

Leadership & Life

I hope all of you will develop a hypothesis for life. And you will continue to polish and strengthen it in the days to come. Aristotle reminds us that it is not enough to know what is right, but to actually do what is right because we believe in doing the right thing. This he called Virtue. And virtue, he explained, is gained by practice, which in Greek is called Ethike and we call Ethics.

Now, let's talk about leadership. The best definition of a leadership is someone who has voluntary followers.

But is leadership a life pursuit or a career? No. It is an **event. An event unfolds, a person steps up and leadership occurs.**

Lincoln found himself in the middle of a civil war, while Churchill was asked to step up to take the helm of Great Britain after years of being in the wilderness.

Leadership occurs in every walk of life: look at the parents, the coaches, the teachers, the list is endless.

Leadership then is **Preparedness meeting Opportunity.**

How then can we can we best prepare ourselves? Simply, by working on **being** better human beings. The difference between good and evil leaders mostly comes down to character, ego, emotional intelligence, and the people they surround themselves with.

How then can you become better human beings?

Every life is a canvas, a blank canvas to paint on. What will you paint on it? A quest for power, wealth, and untold pleasure? Or will it be a tale of exploration, service, joy, and striving to utilize every ounce of your potentiality?

All of us have, within us, the seeds of a Mao or a Lincoln, a Disney or an Elizabeth Holmes. Which seed will you water, which pull will you favor, which wind will you follow, which plant will you let blossom?

The answer, despite all the doubt and fear, is the quest, the real journey of life. So, find your center, your balance, your equilibrium, here and now. Define your values, your principles and your boundaries, and follow your well-oiled, rust-free, fully functioning, compass and head towards your True North.

Remember: ***"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."***

You are among the most fortunate on earth. You are unlikely to ever want for the basic necessities of life, such as food or shelter. **So, you really have no excuse.** No excuse to lie

or cheat. No, the only reason to go down that slippery slope will be to feed your ego. I have news for you. **Everyone does NOT do it.**

You are responsible **for YOU**. You are responsible for your decisions. You are responsible for your conduct. You are responsible for your life. You are responsible for your happiness. No one else, but you.

We may never meet again, but this is what I will be on the lookout for as I follow your story in the days to come. Did you squander your gifts in the pursuit of nothingness? Or, did you use your enormous capacity for good, and did you go out and serve, create something of value?

I pray you will live the life you were born to live.

Thank you.
Professor Verinder Syal