggestions for ways of checking and controlling the challenges have been made to serve as a reservoir of checks and guides for school administrators and leaders. The paper cautions school managers to be tactful and apply modern charismatic approaches in the control, directing of staff and managing of their institutions.

Keywords: Educational Leader; Challenges; Management; Administrator; Educational Institutions.

1. Introduction

Educational leadership involves working with and guiding teachers toward improving educational processes in elementary, secondary and postsecondary institutions, going above and beyond just management and administrative tasks. They are trained to advance and improve educational systems and create and enact policies. An administrator is one who directs the activities of other persons and undertakes the responsibility for achieving certain objectives through these efforts while leadership refers to people who bend the motivations and actions of others to achieving certain goal; it implies taking initiatives (Fonkeng and Tamajong, 2009).

Being a leader is in itself a challenge. The challenges of leadership are really of three kinds: external, coming from people and situations; internal, stemming from within the leader himself; and those arising from the nature of the leadership role. Blame is a remarkably popular but ineffective strategy for change. School systems blame colleges, who, in turn, blame school systems. In Cameroon, administrators blame teachers, who, in turn, blame administrators for impossible workloads and inadequate working conditions. High schools blame secondary schools, who in turn blame primary schools for the challenges faced and the blame continues.

If we aspire to seize the opportunities 21st century learning presents, then we must first make the shift from blame to assuming responsibility. When our students confront difficulty and failure, we expect them to respect our feedback, change their learning strategies, and try again. That is the essence of the resilience, self-discipline, and work ethics that are essential for successful students in every century. Therefore, education professionals must embrace feedback, seize personal responsibility, and model the changes required to close the gaps of the challenges they face as far as leading or managing people in these institutions are concerned. This paper therefore seeks to examine some challenges in leading and managing people in educational institutions of learning.

There is a great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the twenty first century. This is because of the wide spread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes (Bush and Heystek, 2003). As such a key to understanding the processes within educational institutions and organizations is to view a choice opportunity as a garbage can into which various problems and solutions are dumped by participants. This mix of garbage in a single can depends partly on the labels attached to the alternative cans and on what garbage is being produced at the moment, on the mix of cans available, and on the speed with which garbage is collected and removed from the scene (Bush and Heystek, 2003). Therefore, whenever two or more people with common objectives coverage to engage in activities of some sort towards achieving that common objective, leadership is required to receive information, transform them to decisions and implement them in the institutions concerned. Consequently, leadership can be described as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effective and success of an organization or group of which they are members. Simply, it is the ability to influence individuals to work towards attaining organizational objectives

(Mescon *et al.*, 1988). Several leadership styles and related theories exist and some of which are instructional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership, constructivist leadership, servant leadership, cultural leadership, and primal leadership (Goleman *et al.*, 2002). This piece of work dwells on theories related to very specific styles which qualify as leadership theories. Four main generations of theory in classical leadership proposed by Doyle and Smith (2001) are used.

Trait Theory of Leadership is based on the assumption that people are born with inherited traits and some traits are particularly suited to leadership. People who make effective leaders have the right (or sufficient) combinations of traits and great leaders have some common personality characteristics. It identifies traits and dispositions that are helpful when leading others. This theory as described by Kelly (1974) attempts to classify what personal characteristics such as physical, personality and mental, are associated with leadership success. Trait theory relies on research that relates various traits to the success of a leader. Education leaders can utilize the information from the theory to evaluate their position in the institutions and to assess how their position can be made stronger. It serves as a yardstick against which the leadership traits of an individual can be assessed and individuals can get an in-depth understanding of their identity and the way they will affect others in the educational institutions or organization.

Behavioural theory is another leadership theory which promotes the value of leadership styles with an emphasis on concern for people and collaboration. It promotes participative decision making and team development by supporting individual needs and aligning individual and group objectives. Behavioural Theories of Leadership, also known as “The style approach to leadership” focuses on the behaviour of the leader and what leaders do and how they act. Learn about the two general kinds of behaviour; task behavior and relationship behavior and advantages of this approach to leadership. Behaviour is the range of actions and mannerisms made by organisms, systems, or artificial entities in conjunction with their environment, which includes the other systems or organisms around as well as the physical environment (Yusuf, 2008). It considers the observable actions and reactions of leaders and followers in a given situation and focuses on how leaders behave. It also assumes that leaders can be made, rather than born and successful leadership is based on definable and learnable behavior. This theory is based on the principle that behavior can be conditioned in a manner that one can have a specific response to specific stimuli. Rather than seeking inborn traits, this theory looks at what leaders actually do by studying their behavior in response to different situations, assessing leadership success by studying their actions and then correlating significant behavior with success. The practical application of the theory is that the leader’s behavior affects their performance and different leadership behavior could be appropriate at different times. The best leaders are those who have the adaptability to flex their behavioural style, and choose the right style suitable for each situation. It helps educational leaders to evaluate and understand how their behavioural style as a leader affects their relationship with the team and promotes commitment and contribution toward organizational goals.

