

Leadership in tough times

- by Andrew Simon

Good leaders thrive in tough times.

Tough times create a particular kind of human geography and it is in such geography that leaders are called to uncover and clarify the choices that are available.

In spite of what we may often feel, we almost always have a choice in organisational life. Even the decision to not do anything is an exercised choice. Leadership in tough times is especially about helping people, teams and organisations to see the choices that are available and to galvanise the energy, will and the inherent ability of people to imagine a better future, to make the choices that will take them there.

In such a geography, more than ever, leadership is both a clear stance and a firm relationship with people that challenges leaders to:

- Seek out what is truly important, discerning this from the urgent, the popular or the easy.
- Conceptualise and explain situations as they emerge so that people can share in your understanding however incomplete, of the choices that lie ahead. Leaders in such geography recognise that as dynamic, living systems, people self organise in response to meaningful information.
- Re-kindle a sense of purpose and intent which people can rally to and be energised by.
- Work with people to create opportunities and choices in a way that generates a sense of possibility, self efficacy, self confidence and self worth.
- Seek to work with common, not self interest.
- Be honest, recognising that there is no shame in not knowing the answer, as long as there is the commitment to find it.
- Lead from the front, being visible, active and positive even if you don't feel like it.
- Anchor hard decisions and difficult choices in a strong values and ethical base.
- Learn your way forward, for the greater the ambiguity and uncertainty of this new geography, the stronger the need for the leader to learn.

“The person who in shaky times also wavers only increases the evil, but the person of firm decision fashions the universe”. - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe.

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