



# Leadership Link

## Equipping Leaders to Lead



Dear Friend

The character of church leaders is under scrutiny today, as never before. For members belonging to small communities, *who* a leader claims to *be*, is at least as important as what a leader *says* or *does*. Indeed, the moral authority of any leader to influence the lives of others for Jesus sake, regardless of gender, generation, culture or ethnicity, is inextricably bound to their ability to lead well from the inside-out (i.e. self-leadership *before* leading others).

The life of Moses reveals three overlapping and recurring cycles of internal challenge. These areas are 'growing pains' that leaders can ill afford to ignore.

### WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO-ONE ELSE KNOWS

What Moses knew about himself very nearly jeopardised his call to leadership from the outset. **Ex 3-4:14** reveals Moses' lifelong struggle with rejection. He lived among people who demeaned his true identity through the attempted (historical) genocide of his people. Those responsible for raising him, such as Pharaoh (Moses' father figure) were also prepared to kill him for the relatively minor offence (as a royal subject in his society) of killing an Egyptian slave driver. While Moses' own people (represented in the tale by the two Hebrew slaves) indiscriminately reject Moses' Hebrew credentials. Subsequently, Moses struggled with an overwhelming need to belong. His own aborted attempt at leadership had been primarily motivated by personal hurts, needs and resentments, which ultimately led to a crises of faith in God and in his own credibility.

In ministry, we are so often trained to deal with the sin and weakness of others that it is relatively easy to forget the ones that stare back at us each morning from the bathroom mirror! Leading from the inside-out requires us to recognise how personal experience, family history, gender, culture and ethnicity may impact our leadership and those that we lead, in both positive and negative ways.

### WHAT OTHERS KNOW ABOUT YOU THAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW

We all like to believe that we know ourselves reasonably well. In **Exodus 18:13-24** Moses father-in-law, Jethro, challenges him to take stock of poor leadership habits that had the potential to destroy him and those he was responsible for leading. Unaware of the impact of his misguided passion, Moses is exposed to a corrective *challenge*, "**What is this you are doing...?**" And corrective *guidance*, "**What you are doing is not good...**" Any leader who is regularly challenged by a good friend, mentor, spiritual director or coach should consider herself or himself singularly blessed.

Moses had moved from one extreme of believing himself *incapable* of serving his people, to believing that *he alone* was capable of meeting all their needs! In a society, such as ours, where correction is frequently viewed as a sign of failure, it is easy to disregard the biblical perspective that correction is in fact a sign of growth and Christian progress.

### WHAT GOD ALONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU!

**Numbers 20:2-12** What God alone knows about you can only emerge in the context of an intimate relationship with God. Moses' remarkable relationship with God was jeopardised only by his relationship with the people. At key points in his life he feared or loved them more than he did God. Eventually, it is Moses' unbridled anger and frustration at them that leads to his subsequent disqualification from entering the Promised Land. Are you prepared to ask God tough questions about yourself?

Clearly, not every leadership story has a happy ending, but attention to the inside-out nature of effective Christian leadership may prevent us from becoming mere casualties of leadership.

Stay Focused!

Kate Coleman, co-pastor of the Regeneration Centre, Birmingham

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