

E-Leaders Singapore

We manage as who we are

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Happy New Year!

E-Leaders, Singapore

I currently hold the Pierre-Peladeau Leadership Chair.
(the first leadership chair in Canada)

My **presentation** today consists of 12 brief points:

1. The feeling of power
2. The paranoid potential
3. Envy (aggressiveness)
4. The big conflict: me vs. the rest of the world
5. Intuition, learning and management
6. We manage as who we are
7. Internal leadership
8. Leadership, crisis of faith and feeling of imposture
9. To Find His Genuine Genius (*Désobéir*)
10. Sustainable (*durable*) or on going development
11. Personal leadership development
12. The 12th point: *The secret presentations*

1. The feeling of power: omnipotence (absolute power), real power, impotence (powerlessness)

- The feeling (fantasy) of being all-powerful: being able to do anything, right now, all by yourself...
- Feeling (fantasy) of powerlessness: no talent, no power, no hope of success...
- Realistic power = quiet strength (*virtus*)
- Not a middle power or the power of ennui, but a power that is capable of **highs** (enthusiasm) and **lows** (depression)
- Check your illusions at the door!

2. The paranoid potential

- How to talk about leadership without talking about paranoia...
- How to talk about trust without talking about suspicion and mistrust...
- People who are ambitious want to be in a place of authority
- They fantasize about overthrowing authority
- Eliminating enemies instead of managing them. Delusions of omnipotence? Dictatorships
- External *vs.* internal enemies

3. Envy **vs** healthy aggressiveness

- Envy, a mortal sin...
- Resenting other people's success
- Delighting in their failures
- Unhealthy leadership + envy = destruction
- Healthy leadership + gratitude = construction
- Management + **aggressiveness**: *ad-gredi*, to go towards
- Success, aggressiveness and guilt
- We are often suspicious of success (Christian heritage)
- Guilt → determination to fail (adolescence, state of chronic revolt, criminality)

4. The big conflict: me **vs.** the rest of the world

- Our only knowledge of the world and the universe is through ourselves, our senses, our feelings, our intelligence...
- It isn't just *me, myself and I*
- It isn't a case of **healthy or unhealthy narcissism**
- Moving beyond cognitive reasoning
- Understanding, comprehending (from *cum-prendere*, to seize or grasp completely) **vs.** explaining

4. The big conflict: me **vs.** the rest of the world (cont.)

- **The reason of senses and emotions**
- Antonio R. Damasio: *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, Harper Collins Canada, 1995
- *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, Harcourt, 2003
- **Objectivity** → most **important**
- **Subjectivity** → most **determining**

5. Intuition, learning and management

- “The Manager’s Job: Folklore and Facts”
- “Planning on the Left Side and Managing on the Right” (Mintzberg, *HBR*, 1975 and 1976)
- Forget about “normative”
- Good judgement in management = The ability to make clear decisions that are not based on immediately available knowledge or rigorous proof
- All good management is *artisanale**
- It may be more “educated,” but it’s still *artisanale**

* ***artisanale***: hand-crafted → creative, artistic, approximate, inexact

6. We manage as who we are

- With our qualities *and* our faults...
- With our natural aptitudes and our shortcomings....that's what talent is
- With our strengths and our weaknesses...
- With our skills and our ineptitudes...
- All good art assumes its flaws
- Management and leadership are also built on flaws
- ***Always relax. Never pretend. Don't overdo it.***
- Thinking outside the frame isn't abnormal
- We manage as who we are...if we're going to succeed
- Success = focus, feelings, repetition, people

7. Internal leadership

- Orchestra conductor
- Learning to lead, learning the art...
- Difference: leadership **vs.** management
- Hands → management
- Guts → heart, breath, passion
- The body feels, understands and speaks ...
- Passion, feelings, emotions...
- Head, heart, legs...

8. Leadership, crisis of faith and feeling of imposture

- Secular “crisis of faith” = philosophical crisis
- Big dreams → big doubts
- “When in doubt, affirm; when ignorant, provide details.”
- Great leaders, great successes: “If people only knew...”
- Persevere in spite of doubts
- Persevere in spite of “feeling of imposture”.
- Understand that these are only *feelings*

9. To Find His Genuine Genius (*Désobéir*)

(while continuing to be loyal and honest)

(pushing the envelope, changing the world)

- Our first leaders were Adam and Eve!
- The Bible → our unconscious
- The history of humankind began with an act of disobedience
- The serpent: “You will be like gods... all-powerful!”
- Eve got us out of the peaceful, soothing, enthralling Garden of Paradise
- Are women inherently more disobedient than men?!
- Eve gave us a whole world to discover and create...
- Way to go, Eve! → feminist movement of the 20th century
- Management and gestation, feminine and masculine...

9. To Find His Genuine Genius (*Désobéir*) (cont.)

A constant tension in leadership:

- The “poet”: from the Greek ποιεῖν, *poiein*: to make or create
- vs. the “scholar” (pejorative): in the sense of bookish, staid, afraid of creativity
- Churchill and Obama **vs.** Hitler and bin Laden

10. Sustainable (*Durable*) or ongoing development?

- Collective leadership
- Ecological, economic, social
- **Ethical**
- **Sustainable development:** needs many people
- **Life = Change**
- Sustainable development = **Death**
- Life-giving, regenerating
- People are like self-filling wells
- **“Casting”** (*finding the best people*), nourishing and enriching them

10. Sustainable (*Durable*) or ongoing development? (cont.)

- Individual responsibility
- No society or plans are possible without individual responsibility
- Plural leadership is possible when people are responsible and accountable
- Leadership can't be taught, but it can be learned (through change)

11. Personal leadership development

- Reading
- Reflection or meditation
- **Writing**
- A theme, a title
- Full sentences → more precise, more nuanced
- On a regular basis: an hour a week
- Persevere! Stay put and stick with it, even if nothing is forthcoming
- Writing will force you to go farther and more deeply into your true thoughts...to find out what you *really* think

12. The secret conferences

- You are here
- You've come to hear me talk about leadership
- Feeling of power: all-powerful, powerless
- I'm talking to intelligent people who are thinking while I'm talking
- You're thinking faster than I'm talking
- You're fantasizing even faster than you're thinking
- You know the topic of my presentation
- Everybody knows what leadership is
- The real conference is the one going on in your head
- *In your head* (Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller)

Your **“inner presentations”**

Comments & questions