Transformational leadership theory is premised on the assumption that the actions of leaders are based on moral, ethical and equitable consideration of everyone within an organization (Fonkeng and Tamajong, 2009; Mgbodile, 2004). Transformational leadership motivates followers as it defines and articulates a vision for the institution. Transformational leaders are charismatic, motivational, intellectual, and considerate and often display the qualities of self-confidence, vision, inspiration, trust, care, passion, commitment, honesty, and integrity (Bass and Steidelmeier, 1998; Dixon, 1998). This theory of leadership is perceived as a link between the old and new views of leadership (Rost, 1991). Transformational leaders are able to probe the current state of affairs, take a new approach to problem-solving and decision-making, encourage the advancement of ideas and philosophies that differ from the norm, and place emphasis on professional development. Transformational leaders inspire followers to be a source of inspiration to each other to enable them attain advanced stages of “morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978), including justice and equality. While transformational leaders determine new methods of solving problems refute bad practices that are not acceptable; they are also convince to follow the new approach.

2. Statement of the Problem

The complex nature of human beings poses unpredictable problems to leaders and managers of institutions of learning and other government and non-government parastatals in Cameroon. School managers have been attempting to resolve these complexities but the task has not been easy. Chocked with the challenges, the writer thought it worthwhile to identify the remote and immediate elements that militate against effective leadership and management of people in working environment in Cameroon. These issues examined are from the internal and external perspectives. The worries subjected the researcher to finding answers to the following questions: What are the possible challenges that militate against effective leading and managing of workers in institutions of learning in Cameroon? What possible strategies can be used to help administrators rid their institutions of negative challenges?

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

The main objective of this study was to examine the challenges in Leading and Managing People in Institutions of Learning in Cameroon.

Specifically, this study was out to;

1. Examine the internal and external challenges in leading and managing people in educational institutions.
2. Explore some challenges stemming from the nature of the leadership role

3. Propose coping strategies for the challenges in educational institutions of learning in Cameroon.

4. Major Challenges Faced By Leaders in Leading and Managing People in Institutions of Learning in Cameroon

4.1. External Challenges

It's almost impossible to imagine a situation where a leader doesn't have to cope with external challenges. In an educational institution, such issues as lack of funding and other resources, opposition from the colleagues, and interpersonal problems within the institution often raise their heads. Social, economic, and political forces in the larger world can affect the institution as well. To some extent, the measure of any leader is how well he can deal with the constant succession of crisis and minor annoyances that threaten the mission of his group. If he is able to solve problems, take advantage of opportunities, and resolve conflict with an air of calm and a minimum of fuss, most of the external issues are hardly noticeable to anyone else.

The world surprises us at every turn, throwing up barriers where the way seems clear, and revealing broad highways where there seemed to be only brick walls. Both kinds of surprises - sometimes the positive more than the negative - present opportunities for exercising leadership, with all the challenges they entail.

Again political upheavals and social unrest that plague the educational sector is a major challenge to the educational leaders. They are in such situations expected to manifest or put to practice their highest tactical and managerial skills in leading people in such perilous moments. This is exactly the case facing the educational administrators of the Anglophone education sub system of education in Cameroon today.

4.2. Internal Challenges

Leadership presents to each of us the opportunity to demonstrate the best of what we are as well as it also exposes our limitations. In many cases, good leaders have to overcome those limitations in order to transmit and follow their vision. Fear, lack of confidence, insecurity, impatience and intolerance can act as barriers to leadership. At the same time, acknowledging and overcoming them can turn a mediocre leader into a great one. It's often very difficult for people, especially those who see themselves as leaders, to admit that they might have personality traits or personal characteristics that interfere with their ability to reach their goals. Part of good leadership is learning to accept the reality of those traits, and working to change them so they don't get in the way.

