

The Tenets of Good Leadership

Education is said to be an important tool in the development of the nation. Regardless of age and the position people hold in society, education is one thing that never stops. The celebration of Education Month in Barbados, is a reminder of the importance of the role of teachers in the education of our people. The education and training which trade union leaders receive, should make them aware of the awesome responsibility which they carry in influencing the behaviour and actions of others. If there are to understand what is expected of them, they should be cognizant that there are guiding ethical principles which guide the behaviour of each individual in our society.

It is expected that these would inform the behaviour of those who assume leadership positions in organizations. Added to the ethical principles, leaders are expected to observe standards, best practices, and to follow procedures and process. In any organization where the behaviour of leadership falls short of expected standards, this tends to call the integrity of the individual organization into question. This all speaks to responsible leadership. This would mean that fairness, honour and integrity would be benchmarks that constitute responsible leadership.

Those leaders who resort to hiding behind closed doors, violating all ethical standards of behaviour and showing no regard for discipline and order, inclusive of a dress code, must be condemned. They can be best described as unprofessional and obnoxious. The hurdling of insults, and the personal attack on the character and credibility of individual colleagues is a feature of the inept behaviour which such persons display. It even gets worse, as for the most part, those offending persons seemingly always want to get their own way. When this does not happen, it is the norm for these individuals to openly threaten an action that is intended to hurt the organization which they serve and are supposedly committed.

Evidenced by the behaviour of such individuals, there is often little or no respect shown for the collective decision making process. It is unfortunate that such individuals tend to want to impose themselves and their will on others. In doing so, this can result in disruptive behaviour. What becomes distasteful is where gross disrespect is shown for the rules and regulations of the organization. It is unfortunate that for a matter of convenience that some are prepared to breach them and even defend their actions.

It is unimaginable that in a society where laws and rules governing how organizations function, that any leader would subscribe to openly breaking of the laws and rules which govern the way an individual organization functions. This tantamount to be hypocritical and dishonest. It begs the question as to how a trade union leader could publicly ridicule an employer for dishonestly

and for failing to play by the rules, when the leader is guilty in his or her backyard of doing the same.

It is important that our leaders are vocal and not conservative, and are prepared to question and raise their concerns. It would however be appreciated if in their delivery, this was done with a level of decency and decorum, and without any apparent sense of malice; where others are accused of machinations and unilateral actions. There is no place for cantankerous behaviour. Persons should behave with maturity and not set bad examples for future leaders to follow. Leaders are expected to be good teachers and to lead by example by observing principles, standards and best practices. Most importantly, they are expected to show respect. It is double standard to accuse others of not showing respect, while at the same time demonstrating the same poor judgement. Leaders have a responsibility to practice what they preach.

Added to all this, leaders should refrain from distorting the truth. Leaders who display poor personal ethics have some serious introspection to do. Those who present themselves in public as being gracious and concern about the welfare of people, ought not to show a two sided face. Let's not be self-righteous, but it would serve the interest of all if such leaders would at least have a conscience.

If we are to overcome these challenges, it is important that each individual develop a good personal codes of ethics. This is good advice for those who teach and those who learn. The advice offered is for each of us to tell the truth, show concern for the wellbeing of others, show respect for the authority of others, be trustworthy, practice honesty, comply and obey the law, play by the rules, refrain from taking unfair advantage of others and strive to do good.

Leaders are strongly encouraged to avoid harming others, trust and maintain confidence, maintain confidentiality, be transparent and open, don't attempt deceive or mislead others, promise less and deliver more, avoid wastage, respect the beliefs of others and honour their commitments.