

The Art of Pain in Leadership

Leaders are not super heroes. They are ordinary people called by God and willing to sacrifice their time, gifts, etc. to lead others. They have this internal urge to alter the status quo to create a different world. But it comes with a price tag, the cost of leadership, and the cost includes six realities: crisis, complexity, betrayal, loneliness, weariness, and glory. As leaders seek to lead well, a lot of pain occurs as weaknesses and sins are revealed in leaders as well as followers. That pain is part of the leadership journey and is sometimes forgotten or considered failure. Many books on the market teach us, “Take these 20 steps and you will be a successful leader...” That biblical leadership is the reverse and is mainly servant leadership is therefore often contradictory to the secular perception. It is leading out of weakness and pain, trusting God to be the Shepherd.

Evi Rodemann has been involved in creating and organising events for young people and churches locally, nationally, and on the European level since she was a teenager. Events have always played a vital part in her own walk with God, but she has also seen how they bring Christians together and mobilise them for a missional lifestyle. As well as receiving training in event management, Evi also earned an MA in European mission with a focus on the impact of conferences. She studied missions in the Netherland and has worked in India, Africa, and Hong Kong, but her strongest passion remains Europe and helping its young people to find their kingdom role and live missionally wherever God has called them. Until 2016 she directed Mission-Net for nine years and organized four European youth mission congresses. In addition to being engaged in various European networks such as Lausanne and the European Youth Ministry Network, Evi also works part-time in an aluminium company.

I. Introduction

“Leading is very likely the most costly thing you will ever do. And the chances are very good that it will never bring you riches or fame or praise in exchange for your great sacrifices.”

A. Leadership and pain is inevitable

a. “60% of all leaders do not finish” – Michael Oh, CEO Lausanne (said at ELF 2016)

b. What kind of bridge are you?

II. Story of Jacob (Gen 25-35)

Climax:

Gen 32:26 “I will not let you go unless you bless me”

v. 30 “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared”

III. Leading from who you are not what you do

“My grace is sufficient for you” 2 Cor 12:7-10

IV. Five universal leadership challenges

- A. Crisis
- B. Complexity
- C. Betrayal
- D. Loneliness
- E. Weariness
- F. Glory (added by Allender)

Gen 32: Jacob wrestles with God and gains a new name as well as a leader’s limp

V. Faulty and effective responses to leadership challenges

- A. Cowardice – Courage
- B. Rigidity – Depth
- C. Narcissism – Gratitude
- D. Hiding – Openness
- E. Fatalism - Hope

VI. Dealing with pain

God calls us to brokenness, not performance; to relationships, not commotion; to grace, not success. 1. Tim 1:15-16

2 Cor 12:9-10

Suggested Readings:

Allender, Dan B. *Leading with a limp*.

(good book review: <http://msd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Reflection-on-Leading-with-a-Limp.pdf>)

Chand, Samuel R., *Leadership Pain*