

LEADERSHIP'S FIRST COMMANDMENT

Know Thyself

WHAT DOES "BREAKTHROUGH LEADERSHIP" MEAN? Why is it personal? And why is it the subject of the first special issue in HBR's 79-year history?

One question at a time, please.

The term "breakthrough leadership," as we define it, is multivalent – it points in several directions at once. Certainly, it involves breaking through old habits of thinking to uncover fresh solutions to perennial problems. It also means breaking through the interpersonal barriers that we all erect against genuine human contact. It's leadership that breaks through the cynicism that many people feel about their jobs and helps them find meaning and purpose in what they do. And it breaks through the limits imposed by our doubts and fears to achieve more than we believed possible.

Those who would lead these voyages of inner and outer discovery face extraordinary demands on their time, energy, and intellectual capacities. But the emotional demands are just as daunting, argue Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee in "Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance." Goleman, whose concept of emotional intelligence is surely one of the breakthrough ideas of the past decade, and his coauthors synthesize the latest research in psychology, neurobiology, and anthropology to show how the leader's mood can energize or deflate an entire organization. They also offer tools to help leaders gauge their own moods accurately and project the positive energy that inspires people to surpass themselves. But as the authors make clear, no tool can help the leader who

lacks self-knowledge. That's part of what we mean when we say that breakthrough leadership is personal.

The personal nature of leadership is also the focus of "All in a Day's Work." The participants in this roundtable discussion bring vast experience and varied perspectives to the everyday business of leadership, but on one central point they agree: Leaders must help their followers discover what they are good at. Leaders enable self-knowledge.

Like the participants in the roundtable, historian and Harvard Business School professor Richard Tedlow defines leadership as a personal quest, one that can produce blazing triumphs even as it plunges the leader into the darkest, most mysterious reaches of the self. In "What Titans Can Teach Us," Tedlow profiles some of history's most accomplished businessmen and probes why, despite their wealth and great achievements, they continually drove themselves and their organizations to achieve even more. His conclusions are as unsettling as they are illuminating.

You will find much more in the pages that follow, including a generous selection of leadership articles from past issues of HBR, enhanced by suggestions for further reading. As these articles make clear, the topic of leadership has preoccupied this magazine for as long as it has preoccupied its readers. So to answer the final question, we devoted an entire issue to leadership because we know our readers look to HBR for insight into this most perplexing and urgent management challenge. Great leadership itself, like the need for it, is timeless.



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