

Leadership

Charismatic, Transformational and Pseudo

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Leaders have been with us and have evolved over the ages. As voiced in 1159 by theologian and author John of Sailbury, "We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours." (Martin) What does it take to become a giant of a leader, one who others in the future will set their sights on and strive to emulate? In studying contemporary leadership theory it is clear many of the best leaders are those who have risen to meet the challenge of a crisis with clear strategic vision. There are many different kinds of leaders. The types of leadership investigated in this report are Charismatic, Transformational, and Pseudo.

When investigating these leadership styles realize that charisma is an elusive thing. You can't put it in a box to be sold. You can try to imitate or talk about charisma but that is not what it takes. The charismatic person is well liked, admired, and has a special charm. They put the sparkle in the room. When they talk to you, you feel special and important, you are the one this person cares about, and you feel sparkly yourself and significant. This makes you feel happy, and you want this charismatic person as your friend, or more to the point, you want to be on this charismatic person's team. You are overjoyed when they invite you to go out or to come over and hang out, you are thrilled to be in their inner circle. The charismatic leader is always coming up with ideas of exhilarating things to do, interesting places to go, wonderful things to see and exciting times to be had, you feel fortunate to be included in these grandiose plans. Being friends or working with someone with this charismatic glitter is usually an enjoyable experience.

Charismatic leaders have certain identifying qualities including:

- Magnetism
- Vision
- Excellent communication skills
- Confidence
- Self-assurance
- Strong moral convictions
- Lively and energetic
- Action oriented
- Future oriented
- Likeable

(Achua)

Sometime charismatic leaders are transformational or pseudo- transformational, but not always. The difference between these types of leaders is very important.

The transformational leader is often very charismatic. These leaders have strong vision and they focus on changing things “in a big way” (Achua). They often step up in times of crisis. They move their followers to want to make the changes necessary to accomplish the vision or dream. They motivate a group effort and those on their team are eager to help fulfill the vision. These leaders stand up for what they believe in and try to help their followers move forward. It takes a sustained effort by both the leader and the followers to make the changes necessary for transformation and to counter the resistance that is sure to come. Their followers trust them and get behind them in their effort to make changes.

Some traits successful genuine transformational leaders possess include:

- Intelligence
- Inspiration
- Confidence
- Charisma
- A vision
- High moral and ethical values
- Motivation
- Strategy
- Excellent communication skills
- Innovating
- Empathy
- Influence
- Hard work
- Determination
- Resilience
- Courage
- Hope
- Faith

(Achua) (Homrig)

Authentic transformational leaders help their followers go beyond their own self- interests for the good of their group, organization, or society. People usually benefit from following this type of leadership.

On the flip side of the coin, transformational leadership may take a menacing form, what Bass and Avolio call “pseudo-transformation leadership” (Stewart), “Such leaders encourage an ‘us vs. them’ competitiveness and pursue their own self interest rather than the common good. They use symbols of authority and hierarchical separation.” They may possess a type of dysfunctional charisma (Gill) .These leaders are like wolves in sheep clothing, fooling those who follow them. According to Bass & Steidlmeier, these pseudo leaders violate the trust of their followers; they ultimately bring harm to them (Bass). You may be deceived by them if you are not aware of what’s occurring. Some of the traits of the pseudo leaders include:

- Charisma
- Vision
- “What’s in it for me” attitude
- Lack of character
- Unethical behavior
- Get ahead personally
- Money
- Power
- Manipulation
- Scheming
- Lying
- Deception
- Narcissistic
- Domineering
- Egotistical (Bass)

Pseudo transformational leaders are likely to provoke envy, greed, hate, and conflict rather than self-sacrifice, harmony, and teamwork. They take advantage of ignorant, scared, angry, and frustrated people for their own personal gain (Bass). They are usually self-serving.

What do leaders have in common? Most often it is having a vision. Some have a vision of greatness for all people, a coming together for the good of all. These are true transformational leaders. Some might say they have socialized tendencies, because their vision is for everyone to benefit. They inspire others to believe in their vision and adopt it as their own, with everyone working together to make it become a reality. The pseudo leader's visions are for something that will benefit them personally. They can be ruthless in order to achieve their goals.

Knowledge is power, and recognizing the difference between a genuine transformational leader and a pseudo leader is knowledge of the utmost importance. We need leaders in order to feel safe and secure; we want to be led by people who are stronger, more knowledgeable and more powerful than us (Boyett). People want to know they are going to be taken care of. In the case of pseudo leaders, this knowledge may be used to manipulate others.

We have history to look back on to help us recognize these different types of leadership styles. There have been good and bad leaders since the beginning of time. Their names appear in our history books. Jesus, Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. were recognized as authentically transformational. Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Jim Jones obviously were evil and were pseudo transformational leaders. If we are wise, we will search out authentic transformational leaders and run the other way when we recognize a pseudo leader, no matter how charismatic they appear to be.

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