

How to evaluate leadership skills

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We are used to observe that frequently some new (or apparently new) approaches arise about the right manner to approach leadership as a competence. From the first part of the previous century until today we observe many “seasons” of the leadership discipline, and a lot of prominent speakers and researchers that discuss and theorize the “best way” to reach a sort of “heaven of the leader”.

There is a huge amount of documents, tools, guidelines, systematic reviews, position statements and so on, that treat the question of leadership in general, but also in the health field. It is quite difficult in a so full-of-indications field to “trace the way” and to “measure” something that could be useful to judge my personal behaviour as leader. Moreover it is quite hard to feel that a tool, or something which is similar, is a good instrument to “measure” some colleagues’ about a sort of gold standard of leadership. This especially if we think what we are really trying to do with this instrument which is “to measure a person”.

Probably one of the big mistakes that many of us do when we are facing the necessity to “measure” the leadership profile of someone, is that we think to this in terms of “having” some characteristics or “doing” some tasks in a good/bad manner.

But if we describe ourselves in terms of “human beings”, it could be true that still when we think about our leadership profile we need to observe our “being”.

So, first of all, it is useful to have an idea of what it theoretically means to think of leadership in terms of “being” and not only in terms of “doing”. According to the theory of being-centered leadership (Fry and Kriger, 2009), we could approach every leadership profile adopting a five level scale which shows progressively more complete level of “being”.

- Level V (the Sensible/Physical World)
- Level IV (Images & Imagination)
- Level III (The Soul)
- Level II (Spirit)
- Level I (non-dual)

Every one of us, during his/her life has a potential availability of every level of being. Every level provides meaning to our leadership practice. The effective adoption of a level partly depends on our human conditions (i.e. culture, value, study, etc....) and partly depends on the tasks and duties we have in a specific moment and/or organizations.

We will compare some of the main tools used today to measure leadership characteristics with this theory and we will try to evaluate if they “fit” in this theory.

Finally with a brief retrospective analysis of a “natural history” of real leader we will try to show some evidence that could confirm this theory.