

calm minds and emotions need to prevail and ramifications of actions and non-actions need to be taken into account. Both sides of the conflict must think through the issues and get the feelings and emotions in a secondary position rather than foremost in the decision making process. This is not to say emotions aren't an important factor, but they should not be the driving factor in the decision making process of change in leadership.

Theory S Leadership

I propose still another Leadership theory: Theory S. The S stands for Shepherd. As I have studied leadership over the years, I've looked for the ideal model to embody the finest in leadership principles. The shepherd seems to best exemplify that ideal model. I envision two subdivisions to my shepherd model. SW leadership represents a Western culture shepherd. SE leadership represents an Eastern culture shepherd.

Fostering a Relationship: The Eastern Shepherd

Recently, my wife and I had the opportunity to visit Israel, where modern-day culture rubs elbows with ancient ways and traditions. While visiting a tell in Samaria, we saw a shepherd tending his flock much as shepherds have done for hundreds of years. There was a sense of tranquility in the scene before us. Even more, it seemed that the shepherd and his flock were comfortable together and that the sheep completely trusted the shepherd. What was striking was the evident caring and pride the shepherd had for his sheep. Some of the ladies and gentlemen in our group made comments about a cute young lamb

in the flock. The joy and pride on the shepherd's face when he heard these comments showed how he sincerely cared for his sheep. What a lesson this was to me about how we should all care for those we lead. If we could capture the same desire in our leadership to care for those we lead as the shepherd cared for his sheep, there would most certainly be a reciprocal caring of those being led to the leader and the organization he/she leads.

While doing a bit more detailed study on the Eastern culture shepherd, we also learned that in the Eastern culture a shepherd creates a summer sheepfold each evening and leads his flock into its protection for the night. As the sheep pass individually through a small opening, the shepherd puts his staff or rod across the opening. He does this to check each animal for injuries and overall stamina since they have been in open pasture all day. After seeing to their needs, applying medicinal ointments if necessary, and determining that they are safe, he then lies down across the small opening—effectively presenting himself as a barrier to any predators or thieves that might try to enter the sheepfold.

Once again the Eastern culture shepherd has given us a Leadership model we could follow with the ones we strive to lead. Wouldn't it be wonderful if leaders could have only a portion of the caring of the shepherd? According to this model, a leader would periodically check those he/she leads for issues or problems they may be facing. Not necessarily in their personal lives (although this author thinks that could at times be appropriate also), but in their professional lives and their attempts to make the organization they work for successful. If the leader would systematically and intentionally make deposits into the lives of those being led, times of trouble and conflict would most assuredly have less of an impact impeding the success of all stakeholders involved.

Driving the Flock: The Western Shepherd

Shepherds of the Western culture tend their flocks very differently from what we observed in Israel. The Western shepherd “drives” the flock, generally using a dog to nip at the sheep and herd them where the shepherd wants them to go. The shepherd/sheep relationship is different, too. When the shepherd yells at the sheep, they move—not because they want to, but because they fear their shepherd. There is no long-term relationship between the sheep and shepherd. In fact, it’s a one-way relationship, all for the benefit of the shepherd. In Western culture, sheep are a commodity and are essentially raised for wool and meat. That’s a win-lose situation—the shepherd wins and the sheep ultimately lose.

Theory SW Leadership

How does all this relate to leadership? Let’s look at the owner of a restaurant. The food is good and the place is always busy. The owner and his family are well known in the community and thought to be one of the wealthiest families in the county, maybe even in the state. So why am I choosing this organization as an example of Theory SW Leadership?

The reason is the way he treats his employees. The community is full of disgruntled past employees. You see, this leader believes the workers are there only to serve his needs. If they fail to do that or if they make any kind of mistake, they are out! This restaurant owner leads by intimidation; the “dogs” that nip at the heels of his employees are his managers, usually other family members who share in the profits of the business. Further, this leader pays minimum wage, using the most downtrodden to his

benefit, and then callously discards them. His philosophy is that there is always someone in need of a job, so he gets what he can from his workers, then replaces them when they no longer meet his needs.

This “shepherd” doesn’t care to know his sheep and his sheep definitely don’t know him. If they knew beforehand what they were in for, they probably would never agree to work for him. Some work because they have no place else to work. If this is the case, they most assuredly will be gone to a new place of business and a new shepherd at the very first opportunity they have.

Theory SE Leadership

Let’s replace the current owner of the successful restaurant with a Theory SE Leader, one who leads the way an Eastern shepherd would lead. An Eastern culture leader (SE) would care individually about his or her workers and attempt to run the business in a way that would benefit all. This leader believes in the workers and feels an obligation to make their lives better. This is not to say the SE leader or owner abhors financial success! Not at all. But the driving force or motivation for making the business profitable is to include the workers in the success. The relationship between owner and workers is long term, leading to mutual celebrations of longevity. There is no need to “drive” the employees to do their work. Instead, the SE leader examines different ways to ensure employee happiness and success. Many times I have found these SE leaders to have a heartfelt desire for their employees to share in the profits of the company.

The SE Leader should not mistakenly be labeled as a busi-

ness wimp or one who is careless about making money. What I have found in my cursory study is just the opposite. Many times these leaders many times are self-made men and women who know business well and know equally well how to succeed. What they do not have in common with the SW Leader is the idea that workers are just another commodity. They share with other SE Leaders a belief that a successful business is successful *because of* the workers, not *in spite of* them.

The company our family has launched is striving to be an SE company. We have a philosophy that all will benefit from any success the company may enjoy. To exemplify this we have set up a structure so that all our staff will benefit financially as the company grows and we will not limit what anyone can earn. The more successful the company is, the more successful our flock will be.

We also make sure we take the time to know one another and all those we serve. We are trying to live the model of SE and develop long-term win-win relationships with both our internal and external customers.

It's Not Just a Job

Several months ago, I did a strategic planning seminar for a Theory SE leader. I didn't know this was an SE leader until he told me what he hoped to gain from the seminar. His goal obviously wasn't the "bottom line," because he shut down his business and made the necessary arrangements for all his employees to attend. He simply wanted to learn about strategic planning *with* his staff so they could all achieve success and feel a sense of "ownership" in the success of the business.

I can just hear some of you who are reading this right now! "You've got to be kidding," you might exclaim. "No business

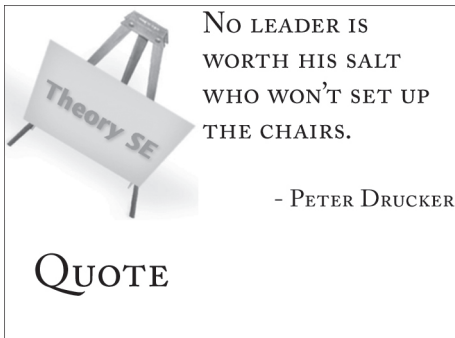
owner would even *think* that way, much less make it happen!” Well, if that is what you are thinking, you probably are operating from a Theory SW mind-set. Unlike some other business owners I’ve known, this owner sincerely wanted to help the company grow and increase its profit margin so those working for him (*with* him, he would say) could reap some of the benefits.

I don’t want to leave the impression that he didn’t want to make money in the process; he just wanted to make sure that all involved in the company’s success benefited from that success. His belief was and continues to be this: if employees can see a chance to share in the growth and success of the company, they will work to ensure the company’s success. In the process, they enjoy their work and don’t regard it as “just a job.”

As evidence of the owner’s sincerity in arranging for the seminar, by the end of the day the owner and employees had adopted a specific objective—the creation of a profit-sharing

plan to be implemented within the first six months of the upcoming year.

It was also interesting during the day to observe the close-knit relationship these individuals shared with



one another. Not that they were alike in many ways, but it was evident that they cared about one another—not just at work, but outside work as well. They talked about hockey, soccer, vacations, kids, and ailing family members. It was obvious that the employees knew the owner and the owner knew his employees - he cared about his sheep.