

The Right Leadership Style

Fanele Mnguni

Leadership is defined as an influential relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect shared purposes. It involves people in a relationship, influence, change, a shared purpose, and taking personal responsibility to make things happen. The people who are followers usually follow someone that is worthy of being followed. Maxwell argued that if you can't influence people, then they will not follow you. Daft states that followers are an important part of the leadership process, and all leaders are sometimes followers as well. Good leaders know how to follow, as they set an example for others.

Under normal circumstances, a leader has followers, and a leader can be a follower of their own leadership. As human beings, we all start from the bottom where we are not leaders. We initially struggle to find out who we are, what we want to be, and what we wish to do in life. This is against the background of the famous quote by Vince Lombardi, "Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work." As time goes by, we then attempt to find some sense of belonging, by trying to answer some of the initial "struggle" questions. I remember as a child, I've always been disoriented, going where the wind blows, without any sense of purpose and understanding. I suppose at that time I was merely a follower, led by anything in front of me that was deemed to be cool. When I reached high school, I began to understand that life has a purpose and that we are all born with one. I then started to identify elements of life in other people that resonated with me in terms of purpose. Initially, it was a range of different elements from different people e.g., from basic human charisma to materialistic things such as cars. I then realised that it takes hard work for one to be in possession of some of these elements.

As time went by, my interest in certain people that I looked up to, grew even bigger. I started to understand the path that those people followed to get to where they are in life. I then realised that it took training and development for them to reach their milestones. As life progresses, we all identify things in people that influence us to do better, and given enough resonance, we simply follow them. That is the true demonstration of being a follower of your own

leadership. You actually lead yourself and therefore, when it comes to a leader-follower relationship, you are no different than your followers.

As an average black child born in the 80s, I grew up in a household where we were 15 people living in a four bedroomed house. I remember this because while my mother was dishing up, I used to count all the plates, hoping that mine would be the one with the biggest piece of meat. We lived under my grandfather's roof – he had the privilege to get the biggest piece of meat. At the time we didn't see any overcrowding issues as we had no reference to the opposite. As a child I was always troubled and curious. I was never comfortable with superficial knowledge and always needed to understand the nuts and bolts of things around me, which often got me in trouble. If it was not me breaking my few minutes old toys, it was me breaking my grandfather's TV or radio, which didn't sit well with him, and ended up with me getting a hiding. But that did not stop me. I remember my grandfather was so tired of me meddling in his unused stuff in the garage, that he ended up putting some of it out of my reach, like his old car door that he put on top of the roof, hoping that I would not get to it. Guess where I was found thereafter? Stuck on top of the roof because the door that I used to climb up was suddenly closed by my aunt who wanted me to be caught red handed.

At the age of four we were already allowed to go and play on our own in the streets and expected to return home before the sun sets. I remember one day when my curiosity got the better of me. I started raising all sorts of questions about the sun. It was round about 16:00 in the dusty street called Mkhabela Street and the sun was already south. I started making up all sorts of stories to my friends about the delicious food that is found in the sun – “cheese” To be more specific. The next thing I knew, we were on the main road called Kgaswane Street, which is diagonal to Mkhabela Street, facing south and on our way to the sun. At the end of Kgaswane Street we turned right into Nkosi Street, then turned left into Job Maseko Street, where we were once again facing the sun. Yes, it was me, Fanele Mnguni, leading the young tribe like Noah when his ark had just sailed off.

As we were walking in Job Maseko Street, hungry like lions, it started getting dark. The sun was still light in that orangish colour as we were approaching Thema Road which is the last diagonal street before you exit Kwa-Thema. The dream of getting into our destination was getting more and more real and we were excited and longing for a delicious cheesy meal from the sun. I, on the other hand as the captain of the ship, had to keep my team motivated that our destination is near, as some of my teammates were starting to look worried. I

