



Africans Leaders

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I. Nelson Mandela's leadership

Nelson Mandela is one of the great personalities of the last century, and a formidable example of leadership. In 2008, Time Magazine published an article on its website by Richard Stengel entitled "Nelson Mandela's 8 leadership lessons". This article provides a good illustration of some of the principles taught in leadership training courses: the constant presence of a strong long-term vision and considerable tactical flexibility; self-control and management of one's internal states; risk-taking; the search for what brings differences together; teaching by example and being a model of the changes expected; the ability to reframe and inspire others ; the ability to influence by synchronizing with your audience's model of the world, then guiding them towards your ideas; the attention you pay to others, your listening skills and the frequent adoption of the second position, even with your enemies; the importance of non-verbal messages; non-polar thinking; comfort with contradictory ideas; humility and the ability to question yourself, etc.

Mandela's eight lessons of leadership

1. Courage is not the absence of fear, it's inspiring others to overcome it: as a leader, you can't let others know that you're afraid. "Your ability to reframe and inspire others; the ability to influence by synchronizing with the model of the world of those you are talking to, then guiding them towards your ideas; the attention you pay to others, your listening skills and the frequent adoption of the second position even with your enemies; the importance of non-verbal messages; non-polar thinking; comfort with contradictory ideas; humility and an ability to question yourself... etc. As a leader, even if you're afraid, you can't let others know. "And that's precisely what he has learned to do: to pretend and, by the act of appearing courageous, to inspire others.
2. Lead from the front but never leave your base in the rear: you take your support base with you. Once you get to the bridgehead, you let the people through; work for the long haul.
3. Lead from the rear and let others think they're at the front: The trick of leadership is to allow yourself to be led by others too. "It's wise to persuade people to do things and think of them as their own idea".



4. Know your enemy and know his favourite sport (learn to speak his language): Mandela studied Afrikaans, the language of the white southern Africans who created apartheid. He wanted to understand the Afrikaner point of view; he knew that one day he would fight them or negotiate with them and that in any case his destiny was linked to that of the Afrikaners. By speaking the language of his opponents, he could understand their strengths and weaknesses and formulate appropriate tactics. But he also placed himself in his enemy's good graces. He even improved his knowledge of rugby, the Afrikaners' favourite sport, so that he could compare notes between teams and players. Mandela understood that blacks and Afrikaners had something fundamental in common.
5. Keep your friends close and your rivals even closer: include in your thinking the men you don't like. Mandela even went to funerals of family members. When Mandela got out of prison, he included his jailers among his friends and placed the leaders who had kept him in prison in his first Cabinet. Mandela believed that embracing his rivals was a way of controlling them.
6. Take care of your appearance and don't forget to smile: there is a historical link between leadership and physical appearance. Mandela was not a great public speaker, and people agreed with what he said after the first few minutes. But it was the iconography that people understood. When he was on a platform, he always did the toyi-toyi, the black dance of the suburbs and the emblem of the struggle. But far more important was his brilliant and total smile. For white southern Africans, the smile symbolised Mandela's lack of bitterness and his goodwill towards them. The smile, says Ramaphosa, "was the message". Even after leaving prison, Mandela was not "bitter".
7. Nothing is black and white: don't see the world in black and white. Life is never either/or
8. Leaving is also leading: Mandela's greatest legacy as President of South Africa was the way he left office. When he was elected in 1994, Mandela could have been expected to be president for life, and many felt that South Africa owed him that, given the many years he had spent in prison.

He freed a country from violence and helped unite black and white, the oppressor and the oppressed, in a way that had never been done before. Mandela is like a secular saint very close to home, but he would be the first to admit that he is more than a pedestrian: he is a politician. He toppled apartheid and created a democratic, non-racial South Africa by knowing precisely when and how to lead the transition between his roles as warrior, martyr, diplomat and statesman. He often said that solving a problem "is not a matter of principle;



it's a matter of tactics". He is a master of tactics. Lessons to be learned: everything Mandela is and was is the fruit of personal experience, exceptional courage and great humility. For a leader, actions and commitment to the common good are more important than words.

II. Julius Nyerere's leadership

Julius Nyerere is known by his Swahili nickname "Mwalimu", which means "teacher". He was a teacher before leading Tanganyika to independence and becoming the first president of a united Tanzania.

He had an unconditional passion for African unity. In opposition to Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, however, he initially opted for a regional union of East Africa, while Nkrumah advocated a complete union of the whole of Africa directly. They jointly headed the Organisation of African Unity. After gaining independence for his country, Nyerere continued his pan-African struggle by welcoming and supporting armed rebellions in Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia and elsewhere.

Nyerere developed a system of African socialism (Ujamaa) by trying to connect it to the African communal way of life. The name Ujamaa comes from the Swahili word for "family". Nyerere was in close contact with Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and many things were put in place to allow Kenyatta to become the leader of East Africa. He even proposed delaying Tanganyika's independence until the other three East African countries became independent, in the hope of unifying them. They finally gave up on him, but this did not discourage Julius Nyerere. He concentrated his efforts on uniting Tanzania's many ethnic groups, for example by introducing Swahili as the national language.

Some of his leadership principles

"Uhuru na kazi", which means "Freedom and work": freedom can only be acquired through work.

"No nation has the right to take decisions for another; no person for other persons": a certain autonomy is important for leadership.

"Unity will not make us rich, but it will make it more difficult to despise and humiliate the African people": unity is strength, division is weakness.

"Education is not a means of escaping poverty, it is a means of combating it": the need for training for a leader



"If real development is to take place, people must be involved": development remains a participatory process.

Mwalimu's leadership can be summed up in two words: determination, courage and a passion for unity.

In conclusion, the leadership that Africa needs today is leadership for the common good, the leadership of unity or co-leadership, which finds its echo in the leadership inspired by ubuntu, namely: servant leadership, shared leadership and participatory leadership.