

LEADERSHIP and THE PUBLIC SERVICE

SALUTIONS

50 Years ago, Thomas Kuhn, a professor at that time, with the University of California challenged the traditional view of science. Kuhn argued that what scientists discover, depends largely on the sort of questions that they ask; as the questions asked were based on a scientist's particular philosophical commitments. Kuhn suggested that scientists have to shift their theoretical framework and as such ask different questions.

Asking different questions would create what he called, a *paradigm shift*.

50 years later many public sector leaders, Human Resource Professionals, scientists and business persons are still talking about paradigm shifts, while they cling to traditional ways of thinking and as such never experience changes or shifts in outcomes because they are asking the same questions. The truth is many persons don't even ask a question and several more are simply afraid of asking a question.

My esteemed colleagues, we perforce **must ask different questions and seek to arrive at different conclusions, which will result in different outcomes and by extension different solutions.**

Let me ask you a question? With a show of hands- which one of us, would want things to remain just as they are? Which one of us- would want to ask the same set of questions, time immemorial? Which one of us- want to remain in a state, where there is no change?

I thought so- NO ONE!

So that means we are all, in this room today ready to make a
PARADIGM SHIFT!

That is what Leadership in the Public Service demands of each us today!

We need to ask different questions. We need to establish a new paradigm so that we can have more creative solutions to existing problems.

Importantly too, is that us, making a paradigm shift will enable us to examine the challenges from different perspectives and thereby apply and develop more appropriate policies.

We have provoke radical thinking to stimulate a new way of looking at and a new way of doing things. A revolutionary way of thinking that will agitate and ignite a fire in the bellies and minds of our minds and be contagious to those around. we have to make that paradigm shift and be infectious with it!

My esteemed colleagues, it is simply, not business as usual.

Public Sector transformation means just that - transforming the way we do things, the way we think, apply and approach problems towards solution.

We need to be aware of the risk involved in every decision that we make, in every plan that we make. We have to think critically, from a risk perspective, and utilise a cost/benefit analysis to our decisions.

This is at the heart of the matter! We **need/have** to establish a new pattern. It will start with the way we think, and the way we think about those things that we think about, and have to change.

We may need to embrace diversity a whole lot more.

It is about the 'Greater Good!'

It is a national imperative!

To make a paradigm shift. To change the way we think about things; in a different way, applying unique and innovative methods to problem-solution.

As leaders, we are change managers, but first we are change innovators. That is what Leadership in the Public Service demands now! That is where we are heading and that is where we are going.

Now you may smirk or ask the question, how is this going to make a difference to the operational day- to- day activities?

How, when the system remains the same.

By effective and purposeful leadership- that is the answer.

Leadership means we steer the ship, we captain the change, we walk the job so that the message dissemination comes from us.

Yes, we **walk the job!** So we leave our offices and walk and talk with under links in our Division and in other Divisions,

Departments, Sections and Units. We trumpet the

transformation/change message and by so doing just that one thing- we would have already made a paradigm shift.

We lead from in front-with the battle cry- **CHARGE** and we lead from behind to ensure that the work force pushes onward.

Yes my colleague-leaders, we lead from behind we are both the consummate leader; we (push from behind) and pull (from in front) leading out.

Let me quote from an International Leader-Icon, Nelson Mandela.

In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*,

Nelson Mandela likens leadership to shepherding, of all things:

"He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind."

Linda Hill, a Harvard Business School professor, also speaks to and has written about this concept of leading from behind for years. In her view, leading from behind is an essential skill for great leaders.

The two key components to leading from behind:

1. View leadership as a collective activity. An ideal leader knows how to cultivate a setting in which others can step up and lead, Hill tells *Harvard Business Review*. "This image of the shepherd behind his flock is an acknowledgment that leadership is a collective activity in which different people at different times--depending on their strengths, or 'nimbleness'--come forward to move the group in the direction it needs to go. The metaphor also hints at the agility of a group that doesn't have to wait for and then respond to a command from the front. That kind of

agility is more likely to be developed by a group when a leader conceives of her role as creating the opportunity for collective leadership, as opposed to merely setting direction."

2. Don't confuse displays of assertiveness with leadership. If you do, you might overlook some great potential leaders in your organization, just because they happen to be less vocal or showy in the way they get things done. "Because they don't exhibit the take-charge, direction-setting behavior we often think of as inherent in leadership, they are overlooked when an organization selects the people it believes have leadership potential," Hill said.

As an example, she cites Taran Swan, who worked for Nickelodeon Latin America. When Swan's team made presentations to upper management, Swan calmly sat on the side and let team members do the talking. She'd occasionally speak up to support or clarify a point.

One of Swan's supervisors warned her about her inclusive approach. He told her, "You're making a career mistake. You're not going to get ahead if you do this. It would be better if you came by yourself and made the presentations," Hill recounts. In the supervisor's view, Swan's behavior wasn't leader-like. But her results were: Amidst highly unstable market

conditions, her team managed to build Nickelodeon's presence in Latin America and to meet its overall budget.

So if that does convince you. Then let's talk about more benefits of making a paradigm shift as leaders.

How will we benefit? As the leaders - we are the innovators, the change managers, we personally and our organisations will benefit from:

- Our teams operating optimally.
- Our business processes being more streamlined.
- We will create an environment, where thinking outside the box is the norm-not the exception.
- Better decision making.
- Having a more energised workforce and
- More empowered leadership.

If that is not enough to get you on board, I don't know what will?!

I am on board. I want to contribute to the VISION 2030 Goal. I want my contribution to count towards the transformation of Jamaican lives, our way of doing business and in creating a better and healthier work environment.

We all know that even when there aren't operating at optimal conditions, people rally around a cause, they rally around effective leaders, who can lead the charge from in front and lead from behind. People rally around those Leaders, who are Change Managers with a Purpose; Dedicated to making a Paradigm Shift- as often as we need to make it!

Will you today, answer the call and rally around making a paradigm shift as Leaders for tomorrow-committed to doing things different so that our outcome can be different.

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