believed that the sun was actually behind the manufacturing buildings, called BCM which was about 800 meters from where we were in Job Maseko Street. Then all of a sudden, we heard a yelling voice calling one of my friends' name and when we looked, it was his grandmother shouting from the back of the taxi telling us to go back home. The funny thing is, the taxi did not stop and that yelling was not enough to change our minds, as we were too hungry and eager to get to the sun. The next thing I know as we were wondering which direction to take after hitting a T-junction in Thema Road, my mother sprang out from my grandfather's car and threw us all in the back seat. What I recall from that point onwards is that we were all crying in the car, as she managed to hit us all with her Hang Ten shoe. To this day, I still don't know how she managed to do all of that. I mean, about eight kids in the back of the car, plus one angry adult giving each kid a hiding. I ended up getting more blows than everyone else, not because someone ratted me out, but because it was my mother who was giving the hidings.

At the age of five I started school in Zamani Primary School because of a teacher who was a relative of ours. In those days, schools were known to be effective in instilling discipline in children. So, my parents couldn't help themselves but to hand me over as I was too curious and naughty at home. I was placed in the same class with my old mate from the sunny days called Thando *aka* Nandos. Nandos' mother used to work at Chicken Licken back in the days when Joe Mafela was still the ambassador advertising delicious famous chicken meals such as Taxi Two. Nandos' mother made us quite popular at school with teachers as each time they sent us to buy them Chicken Licken, we would bring an extra piece of chicken. I was good with the directions back from the good old sunny days and Nandos had the keys to the extra piece of chicken, so we were a good team. Now and then when returning from Chicken Licken, we used to open the food and steal the small crumbs on the side. This continued to happen until the day that Nandos and I were too hungry to eat just the crumbs. As we were eating the crumbs as usual, I decided to pinch off a bit of crispy chicken skin from one of the chicken pieces. Nandos followed, then the next thing I know it became quite evident that someone had obviously tampered with the chicken. Then Nandos and I immediately came up with a plan. We decided to peel the entire skin off on all chicken pieces so that they all look the same. At the time Chicken Licken was famous for its spicy, crispy, delicious chicken skin which Nandos and I decided to help ourselves to. When we finally got to school and delivered the meal to the teacher, the look on her face when she opened her meal is something

that I will never forget in my life. Of course, the cooking oil on our mouths was a giveaway and that was the end of our Chicken Licken journey days.

The days of being naughty carried on for a while. If it was not me and Nandos stopping a minibus taxi on the main road and then running straight back home, it was me and Nandos putting sharp objects on the road to test the strength of the coal truck tyres. Of course, this always resulted in a hefty price tag for our parents and for us – just a hiding. As time went by, we advanced to another level of being naughty. I suppose we were becoming good at it. Then one of my relatives, upon hearing about my troubles, advised my parents to do a traditional ceremony to formally request the person whom I was named after to pass on his name to me. My second name is Phillip, so the guy that I have been named after was Phillip and he was a bishop. Bishop Phillip passed on before I was born. My parents then organised the traditional ceremony during the December school holidays where a sheep was slaughtered, and I was taken to the grave where Bishop Phillip was buried. I remember very well when we were at the grave – it was my grandparents, my mother, and a few elders and me.

While we were all kneeling around the grave, one of the elders started talking to the grave, calling Bishop Phillip's name as if he was standing right in front of us. He started with an apology for using his name without his permission, followed by the request to pass on his name to me. The whole ordeal was funny to me as I kept wondering if the guy called Phillip Bell whose name appeared when the TV show called *The bold and the beautiful* started, went through the same ordeal. Then, when we were going back home, I started to feel bad, as if I had done something terribly wrong. My friend Nandos was nowhere to be found even when we returned from the graveyard. With my friends not being around, I was stuck at home during the course of the ceremony with my relatives reprimanding me. I found myself bored and listening for the sake of listening as some relatives found the whole thing funny as well. I remember asking and comparing myself to another street play buddy of mine, named Sunday. Sunday lived a couple of houses from mine and boy!!! He was a thief of note. He used to steal a lot of money from his parents and buy everyone just about anything they wanted. I was naughty and curious, but I was never a thief. That is one thing that I was never curious about and had no interest in.

