

## Authority - no need for pips on my shoulders Pt.3

In the previous two parts of this article, I used my school cadet and athletic carnival experiences to illustrate that people sometimes use position, rank or managerial authority from a fractured state of mind. As we saw, such a mind can produce the bully (the 'major'), or a person who (without the 'cover' of rank) actually experiences fear and insecurity. Through the lieutenant, we saw a person who was able to live an authority which was more integrated and therefore, its effect was powerful, both relationally and in 'getting the job done'. His authority came from a settled or calm state of mind. He expressed a more natural authority which reflected humility while being powerfully influential in its outcome.

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### *Life essence: the source of influential authority*

In *Good to Great* (HarperCollins 2001), Jim Collins described Level 5 Leadership as 'a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will' (p.20). In *The First XI* (John Wiley & Sons 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007), the authors uniquely define Australian leadership with the Captain-Coach Leadership approach, within the context of teams rather than individuals; citing that "...captain-coach leaders build the business not their own careers, are grown from within and have long internal experience, walk the talk, are passionate for the cause, are decisive, have a long-term view, communicate, are consistent and have few trappings" (p.144).

My personal position on leadership is that it is a latent reality within all of us, which requires each of us to commence a consistent inner journey; an inner discipline to live beyond our ego. Leadership is our willingness to live our inner authority. Leadership and authority are different sides of the same coin. The bedrock of all authority is that we freely open ourselves to 'inner-self-emptiness' which does not impede an authority which already exists within LIFE itself. This natural and integrative authority requires a consciousness – a self awareness – that stills our craving for power and control, our obsession to be right (which thrives on judgemental and opinionated self interest). When self-interest, self-preoccupation and self-importance vanish from our minds, the essence of LIFE flows freely, and influential authority is self-evident for all to see.

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When you live humbly, build something beyond yourself, demonstrate a passion that ignites heart and minds and communicate that in such a way that others can listen and be inspired to act; then your authority is not yours but a reflection of LIFE'S AUTHORITY ('LIFE' being the energy in, before and after all history/time). LIFE is variously called God, Spirit, Allah, Chi, Life energy, the one unifying force... though no name can define, limit or contain its reality. LIFE IS.

LIFE is the ultimate authority. It is the only authority that is real and transformative in human history (and includes business). *Level 5* and *Captain-Coach* leadership approaches are only external affects of a lived inner reality. What is critical in future leadership is our willingness to look within and be open to and influenced by LIFE'S AUTHORITY.

A small example of LIFE'S AUTHORITY can be seen in the term 'climate change'. The ultimate timetable for its full effect on human and planet history is not for us to determine. LIFE is the AUTHORITY reality. It will be the quality of our individual and global leadership that will determine how we respond to LIFE'S REALITY. The business world is made up of human beings and their leadership-in-action will be determined by the quality of their inner world. Their actions will be a reflection of how willing they are to LISTEN to THE AUTHORITY within each them. This LISTENING to an inner AUTHORITY is incumbent on all of us and will affect our spheres of influence.

Like climate change, the present financial demise is the effect of poor listening to LIFE'S AUTHORITY. We have ignored ITS voice and have reaped the consequences. There have long been voices in the wilderness speaking about the unsustainable way we humans live on this planet, run the global economy, engage in our personal, community and global relationships.

Yet, we are unwilling to listen to their voices. Why?! Why is it so hard to hear, be open and respond to them? I suggest that long before we fail to listen to others, we stop listening to our inner voice that connects us to LIFE'S AUTHORITY.

Listening to our inner LIFE'S AUTHORITY can be summed up in *The Road Not Taken*, a poem by Robert Frost. In particular, his final words: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I ... I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference."

### **The inner journey: listening to LIFE'S AUTHORITY**

#### **Some lessons learnt**

I have heard that the business world and everyday life is so different: worlds apart. There is only one LIFE unfolding and we all are called to listen to the AUTHORATIVE VOICE that is within each of us. It requires:

- ✓ A willingness to respect an inner stillness, an openness to quieten our minds to listen to an AUTHORITY from within.
- ✓ A commitment to the discipline of acknowledging that 'what I think' is not important - and enabling the growth in our understanding of the gift that we have in 'that I think'. That discipline SEES the birth of an idea.
- ✓ A willingness to let go of 'what I think' no matter how precious it might be to enable us to 'look again' ... which is the true meaning of reflection.
- ✓ A discipline to take a step on the 'road less travelled' each day or when we observe the fork in our road.
- ✓ An appreciation that our actions have their cause within us.
- ✓ An expanding appreciation of Life unfolding in us. ■ ■

### **The Road Not Taken** **Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference