

What's so Transformational about Transformational Leadership?



The answer to that is that it's Transformational, of course. For both the leader who is Transformational in leadership behaviours for the most part, and for the follower who looks up to him for inspiration and guidance.

Why has there got to be Transformation? Why has there got to be change? What is the Transformation, the change, for? What are we Transforming into, where is all this change taking us? How is it that this change, this transformation, is not taking place in the natural order of things? We as human beings feel drawn towards living at a higher plane of consciousness, a higher plane of existence, and this is why we tend to be attracted to Transformational leaders. We also know that it is difficult to live at a higher plane of existence, and we always appreciate some help from leaders we admire.

Transformational leaders possess Idealized Attributes and exhibit Idealized Behaviours. Since all of us are human, meaning all leaders are human, we can expect even Transformational leaders to be less than perfect. How, then, does a Transformational leader display Idealized Attributes and Idealized Behaviours? By showing the way and demonstrating that they are committed to those same Attributes and Behaviours. By being very candid with the fact that they, too, struggle with being human and are at most a few steps ahead of their followers, as it were. Even if a Transformational leader were many steps ahead of the rest, he still needs to recognize that he can fall behind at any moment, and continue to be open to genuine feedback. He needs to know what feedback to ignore and what feedback to take seriously. The key is for a Transformational leader to inspire his followers upwards towards noble goals and aspirations, and not to rely upon him. A Transformational leader knows he has done well when those he leads are well able to function at optimal levels with him or without him. By then, of course, he had better be at least two steps ahead of the rest! Transformational leaders are themselves being transformed all the time!



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I have been very blessed to have had at least two Transformational leaders over me when I was in active Service. My immediate superior was one who was very detailed and loved having his fingers in the works, so to speak. He was utterly professional and always encouraged us to take on tasks beyond our usual scope of work for our own

betterment. Serving with him was one of the most enjoyable periods of my time in the Service, because, for once, I was serving under a leader who actually knew what he was doing, and was a past master at it, too! At the same time, two levels above me, I enjoyed having a Boss who was extremely clear and practical, and who had the Big Picture always in his mind. This Boss also protected us from the vicissitudes of the higher Powers-that-be, as he was also a very astute observer of games people play, and managed to avoid steering the ship into trouble, unlike a few others. He was one who always recognized what might be desirable but practically impossible, and so was crystal-clear about his priorities and did not indulge in wishful thinking.

Do you know any leaders who similarly exhibit Idealized Attributes and Idealized Behaviours? Do share with us!