The traditional ceremony then came to an end, as my relatives (for the last time) took turns in reprimanding me, telling me that this ceremony should not happen again. Come to think of it now, none of them actually made time to sit with me and ask me what the reasons behind my behaviour were. I suppose during those days parenting was different from what it is today, especially when

it comes to disciplining a child. After the ceremony, things got slightly better. I was reminded now and then about the ceremony, whenever I started doing things that seemed like trouble. Schools eventually opened and on the first day I got the biggest surprise of my life. Nandos and I were not in the same class anymore. I suspect that someone requested that we be separated. I was doing Standard 5 which is now called Grade 7 – the last year of primary school. I then started making new friends in the new class. I met a guy named Nhlanhla Sibanyoni. Nhlanhla was shorter than I was, very aggressive and a boxer. I don't know how we clicked, as fighting was not a part of who I am. Nhlanhla then invited me to his boxing training session and when I got there, I immediately fell in love with the sport. In that first training session, I inquired about joining the club and the coach told me that I needed to pay five rands to join and become a member. At the time the only money I used to get was 50 cents a day for lunch during school days. Of course, my parents declined giving me the money upfront and I had no choice but to save the only income I had. It took me two long weeks to save for the joining fee. During these lengthy two weeks I was like a kid who was given a taste of candy for the first time and was now longing for the next one. Eventually I managed to save the required five rands joining fee which was made up of a lot of coins. I remember this well because I used to count that money every single day. It was a Friday when I eventually handed my joining fee to the coach. He just took it without counting it and welcomed me as a new member. There was no consent form or any documentation that was required upfront at the time, and the coach did not seem to care to know my name. In our training club, Friday was a sparring day. In sparring it is recommended to always use gloves, a mouth guard, as well as a head and groin guard.

The only equipment that the club provided to us was the worn-out boxing gloves that only served the purpose of protecting the fist-bone, rather than any body part of the opponent. The gloves were so old and had accumulated so much sweat, that we thought that the coach poured vinegar on it to keep it clean. The only comfortable training clothes that I had at the time were my winter pyjamas – light long sleeve T-shirt and pencil pants – without shoes. The training facility was a school classroom of which we had to move desks and chairs to the side to make space for training. Here I was on my first day of boxing, wearing pyjamas with slippery socks of which most teammates found very funny. My first boxing opponent was younger than I was and he happened to be the coach's son. Though we were all young, he was more experienced than I was. He took full advantage of that and introduced me to boxing in a hard way. At some point he knocked me so hard that I fell on top of the desks and chairs.

My first few boxing days were a mess, but I remember, after my first sparring session, I realised that, by sparring with that young boy, I had found myself a benchmark. I then started mimicking everything my first opponent used to do in training sessions, from running to jumping exercises and push-ups. Then eventually I started getting better, and the coach started calling me by my name instead of “you.” When I got to the point where I could do almost everything that my first opponent could do, I requested a second sparring session with my first opponent. The coach refused and gave me a stronger opponent who was my age. My second opponent was slightly taller and much bigger than I was when it comes to body mass and weight. Here I was again, a skinny boy facing a giant. I kept telling myself before the fight started that if I lose, it’s not going to be by knock-out to the desks and chairs again. I was stronger and this would prove how much punch I could take. During the first few minutes of the fight, he just chased me around aggressively, while I made mistakes. I took a few strong punches from him, though. Then suddenly I started to retaliate with a punch to his stomach that I had given all my strength. The next thing I knew, he paused for a moment before he started screaming and holding his waist, and then falling to the floor.