Sometimes, what seems to be an advantage may present a challenge as well. A leader who's extremely decisive may alienate followers by never consulting them, or by consistently ignoring their advice. A leader who's terrific at developing relationships with others in educational institutions may be unable to tell someone when she's not doing her job. Some characteristics can be double-edged swords, positive in some circumstances and negative in others. The real challenge is in knowing the difference, and adapting your behavior accordingly.

Leaders are human. That's hardly news, but it means that they come with all the same problems and failings as everyone else. One of the greatest challenges of leadership is facing your own personal issues, and making sure they don't prevent you from exercising leadership. Acknowledging the attitudes and tendencies that get in your way, and working to overcome them, is absolutely necessary if you're to become an effective leader. Among the most common personal traits that good leaders have to overcome or keep in check are:

- **Insecurity:** Many people feel, at least some of the time, that they're not up to the tasks they face. They may even believe that they're fooling people with their air of competence, when they know they're really not very capable at all. Insecurity of that sort keeps them from being proactive, from following their vision, from feeling like leaders. It can be crippling to both a leader and her group or organization.
- **Defensiveness:** Also born of insecurity, defensiveness shows up most often as an inability to take criticism (other people might catch on to the fact that you're as incompetent as you know you are), and continuing hostility to anyone, even an ally, who voices it. Defensiveness often also includes a stubborn resistance to change ideas, plans, or assumptions, even if they've been shown to be ineffective.
- **Lack of decisiveness:** Sometimes it's hard to make a decision. You never know till later and sometimes not even then whether you made the right decision. Maybe if you had a few more facts. The reality is that leaders are called on to make decisions all the time, often with very little time to consider them. It is important to have as much information as possible, but at some point, you just have to make the decision and live with it. Some decisions are reversible, and some are not, but in either case, it's important to learn to make a decision when necessary and understand that living with the consequences is part of being a leader.
- **Inability to be direct when there's a problem:** Many people want so desperately to be liked, or are so afraid of hurting others, that they find it difficult to say anything negative. They may be reluctant to tell someone he's not doing his job adequately, for instance, or to address an interpersonal problem. Unfortunately, by letting these things go, they only make them worse, which makes them still harder to address. It's essential to learn when firmness is necessary, and to learn how to exercise it.
- **Inability to be objective:** Neither looking at situations through rose-colored glasses nor being always on the edge of hysteria is conducive to effective leadership. Just as objectivity is important in dealing with external issues, it's important to monitor your own objectivity in general. There's a difference between being an optimistic individual and being unable to see disaster looming because it's too painful to contemplate. By the same token, seeing the possible negatives in an apparently positive situation are not the same as being

paralyzed by the assumption that calamity lurks around every corner. The inability to accurately identify the positive and negative in any situation and react appropriately can create serious problems.

- **Impatience:** with others and with situations. It may seem, given the importance of decisiveness and firmness, that patience is not a virtue a leader needs. In fact, it is perhaps the most important trait to develop. Situations do not resolve themselves instantly, and anyone who's ever been involved in an organization knows that Rule number 1 is that everything takes longer than you think it will. People in unfamiliar situations need a while to orient themselves. Leaders who are impatient may make rash decisions, may alienate staff members or volunteers or allies, and can often make situations worse rather than better. It's hard to be patient, but it's worth the effort.

4.3. Challenges Arising From Leadership Itself

Real leadership makes great demands on people. As a leader, you are responsible for your group's or institution's vision and mission, for upholding a standard, often for being the group's representative to the rest of the world and its protector as well. These responsibilities might be shared, but in most organizations, one person takes the largest part of the burden.

In addition to its responsibilities, leadership brings such challenges as motivating people - often without seeming to do so - and keeping them from stagnating when they're doing well. Leaders also have to motivate themselves, and not just to seem, but actually to be, enthusiastic about what they're doing. They have to be aware of serving their group and its members and all that entails. In other words, they have to be leaders all the time.

The Assessment Gap: A major challenge of leading and managing people in educational institutions is the assessment gap. Reasonable people differ about the details of 21st century skills, but the common themes that emerge include communication, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. Although educators' leaders will never advocate lower standards for communication or diminishing teamwork, there is an enormous gap between rhetoric and reality. Effective communication includes both written and oral skills and the use of technology to convey ideas, evidence, images, and emotions. Despite the evidence on the importance of communication, the use of evidence-based practices to assess communication skills is remarkably low (Kihara *et al.*, 2009).

