

# Time to find yourself

Self-leadership can be a valuable tool for those who believe in its power

INTERVIEWED BY MARK SCOTT

Self-leadership is not about the way you lead others. It's about mastering yourself.

"Once you do that, the perfume of self-mastery creates influence in your style," says Satinder Dhiman, Ph.D., Ed.D., associate dean and chair and director of the MBA program at Woodbury University. "Your influence is predicated on who you are inside. Self-leadership is an inside-out leadership approach. It's leading from within. You have to be in touch with your deeper, truer authentic self for it to be self-leadership."

In these chaotic times when it seems like there are never enough hours in the day to get everything done, it's easy to overlook your own personal growth as a leader. But Dhiman says you should not view self-leadership as another task on your to-do list.

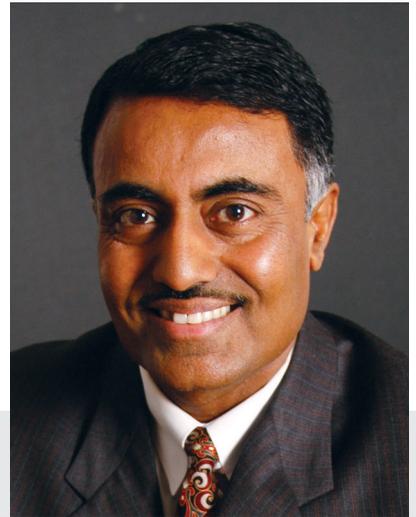
"It's not extra time nor is it something on top of the 20 other things you do every day," Dhiman says. "You should be leading from your authentic self all the time. It's called moment-to-moment intelligence. When you do that, you're also able to connect with the authentic self of others."

*Smart Business* spoke with Dhiman about the benefits of incorporating the philosophy of self-leadership into your management style.

## How do you develop your leadership style?

Everybody, regardless of who you are or what you do in life, has two basic needs. The first is the need to express yourself. Leadership is the art of self-expression and your leadership style is an extension of who you are. If it is not, it's not authentic. It's something else. In the whole universe, no scientist can find two things that are absolutely identical. Everything nature does is original, one of a kind. Why don't we do

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that in our own leadership style?

The second need we all have is the need to surpass ourselves. I want to surpass myself. Sometimes we look for that in our children. I could not do that, I want my child to go to Harvard. I was not able to be successful, so I want my child to become a doctor. This is the need to surpass. Every human being has this need. It is not very well-articulated, but it is there. I want to self-express and I want to surpass myself. Self-leadership accomplishes both in one stroke. Self-leadership is the art of self-expression and ultimately it's the art of surpassing oneself.

## Why do companies struggle to reach consensus?

The most problematic thing you see in corporate leadership is lack of trust. People don't trust. They don't know where the values are. If by harnessing my deeper self through self-leadership, I'm able to create more authenticity, more openness and more transparency around me, then the other things will take care of themselves.

If there is a person you don't trust, even if the person is saying something useful, you will doubt it. But if the person you trust is saying something you don't agree with, because you trust the person, you may go along with it. Self-leadership works great in what I call consensus building in the organization. Why? You are operating from

your authentic self and connecting with the authentic self of others.

Both of you, you as a leader and your followers as one entity, you are trying to express and surpass yourself. There is nothing more exciting in life. If you can go to work and drive back at the end of the day and say, "Today, I got a lot of opportunities to express myself. I was in this meeting and everybody was paying attention. They actually heard what I said." That's great.

## How does self-leadership apply to vision?

There is big difference between shared vision and vision shared. So when you are authentic, you connect with people at different levels. There is less of a lack of a trust. Lack of trust breeds cluelessness. When people don't trust the leader, the leader gets removed from reality because nobody is going to tell you the truth. They don't trust you. If you are not being told the truth, you are already several steps removed from the reality of being a leader. This is a perfect recipe for cluelessness.

## What does self leadership do for an organization?

Everyone wants to do good work. Self-leadership allows everyone to do original, creative, and excellent work. It is the art of inspiring excellence by allowing people to express and surpass themselves. ●