On that day the coach had brought a friend to our training session and they were talking without paying attention to the sparring fights. However, all of a sudden there was silence and they were both staring at me. At that moment I thought that once again I was in deep trouble. It felt like I had done something wrong, but then everybody started clapping their hands. That moment marked the first achievement of my life. On that day when I returned home, I couldn’t obviously share the good news with my parents as I was never given permission to participate in boxing. However, my mother said something that I will never forget. While looking at me all proud and wondering with a bit of a smile on her face, she said in Zulu, *Kukhona okushintshile ngawe kulamalanga, ngiyabonga* which means in English: “There’s something different about you. Whatever it is, thank you.” At the time I did not want to ask any question, fearing that she might find out about me boxing. I started getting less and less in trouble both at home and in school. I started ignoring things like toys and electrical appliances. However, now and then I would find myself examining some old broken electrical appliances at home. When it comes to clothes, I started opting for more sports clothes rather than formal clothes (which we used to call “Jewish”), which pathetically made us look like adults that were going to work. I started being more reserved, cleaner, and neater. When it came to someone picking

a fight with me, I usually avoided it as I was aware how much skill and power I had.

I suppose martial arts movies such as kick-boxing played a vital role in influencing me. I genuinely believed that I had the same strength as Jean Claude van Damme. Whenever I found myself in a fight, I would justify it by picturing myself as Van Damme being forced to fight back Tompo. I had finally found something that made sense in terms of using my time wisely and that felt good. Boxing finally won the battle of keeping me away from trouble unlike the traditional ceremony. Academically, I was not bad either. I was excelling in Maths quite well, to a point where I used to get the highest results in the class without practising it at home. My primary school Maths teacher was Mr Ndala who came from the Ndebele ethnic tribe. Ndebele people till this day are known to be strict and very business minded. Most Ndebele households that were privileged enough to have a car in those days, had a bakkie with bunk chairs at the back. The bakkie was used as both a business and family car. I enjoyed Mr Ndala's Maths classes as he used to give us a lot of details that were easy for me to grasp. He also had a lot in common with my grandfather who was also Ndebele and therefore kind of made it easy for me to understand his personality.

I fell in love with Maths so much that I started slugging behind on my other subjects. To this day I don't know how I made it in primary school without repeating a grade. I don't recall ever doing any homework nor studying for the exams. It was so bad that I never even realised that it was exam time. I would just rock up at school unprepared and do whatever it was I'm told to do and write as much as I can remember. At the time there was never a need to change as nothing concerning my unpreparedness for school was ever brought to my parents' attention. Whenever teachers found out that I did not do any homework, it would just be a hiding and that's it. That was also the case for about 80 percent of the class. We were just not motivated by education.

I then went to a school called Springs Boys High School, which is a multi-racial school. This was at the time when Mandela just got out of prison, and we were amongst the first few black people who were allowed to enrol in the school. As black people, even when we were placed in different grades, we were forced to know each other because of the racism and bullying that we often experienced. Racism did not bother me that much, especially the pushing and shoving when we were changing classes. My boxing background made it feel whenever we were pushed, it was just poking a lion with a broom stick. We could not really describe our situation when we escalated it to the teachers, as

English was not our first language, and all our teachers were white. Most black boys that were from the black primary schools used to excel in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and Accounting. The rest of the subjects such as Geography, Biology, and History were challenging. We really found it difficult to read Afrikaans. The book we were supposed to read and understand, was *Die kind*. I managed to get hold of the Zulu version of that book called “Ingane” (“the child”). I shared the book with my black mates, and we all understood the content of the book and were confident. However, come test time we all struggled to provide answers because we could not understand the questions. I remember we were so bad at Afrikaans that during a comprehension test, we used to answer the questions by looking for the long Afrikaans word from the question that matches to the story or passage, and then just write the whole entire paragraph or three sentences. We made up of the sentence before the matching words, the sentence with the matching word, and the sentence thereafter.

Then it came to Afrikaans first paper exam where we were usually given a few titles to choose and compile a letter. We always knew that one of the options was going to be “Die vakansie” which is “The holiday” in English. We all chose the same title and used similar words to describe our experiences and we all got more or less the same results.

Whenever there was an altercation between a white and black boy, we would all stand around the black boy and do nothing, just like a herd of zebras while the lion has its way and does as it pleases. I remember how one black boy was eventually celebrated after he retaliated by just pushing the white boy back, after receiving a myriad of punches on his face. When it came to me, I avoided any retaliation or eye contact with the white boys. However, there was a time when we were at the school’s Valentine’s Ball which catered for boys and girls. I was outside the venue and one senior white boy, in the absence of the teachers, started pushing me around to impress his girlfriend. I first tried to ignore him and walked away but he blocked me and continued hailing racial insults at me, while his friends and girlfriends were laughing. Then suddenly, I lost my temper and punched him hard in the face and he fell down. He got up and we started fighting. Of course, the zebra herd joined in just to witness the fight. I remember beating him so hard that there was suddenly silence among his friends. His friends then stopped the fight as a way of trying to save him from the embarrassment. I recall one of his friends saying after the fight in Afrikaans, *Jeere, die laaitie het jou goed gebliks*m* which translated into English means, “This young boy just gave you a good hiding.” Then my black friends started celebrating and cheering me up about something that I did not really feel

good about. I was worried that I had hurt the guy quite badly as being violent is not part of who I am. Fortunately enough, the boy did not report the fight to the school or to his parents.

Some guys at school then started giving me ridiculous names like “Tyson” of which again I was not pleased and ignored them until they stopped. Academically, I was doing well. As usual I came on top of the class when it came to Mathematics. Then Grade 8 exam time came along. We used the same tactics that we had practiced for English and Afrikaans. However, when we got the results, most of us got the shock of our lives when we realised that we had failed and therefore had to repeat the grade. To get promoted to the next grade, both first and second language, which were English and Afrikaans were mandatory to be passed. My mother still remembers this day, when the Grade 8 final report contained two red circles around English and Afrikaans, a distinction for Mathematics with a big “Fail” at the bottom. She was obviously disappointed that I had to repeat a grade, but for the first time she did not give me a hiding for being or doing something that was wrong. At the beginning of my second year in Boys High, some of my friends who made it to the next grade and who predominately came from the model C primary schools stopped hanging out with us. New freshers came along, and I met a few new friends. I started paying more attention in English and Afrikaans, to a point where I requested help from my grandparents and some friendly white boys who were quite fluent in Afrikaans. Some of the new freshers that came from the model C schools helped out as well. Then, before I knew it, it was final exam time. As years went by, more and more black boys were accepted into the school and things started to change as far as bullying is concerned. The friends that I met when I repeated Grade 8 and the ones that I repeated with remained my friends till the end of high school. We are still friends till this day, and I will save my experiences with them for another version of this book.

After my Matric year, I decided to pursue a career in Information Technology (IT). How I got to IT is both a funny and a sad story. When I started varsity, I was initially registered for medicine at Wits in Johannesburg. During the first few days of my first semester, I realised that I was not getting the results that I was used to getting at school. Don’t get me wrong – I was not failing. It’s just that my results were not as good as they used to be. I remember how I used to study five to six hours straight on a daily basis while most the other students were partying. I used to get between 50 and 60 percent while the class average was between 65 and 80 percent. The fact that I was below class average got me very concerned. Then I started to doubt myself when one of the lecturers shared

the drop-out statistics. I realised that I could be part of those drop-out statistics. I remember consulting with one of the lecturers where I was told that medicine is predominately about chemistry, which is the subject that I was not good at in high school. I remember back in the days that there was a subject called General Science which was made up of physics and chemistry. I was much stronger in physics than chemistry.

After realising that I was doing a course that was not for me, I enquired further with other lecturers to get a second opinion and I was told that chemistry forms a substantial part of medicine, with biology being just a static environment where chemistry operates. Mathematics on the other hand could potentially help me with logical thinking but was not offered as a subject in medicine. I remember that the one lecturer even went as far as using flu as an example, saying that it's a virus that comes in different forms at different times, predominately caused by different chemical combinations, which then require the right chemicals to suppress the symptoms.