Moreover, despite the clarion calls for teamwork and collaboration, no state test—the barometer by which many teachers, administrators, and education systems are measured—assess students in a team or collaborative environment. Our words may say "teamwork," but our assessments scream, "Compete, don't cooperate, with your classmates."

Finally, although policymakers talk a good game about 21st century skills such as problem solving and creativity, assessments of student performance (and, by implication, teaching and leadership performance) remain overwhelmingly focused on content knowledge and basic literacy skills. Academic content and skills are necessary but in insufficient condition to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The Teaching Gap: Marzano (2009) recently issued a scathing indictment of schools claiming to use "Marzano strategies" that he neither supports nor endorses. In previous decades, one could substitute "Marzano" with "Hunter," "Dewey," or "Socrates" to see the pattern of thoughtful ingenuity followed by over simplification; mass production; and, often, disappointment. The cottage industry that claims to use "Marzano strategies" without being informed by Marzano's actual research is as superficial as the claim that "Socratic dialogue" is little more than asking questions to students.

Socrates did indeed ask questions, but these queries were sufficiently challenging that the result was a state-administered dose of hemlock for his efforts. Consider the contrast between Socrates' challenging pedagogical stance and the contemporary education ethics in which the student is the customer, demanding immediate gratification. Teachers fear delivering honest and challenging feedback, and with each stroke of candor, teachers and school leaders risk negative evaluations that, through social networking tools, become an instantaneous combination of indictment and presumed truth—the hemlock of the 21st century (Douglas, 2017).

Although the conventional wisdom is that teacher tenure is the root of all education evil, the other extreme is equally pernicious. In a world where "customer satisfaction" is the coin of the realm, the teachers who are most highly rewarded will not be those who tell the truth about student performance, but rather those who tell the customers what they want to hear. "Your 9th grader can't read? No problem—it's a societal issue, and we'll deliver a diploma without the inconvenience of work, remediation, or confrontation" (Douglas, 2017).

The Leadership Gap: No teacher wakes up in the morning thinking, "How can I mess up students today?" Inadequate teaching practices, inconsistent curriculum; infrequent feedback; toxic grading systems; and resistance to 21st century skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and communication are a direct result of leadership failures. Leaders who bring in an inspirational speaker to talk about 21st century skills but who evaluates teachers with centuries-old assessments should not point the finger at unions, teachers, or colleges of education. This is a failure of leadership, not a failure of teachers.

If we aspire to have improved teaching and learning, then we must demand 21st century leaders. Specifically, if we require critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and creativity, then leaders must assess now-today, this very hour - the instances in which you can observe these characteristics in classrooms.

5. How to Cope with External Challenges

Be proactive: Regardless of the situation, it's important for leaders to do something. Waiting is occasionally the right strategy, but even when it is, it makes a group nervous to see its leader apparently not exercising some control.

At the beginning of his first term, in the depths of the Depression, Franklin Roosevelt created government agencies and programs, took steps to control the economy, and generally looked like he was in charge. Not everything he tried worked, but the overall - and accurate - impression people got was that he was trying to control an awful situation, and they took comfort from that (Burns, 1995). Throughout his long presidency, Roosevelt continued to be proactive, and history has largely proven the wisdom and effectiveness of his strategy (Gardner, 1993). These are examples that leaders of educational institutions should adopt when challenges crop up.

Be creative: Try to think "outside the box," that is in unexpected but effective ways. If disaster has struck, how can you turn what looks like the end of the world into a new beginning? Can you change the way the institution operates to deal with the loss? Can you use the fact that you're about to lose services to gain community and political support? Is this an opportunity to diversify your funding? Can you expand your horizons and your reach through collaboration? Don't just look at the obvious, but consider a situation from all perspectives, and search for unusual ways to make things work. In such situations always adopt the Chinese adage which says the Chinese character for "crisis" combines the characters for "danger" and "opportunity" (Greenleaf, 1983).

