

Courage and Leadership

Dealing with Difficult Choices, Changes and Conversations in Leadership

Difficult Choices, Changes and Conversations

- **Somebody comes to you and says, “I’ve got a chance to buy my dream house.” And you’re his boss, but you’re also his good friend. And he asks you, after telling you about the house, “Do you know any reason why I shouldn’t go ahead with buying this new, expensive house, that I’m going to have to stretch to buy?”**
- **You know that in your desk there’s a list of people who are going to be laid off in two weeks, and of course it’s supposed to be confidential, because the announcements should be made all at once.**

Right vs Right Decision Making

- **What are the consequences of different ways of dealing with the problem for everybody who's going to be affected by it?**
- **Which individuals and which groups involved in the situation have rights that you've really got to respect?**
- **The third question is about the messages you want to send about your values as a leader, and about the values of your organization.**
- **And the final question is what's going to work. You've got to be practical. You need something that's going to actually make a difference.**

3 Tests

- **Newspaper test: Ask yourself what plan of action for dealing with the problem in front of you is going to work best if it's going to appear on the front page of your local paper—let's say, tomorrow. (consequences/pragmatic)**
- **Golden Rule: That's a way of picking up on other people's rights that you may be overlooking.**
- **Best-friend test. Ask yourself how you would like somebody who knows you well, whose respect matters to you, to look at you a few years down the road, and think about how you made the decision (character/values).**

**Ostensibly ordinary problems
can be incredibly messy,
complicated, ambiguous and important.
As such, they are
real leadership challenges.**

Leading Quietly

- **Don't kid yourself about how much you understand and can control.**
- **Expect your motives to be mixed and that this valuable and useful.**
- **Count your political capital and spend it wisely.**
- **Find ways to buy time before you do anything.**
- **Drill down into the technical and political aspects.**
- **Search hard for imaginative ways to bend the rules.**
- **Instead of moving aggressively – nudge, test, and escalate gradually.**
- **See compromises as an invaluable practical art.**

Leading Quietly

- **Bending the rules can shade into breaking them.**
- **Some compromises are unimaginative exercises in splitting the difference, while others are sell-outs to basic principles.**
- **All can become excuses for doing nothing or taking sleazy shortcuts.**

The Case for Courage

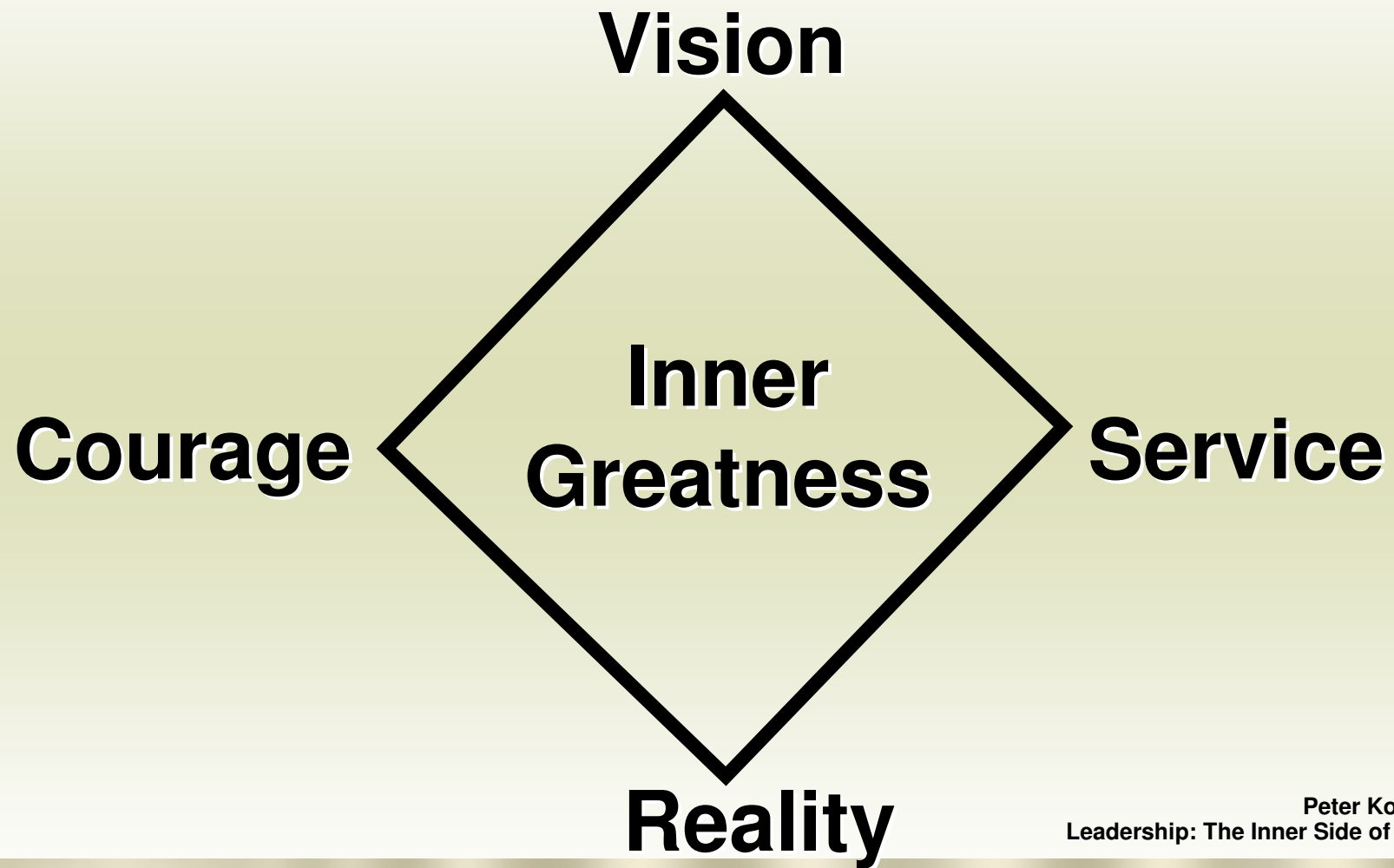
**“They enjoy their lives in their way,
especially simple pleasures
such as good company and food.
They are missed by family and friends,
but because they do not try much,
do not invest themselves in much,
do not risk much,
not much is different with their passing.”**

Leadership and Courage

Courage is the enforcing virtue,
the one that makes possible
all other virtues common to exceptional leaders:
honesty, integrity, confidence,
compassion, and humility.
In short, leaders who lack courage
aren't leaders.

John McCain, Fast Company,
Sept 2004, Issue 86

Leadership and Courage



Peter Koestenbaum
Leadership: The Inner Side of Leadership

Courage Assumptions

- **In your team tables, develop a poster of your courage assumptions.**
 - What courage really is
 - How you develop it
- **Tick the 2 assumptions that you believe are the most significant.**

Courage Assumptions

- **Courage is not the absence of fear, but the capacity to act despite fear. Fear is the opportunity for courage, not proof of cowardice.**
 - Fear is indispensable to courage ... it must always be present for courage to exist. You must be afraid to have courage.
 - Always linked to something - “courage to....”
 - outer action and inner struggle
 - “to act in spite of...”
- **Courage operates beyond self-interest – “love makes courage necessary ... You get courage by loving something more than your own well-being”.**
- **Courage is multi-dimensional.**

Courage Inventory

The Courage to ...

Courage to ...	High	Low
Seek the Truth		
Live an Ethical Life		
Speak Out		
Stand for Something		
Stand Up <i>To</i> One Another		
Stand Up <i>For</i> One Another		
Be Involved Even When It Doesn't Go Our Way		
Persist		
Reject Cynicism		
Be Controversial		
Assume Responsibility		

Leadership Courage Inventory

- **Discuss:**
 - your two strongest courage dimensions
 - your two weakest courage dimensions

Leading UP

- **It's up to each of us to lead our leaders**
 - The people closest to the front lines can see what their leaders are missing.
- **You've got to speak up to lead up**
 - In the marines, if their superior issues a flawed order, officers are expected to point out the flaws before that order goes into effect.
- **Before you lead up, you've got to team up.**
 - Recruit other people to your cause, and don't disagree disagreeably.

Michael Useem
Leading Up

Leading from the Middle

Avoiding Extremes

- **Challenging a specific leader on a specific subject may be healthy, but a pattern of challenging all leaders on all subjects is not. A rebellious, alienated follower will never earn the trust to meaningfully influence a leader.**
- **A follower's deferential language and demeanour toward a leader may be appropriate, but strained subservience or chronic resentment are not. A follower who is too subservient and eager to please authority cannot provide the balance a leader requires to use power well.**
- **Clamming up when a leader interrupts us in a raised voice may have been necessary at home or school, but serves us and the leader poorly now. Tolerating disrespect for our voice and views will reinforce the behaviour and weaken the relationship.**

Ira Chaleff

Courage Mindset

**Having courage
VS
Developing courage**

Developing Your Courage

- **Build a secure foundation - know what's important to you.**
 - Develop strong sounding boards.
- **What's the worst that can happen.**
 - “Worry is the misuse of imagination”
- **Commit yourself publicly (then work out how)**
- **Get started - take action outside your comfort zone.**
 - Start small.
- **Don't focus on feelings - act in spite of feeling inadequate, uncertain.**
- **Recognise your own games as indicators that time to act.**

Leadership Moments of Truth



Pinch Points are when . . .

- **You are disappointed, hurt, put out or negatively impacted**
- **You wonder whether raising the issue is worth it**
- **You find yourself avoiding saying something you know you should**
- **Something you have been trying to put behind you keeps coming up or won't go away.**

Courageous Conversations

One on One Examples

- Giving negative feedback
- Admitting a mistake
- Expressing strong feelings
- Putting forward a new idea
- Talking about sensitive issues
- Letting someone know how much we care

One to Many Examples

- Conflicting values
- Corporate culture issues
- Power and responsibility issues
- Inter-departmental disputes

Starting Off on the Right Foot

- 1. I would like to talk about _____.**
(What in neutral, non-judgmental terms)
- 2. The reason I want to talk about this is**
(my positive intention/outcome OR the negative impact I want to avoid)
- 3. When you <specific behaviour>, I felt <impact on you/others>”**
(and . . . and . . . and . . .; not “I feel you are ...”)
- 4. Invite their side of the story.**
- 5. What will we do looking forward?**
(process or actions)

Application

- **For a courageous conversation you have selected, discuss how the framework might apply.**