The session with this lecturer left me feeling distorted, confused, and disappointed in myself about my career decision. I then decided to go and seek career counselling. During my counselling session, I was advised to take the psychometric test. I took it the next day. The results came back recommending engineering as a career more aligned to my *persona*. After receiving the bad news, I was more distorted and confused and didn't know what to do. Then, as I was sitting on the stairs outside the building, a friend of mine who was passing by, asked me to accompany him to Pretoria to go and write his entrance exam for IT. When we reached Pretoria Technikon, I decided to walk with him to the lecture halls to check out the institution. As I was sitting outside the lecture hall, minding my own business, an old lady suddenly showed up from nowhere and said to me in all annoyance, "Sir, did you know that the test has already started? I am not going to give extra time just because you decided to sit outside. Please get inside and write your test." Then I figured, okay IT, here I come. I went inside and wrote the exam. All of a sudden, I was accepted to do IT which is also an engineering field in its own right.

While I was barely surviving financially as a full-time student in Pretoria Technikon, something worse happened. My mother got retrenched and the following month my grandfather went on retirement. I remember at that time my mother received a pension pay-out of about R40,000 which was not enough, considering that she didn't have much of her own stuff. My grandfather, even though he worked for a longer time than my mother, also had a lot of responsibilities to fully commit his last pension money to. He bought himself a

car and reinvested most of his pension money to get an investment interest of about R2,000 a month. Upon realising that my financial situation was getting worse, I hopped into the taxi back home to make a deal with my grandfather. At that time, my grandfather had two vehicles, a bakkie and a normal sedan. My deal was that he had to give me his bakkie so that I could try earning a living at school. I made the deal even sweeter by informing him that my student loan application has been approved – therefore he did not need to worry about my class fees and accommodation. Then out of the excitement, he agreed to the deal and gave me his bakkie.

The first client I got was someone who wanted to move her furniture from one apartment to the other. I started pasting stickers on trees around the Pretoria CBD with a message that said, “Need to move? Call 073 xxx xxxx.” As the furniture moving business went on, I got another opportunity to transport children to a nearby nursery school. I was making enough money to support myself and my mother and sister back home. I remember that I used to send her R1,000 every month. To survive varsity life with my circumstances, I had to forget about participating in parties or any social events such as freshers bash and the like. The only times that I could visit home were a few weekends when I was not busy, or during the December holidays. As time went by, I started making new friends who were permanent residents in Pretoria.

During the Easter holidays, when everybody had gone home, I met a guy named Jay Makgopela. Jay was not a student, but an entrepreneur and a resident in Pretoria who used to sell computers to the students. Jay and I struck a deal: Whenever I brought a student to him to buy a computer, I would get a commission. Jay used to buy computer components and assemble the computer himself, and then sell it. He was not only selling computers but also things like construction material and cars. He did not have a car or a driver’s licence, and often asked me to drive him around when he was doing his deals. I then realised that Jay was a general reseller. He had good connections with sellers and buyers. He did not keep stock of anything and the only asset he had was a contact list in his outdated diary. He carried a lot of cash with him, and often spent it on buying something that he would resell for a better price on the same day.

I was truly inspired by him and eventually asked him to show me the ropes on some of his business dealings. He advised me to start by selling computers as I was already working with him and studying IT at the same time. He advised me to register a business as a supplier. I followed his advice and started selling computers. He was not too concerned about me taking some of his customers, in fact he was doing so well thereafter that he ended up buying himself a car and

asked me to teach him how to drive. Jay and I made so much money that I ended up buying myself a house through a bond while I was a student. I remember one day there was a computer shop that was closing down and selling everything at a low price. Just a few shops away, a new Cash Crusaders shop had just opened. Jay and I took stuff from the closing computer shop and sold it to the Cash Crusaders. I remember how we used to take turns to make sure that the computer shop owner does not see where we are selling his stuff. We made a fortune with each item.

While life was good in Pretoria business wise, academically things were also good. Jay and I had a lot in common when it came to our backgrounds, and we were both responsible people. When it was time for me to attend class or study, there was no excuse. It went good until something tragic happened. While visiting home for a weekend, my bakkie got stolen in Kwa-Thema. I had no insurance or enough money to buy another one, but only a debt commitment to pay my bond. During that weekend a total of six bakkies were stolen from the same township. I then arranged with my childhood friend, Sihle Kunene who was also attending Pretoria Technikon to help me out with his bakkie. We agreed, and then he started wanting to get more involved in the business rather than hiring out his bakkie to me. In this way he became my business partner.