Face conflict squarely: Always identify and acknowledge the conflict, and work to resolve it. This is true both for conflict within your institution, and conflict between the group and others outside it. Far too many people, leaders included, act as if conflict doesn't exist, because they find it difficult or frightening to deal with. As a result, it only grows worse, and by the time it erupts, it may be nearly impossible to resolve. If it's faced early, nearly any conflict can be resolved in a way that is beneficial for everyone involved. It's a function of leadership to have the courage to name the conflict and work on it. Such is an example of the present Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. If there's a philosophical difference among the staff of an organization, for instance, it's important that it be acknowledged and discussed. If that's done in a matter of fact way, without any finger-pointing or accusations about lack of political correctness or philosophical purity - before it gets to the point where people are angry with one another - it can lead to an exchange of ideas instead of insults and rancor. The mix of ideas in the institution can become richer, everyone can feel that his point of view is taken seriously, and the whole staff can benefit.

Always look for common ground: If there's opposition to what you're doing, it may only be to one specific part of it, or may be based on misunderstanding. There are few groups or individuals who don't have some common interests. If you can find those, you may have a basis for solving problems and making it possible for people to work together.

Retain your objectivity: It is not uncommon to find people in educational institutions in conflict with one another. If you're mediating a conflict within the institution, don't take side, even if you think you know one side is right. That will come out if you mediate objectively and well. If you're faced with detractors or opposition, don't automatically assume they're villains. What are their concerns, and why do they disagree with what you're doing? Don't get sucked into a fight unless there's really no alternative. Even rabid opposition can often be overcome through a combination of respect, political pressure, and creative problem solving.

When you do feel you have to fight, pick your battles carefully. Make sure you have the resources - money, political and other allies, and volunteer help, whatever you need - to sustain conflict. Battles can advance your cause, or they can kill your initiative once and for all. Don't get into a fight you have no chance to win.

Look for opportunities to collaborate: This is important both within and outside your institutions. Within the group, involve as many people as possible in decisions, and make sure they have control over what they do. The more they own their jobs and the institution, the more enthusiastic they'll be and the more effective the institutions will be, and the more effective you'll be as a leader.

Outside the institution, try to forge ties with other institutions and groups. Let them know what you're doing, get and give support, and work with them to the extent you can. Make common cause with other groups that have similar interests. In numbers, there is strength, and you'll be stronger as an alliance of groups than any one of you could be individually.

6. Coping with Internal Challenges

Listen: Listen to people's responses to your ideas, plans, and opinions. Listen more than you talk. Listen to a broad range of people, not just to those who agree with you. Probe to find out why they think or feel the way they do. Assume that everyone has something important to say. If you hear the same things from a number of different and diverse sources, you should at least consider the possibility that they're accurate. If they're about things you do that you can change, you might give it a try.

Ask for 360-degree feedback...and use it: This is feedback (people's views of you) from everyone around you - staff, volunteers, Board, participants, people from other organizations or groups you work with - anyone you work with in any way. As with listening, if you hear the same thing from a lot of different sources, it's probably true. Act on it. All the feedback in the world won't do you any good unless you do something with it.

Look at what's going on around you: Are you the center of controversy and chaos? Or do calm and good feeling seem to reside wherever you go? The chances are that the answer lies somewhere in between these extremes, but it probably should be closer to the calm and good feeling side. Even if you're involved in a battle with the forces of

evil, you can foster calm in yourself and those you work with. At the same time, your institution could be on top of the world, and you and your colleagues could still be climbing the walls if that's the kind of atmosphere you create. Our institutions have been joyless places and teachers and students do not appear to be intensely involved in their work. . Another question to ask is whether the people you work with are happy and enthusiastic. If you're meeting their needs, the chances are they will be. If you're insensitive and impatient, if you play favorites, if you're disengaged from them and from the cause, or if you're downright nasty, they'll probably wish they were somewhere else. Taking a look around will tell you a lot about what - and how - you're doing as a leader.

Reach out for help in facing internal challenges: Most of us find it difficult to change entirely on our own. A psychotherapist, a good friend, a perceptive colleague, or a trusted clergyman might be able to help you gain perspective on issues that you find hard to face. Many people find meditation or some form of self-discovery helpful in understanding themselves and in getting through change. Don't feel you have to do it all on your own. The difficulty here is that, if you're defensive, you're likely to be defensive about being defensive. If you're insecure, you may well be insecure about finding help - there's always the chance that you'll find out that your insecurity is well-founded. One of the greatest challenges of leadership is shouldering the responsibility it confers. Part of that responsibility is the responsibility to deal with those aspects of yourself that can keep you from being an effective leader. That's not easy, but the rewards are great.

