Great Leaders Teach

Great leaders should leave their legacies for others to follow—build upon and grow. The bigger organisational goals and their own personal roles.

Sixty-two years ago, Jack Welch took over at General Electric (GE), replacing Frank B. Kelly. Welch was 40 years old. He had been with GE since 1969 and had worked his way up the ranks. Welch had a clear vision for GE’s future, and he was determined to make it happen. He knew that the key to success was teaching. He believed that every leader should have a teachable point of view. It is the leader’s responsibility to create a virtuous cycle of learning and mastering the skill of teaching. By their role modelling, he too aspires to become a great leader.

According to Tichy, “...teaching is not the only reason. Everyone wants a part of the CEO’s time and they listen for ideas, doubts and challenges. It helps them to learn from others as much as the participants get from their instructor. One of the reasons Welch and Enrico taught so much was because they learnt much more about their organisation than they did by going through the pain of doing business reviews.”

The Cycle of Teaching Leadership

Leadership is not a personal role. It is a collective effort. It requires significant reflection, i.e. to look back into your life and personal experiences. You need to connect the dots from your past and have clarity on your story. It is impossible to plan the story, you will start having clarity on your story when you start telling your story.

Tichy points out that great leaders are great teachers. The leader needs to create a virtuous cycle where the leader and the students learn from each other. One great leader’s story can be a teachable point of view and they may later be ideas, doubts and challenges to those teachable points of view. This helps them to learn from others as much as the participants get from their instructor. One of the reasons Welch and Enrico taught so much was because they learnt much more about their organisation than they did by going through the pain of doing business reviews.

Great leaders teach and leave their legacies for others to follow—build upon and grow. The bigger organisational goals and their own personal roles.

FINALE

Thousands of years ago, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle taught. It became contagious with each leader building upon what they learnt from their predecessor. They bequeathed the foundations of the organisation we now embrace. The same dynamics work in organisations.

Great leaders teach and leave their legacies for others to follow. The moment the teaching stops, the learning stops. The organisation stagnates and dies. Leadership and growth is about continual teaching and learning. As Al Hay was Teacher’s Day.

The Teachable Point of View

According to Tichy, “...great leaders are great teachers. The teachable point of view is an asset to the leader. It requires significant reflection, i.e. to look back into our life and personal experiences. You need to connect the dots from your past and have clarity on your story. It is impossible to plan the story, you will start having clarity on your story when you start telling your story.”

The teachable point of view is a teachable point of view that they think of creative ways to find teaching and learning opportunities. They try to have every interaction with their peers and subordinates become a teachable moment and open up time to back leadership open. As a result of this, he has been inspired by both his parents who loved teaching and learning and mastering the skill of teaching. To them, teaching is not the only reason.

Everyone aspires to be a great teacher and look forward to learning and mastering the skill of teaching. To read more about Leaderonomics and its teaching programmes, email training@leaderonomics.com.

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