At that time, Jay had already advanced into the construction business and was hard to find. Sihle and I worked together, selling computers, transporting children, and moving furniture. We made decent money and ended hiring other students to help out. As time went by, we started getting smarter by charging our clients based on distance and the required assistance. For *ad hoc* transportation we had a separate price for the bakkie that comes with the driver at five rands per kilometre and there was a price for a “van boy” – a student that used to assist in carrying customer goods. We used the same method for computers that we sold and that needed to be delivered. However, for the nursery school children we charged per child.

Business was good. Therefore, I decided to buy a bigger bakkie on credit as Sihle’s bakkie was becoming too small for some of the big jobs. In those days I worked my butt off. I remember there was a time during my exam period that a lady approached us to move her stuff to another flat quite urgently. She was moving from the eleventh floor of some building and lifts were not working. Everybody was busy with the exams and there was no van boy to assist – so it was only Sihle and I. That night we worked until 04:00 in the morning. I was scheduled to write an exam that morning at 08:30. I arrived in my room round about 04:30, took a shower, and then went straight into the books to do my final

preparations. That's how focused and disciplined we were. Our mission was based on a quote from Arthur Ashe who said, "Start where you are, use what you have and do what you can."

As far as qualifications are concerned, throughout my tertiary days and afterwards I accumulated the following qualifications: A Master's degree in IT, Information Technology Infrastructure Library certification, Microsoft Business Intelligence certification, Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from GIBS, The Open Group Architecture Framework certification, and recently Amazon Web Service Cloud certification.

Throughout my school days I have met different types of people of which some contributed positively towards my life, while others did not. I recently came across an article which describes three kinds of people who were first identified and stated by the supporters and founders of democracy in ancient Greece. For the Greeks – the nation who, in many ways gave us the modern civil world, the first kind of people in any given society were the idiots. According to the Greeks, an idiot is not necessarily someone who is mentally deficient, it is rather someone who is totally private, self-centred, and selfish. The idiot is always looking for personal gain and interest. They do not have a personal public philosophy, and no knowledge, skills, character, or virtue to be able to live and contribute in society and community. The idiot is always focused on their personal pleasures and treasure. The Greeks said that the idiot was just an upgraded barbarian.

The second kind of person in any given society, according to the Greeks, is the tribe person. A tribe person does not necessarily mean that this person belongs to a certain tribe, but rather a person with a tribalistic mentality. The tribe people are the people who cannot think beyond their small tribe or group. For the tribe people, their only religion and ultimate religion is to their tribe. Their tribe is their god and the religion is tribalism. The tribe people are always afraid of things that are different and alien to them. They are always suspicious and fearful. They deal with difficult and different people with intimidation, force, and violence. The best example of a tribe person is a warrior because tribe people are a war making people.

The third classification, according to the Greeks, is the citizen. They regarded the citizen as someone who has the knowledge and skills to lead a public life. The citizen is a person who can live a life of civility. They recognise that they are members of the commonwealth and thus strive for the common good. They always understand their rights and responsibilities in society. They

will sometimes fight for their rights, but always with the awareness and respect for the interests of others (neighbours, the smallest of minorities, as well as their worst enemy). These citizens, according to the Greeks, make up a civilised society because citizens settle their differences with civility. They therefore produce a civilised society that truly lives up to the meaning of the name “society.” Society literally means friendship and friendliness.

Those are the threefold distinctions that the Greeks had. We may not all come from the same background and upbringing, but life always gives us an opportunity to make a choice. A truly great leader is someone that genuinely cares about society.

I read an interesting analogy in the book, *Just ask leadership* by Cohen (2009), with this sudden move of CBDs being replaced by malls in townships. At first, I was only concerned about the businesses that are negatively impacted by this sudden move e.g., minibus taxis that heavily rely on transporting people between CBDs and townships, and surrounding spaza shops within townships. However, then I realised that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

I have now been through almost all the township malls in Gauteng, and I found out that most of them have liquor stores while none of them has any bookshops. What does that mean in terms of our society supply and demand? Is there more need for booze than for books? Vance (2015) mentions that education stimulates the desire and ability of what you already are. Someone once ironically stated that when it comes to liquor, when one is intoxicated, you start to see the person they really are. The world is moving fast. Alcohol has done more damage than good, irrespective of how many people are hired by the liquor companies.