7. Coping with Challenges Stemming From the Nature of the Leadership Role

A leadership position brings with it unique demands. Leaders can be looked on as authority figures, as saviors, as fixers of things that are broken, as spiritual guides, as mentors, as models, as inspirers, as teachers. In short, they may be seen however others choose to see them. This in itself carries a set of challenges, in addition to those posed by what all leaders indeed have to do in order to keep things going. Some of the issues that leaders have to cope with specifically because they're leaders are:

Keeping an eye on, and communicating, the vision: As the guardian of a group's vision, it's up to the leader to remind everyone of what that vision is, to keep it in mind in everything the group or organization does, to protect it from funders or others who would try to change it...and to make sure it does change, if necessary, with changes in circumstances, the needs of the target population, or the available information. That means not being distracted from the bigger picture by day-to-day issues (even as those issues are addressed and resolved). It also means not substituting another, lesser goal (getting enough funding to start a specific program, for instance) that may be contrary to the true vision of the organization.

Keeping the everyday under control while you continue to pursue the vision: You can't maintain the vision without making sure that there's paper in the printer, that you understand the legal implications of an action you plan to take, that people know what they're supposed to be doing on a given day, that there's enough cash in the bank to meet payroll, and that there's someone there to answer the phone, to pay the bills, and to look for funding. These aren't necessarily all things a leader has to do herself (although there are certainly organizations where that's what happens), but she's responsible for making sure they get done, and that things run smoothly. No matter how transformative she is, no leader can accomplish much if the infrastructure doesn't work.

Setting an example: If you want others in the group to show mutual respect, to work hard, to embrace the vision and mission of the organization, to include everyone in their thinking and decisions, you have to start by doing those things yourself, and behaving in the ways you want others to behave. A leader who yells at people, consults no one, and assumes his word is law will intentionally or unintentionally train everyone else in the group to be the same way. A leader who acts collaboratively and inclusively will create an organization that functions similarly.

Maintaining effectiveness over time: One of the hardest lessons of leadership is that you're never done. No matter how well things go, no matter how successful your group or organization or initiative is - unless it's aimed at accomplishing a very specific, time-limited goal - you have to keep at it forever. Even if you get a bill passed or manage to get money for your cause included in the state budget, you have to work to maintain your gains. If you're running a community intervention, you have to recruit participants, refine your methods, do community outreach, and raise funds indefinitely. Maintaining effectiveness is a matter both of monitoring what you do and working to improve it, and of keeping up enthusiasm for the work within the group. It's part of the leader's role to maintain his enthusiasm and drive, and to communicate and transfer them to others.

Avoiding burnout: This is a challenge not only for leaders, because a burned out leader can affect the workings of a whole organization. Leader burnout is a product of being overwhelmed by the workload, the frustrations, the stress, and the time demands of the position, multiplied by the number of years spent in it. It can reach a point where the leader no longer cares about the vision, the work of the group, or anything but when he can go home. By that point, the rest of the group is likely to be struggling, feeling rudderless and uncertain. It's crucial that leaders learn to recognize the signs of burnout and - depending on where they are in their lives and a number of other factors - either find ways to renew their commitment or leave.

Finding support: Clichés often become clichés because they're true. It is lonely at the top, largely because a good leader tries to make things go smoothly enough that others aren't aware of the amount of work she's doing. The leader may have no one to share her concerns with, and may have to find her own satisfaction, because others don't recognize the amount and nature of her contribution. The buck may stop with her, but where then does she unburden herself? As mentioned earlier, leaders are human. They need support and comfort as much as anyone else and it's important that they find it.

8. Conclusion

Leadership poses a host of challenges. They come in three categories: external (from people and situations); internal (from within the leader herself); and stemming from the circumstance of being a leader. They often arise in periods of instability or change, such as when a program or period of work is beginning or ending, or when a group or organization is in transition. Some are concrete and limited - dealing with a particular situation, for instance - but many are more abstract and ongoing, such as keeping your group focused on its vision over the long term. Any individual who successfully manages the different situations occurring at these levels is a leader who can surmount challenges to lead and manage people in the educational milieu. School managers and leaders should therefore be tactful and apply modern charismatic approaches in the control, directing of staff and managing of their institutions.

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