Some people believe that others are responsible for causing their visions to fail. Maybe their parents could not afford to send them to varsity. Maybe the environment that they grew up in, did not have people who were successful in life. However, we are all responsible for where we are going. I once came across a saying, *When you are born poor it is not your fault but when you die poor it is your fault*. Everyone is at least capable of self-management. Everyone is capable of doing good in our society, while collectively we are all capable of lifting our society up. Having more liquor shops than bookshops, calls for a serious crisis.

This is how potential problem solvers pray: “Dear God, South Africa has got one of the best infrastructures in Africa. South Africa has the potential to combine all African countries into one so that they could take advantage of what you have blessed them with. South Africa has the power to turn Africa around,

however, South Africa has its own challenges. South Africa lacks good leadership. Our future generation is drowning in alcohol and drugs, while some of those that have been elected to lead, are only in it for personal gain. Dear Lord, please baptise me with fresh ideas so that I can solve some of these problems? Take me to the right partners to make it happen? Thank you, Lord.”

God will download creative ideas into our minds when we change our thinking and prayer patterns. We need to stop looking for shortcuts to the top and start looking for challenges that we can solve for humanity. Kloppers mentions that “[g]ood mining companies create unique, encompassing value in their communities. Profits are immensely important to investors, and the tax on profits similarly to governments; however, to the communities that they operate in, mining companies deliver far, far more. Profits are only what is left over for the investor: after jobs have been created, training done, community infrastructure established, industrial nodes incubated, workers, suppliers and contractors paid, and they in turn having paid their own taxes. Yet the current public debate is almost always about royalties and taxes, and not about overall benefits.”

One of the many examples that I got from Mike Teke was that “he kicks down doors” To get opportunities. He does not wait for them to come to him, but he plans and approaches them in a hard way. When I once inquired from him, obviously with my practical thinking, Mike told me, “Fanele, I also meet people that seem like giants to me and sometimes I get nervous before meeting them. I would be misleading you if I were to tell you exactly what to say. However, when you get there after kicking that door open, you’d better know exactly what you want. Most of the leaders that I have met, are concerned about society, and always looking for better ways to elevate people from poverty. I think the biggest problem is that people expect to be handed over money rather than opportunities. People rather opt for the fruit than for the seed.” Legere mentions that “it’s kind of fun at my age to go back and talk to business-school people. I tell them, ‘I can summarize everything you need to know to lead a major corporation. Are you prepared to write this down?’ And then they all get ready. I tell them I can summarize how I succeed as a leader: Listen to your employees, listen to your customers, shut the f*** up, and do what they tell you.”

Throughout my life I have dealt with different kinds of people. I have engaged in new challenging activities such as boxing that changed my life for good. I have led, been blamed, and took the most punishment. I have fallen before and had no choice but to change, get up, and move on.

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FANELE MNGUNI has a Masters in information technology (IT) and a Post Graduate diploma in Business Administration from GIBS. He is also certified in AWS Architecture, TOGAF, ITIL and Microsoft Business Intelligence. He started his career as developer in IT and worked his way up to more senior roles within Geographical and Financial information sector. Fanele is highly motivated with ability and track record to develop people and workable business solutions. His core skills lies within creativity, problem solving, analytical, communication, teamwork and people management. Among many recognitions from Employee of the month, Fanele was recently been nominated and identified as a COVID-19 lockdown Hero for his food feeding scheme initiative that fed over 20000 people and 100 families. This also supported surrounding businesses which resulted in preservation of employment. Fanele is currently a managing director of company called TomTracks (Pty) Ltd which provides IT services to the Financial institutions and South African Taxi Industry. Fanele is a strong believer in education as one of many ways to eradicate poverty within communities.

