

Practical Lessons I Have Learned From My Own Mistakes in Leadership

It is good to learn from the mistakes of others and not from your own. Still, our own mistakes we remember much better. In my career of around 40 years of leading, I have developed my personal "code" that works for me: A leader takes time and senses opportunities that are future proof and are manageable; a leader detects potential in people he meets and recruit them, knows his limits, and so forth. This lecture will explain how I have discovered those obvious truths for myself.

Henryk Król is the President of DR Studio and CEO of DEOrecordings Association, an innovative media ministry based in Poland that combines traditional media (6 FM Radio stations), art (professional recording studio and publishing), and new tools (13 Web portals, multimedia productions) with deep, Bible-centered convictions and a primary goal of evangelism. His heart is in building cooperation and partnership across denominations and countries to network for better effectiveness in spreading the Gospel. Henry holds a PHD in engineering. His research focuses on how to best use the Internet without forgetting to "stand firm" on the biblical truth as the final authority. He is married to Boguslawa, with whom he has three children: Filip, Paulina and Szczepan.

1. Background

- a. As a young man, I radically disliked "leaders", people who pushed themselves up front and wanted to make all the decisions. In a Christian young people group, and later when I was attending a student group, I played guitar and naturally had to "kick off" some activities... but I would have never considered myself to be a leader, just the opposite, I loudly argued "we are all equal". Somehow, without reading any books on leadership (in Communist days they were not available, anyway!) I felt by intuition that "a lot can be accomplished when nobody takes credit for it...". As far as I remember, I was using the plural form – "we" instead of "me".
- b. After completing my studies, I started my University career both in teaching and research. As a young person, I very soon discovered that there are plenty of opportunities, but very few people care to pick them up... all the political conditions were anti-entrepreneurial, but for some reason I decided to go for it. Soon, as a 25-year old engineer I was in charge of a small research group (I arranged the monetary grant for it) with 4 other folks who were older and had all the degrees, happily working for me.
- c. At this same time we started a Christian Music Band in Poland, and our focus was evangelism. There were ten of us in this group, and again, no leader! But when someone had to go up front, order something, plan for concerts, etc – I was the one doing it... while still saying I was not a leader...
- d. As time passed, this ministry matured and eventually changed into a business. Finally I had to take official responsibility for leading and directing it. We started as a professional music recording studio and a small Christian music publishing company, but when freedom came to Poland in 1989 – we expanded, adding lots of other media centered activities, including international music distribution, cooperation with international ministries, starting an FM radio network, developing Internet outreach ministry, starting a software development group and

a content development team. The latest thing we are focusing on is the development of effective follow-up tools for new believers and monitoring their efficiency/outcomes by mobile data-mining systems that we are developing in-house. All the outreach, Internet work is based on volunteer involvement – over 200 trained e-coaches and over 400 small group leaders.

2. I have made many mistakes – learning by doing:

- a. Thinking too much about myself and my abilities
- b. Not listening to good advice
- c. Making decisions without properly understanding the situation
- d. Trying to make things all by myself
- e. Not caring enough for my family
- f. Not caring for physical health
- g. Forgetting daily spiritual edification
- h. Neglecting analysis of time management and life management
- i. Not caring enough for co-workers and employees
- j. Forgetting to read/study what others are writing/telling

- k. Sticking too long in my comfort zone— doing the same activities/methods over and over again; but, times change, and so must methods.

This list is definitely not complete; it could go on and on...

- a. A great discovery. There are plenty of good books written on leadership. It is good to study them, always try to improve and get inspired, but my personal great discovery was to notice that ALL those good books can be summarized in simple statements as written in the Bible, over 2000 years ago, and Biblical principles work very well even today... just a few examples:
 - i. “Love your neighbor... as yourselves” (people will love working with you, your customers will love you and flock to you...)
 - ii. “If you want to be first ...serve” (it will be a very large influence on everybody in your company/ministry...)
 - iii. “Whatever you do, do it like you’re doing it for the Lord” (this sets a standard of excellence and adds PASSION that is so important to have in your followers...)
 - iv. “Treat others with reverence” – (people will love to partner and cooperate with you)
 - v. “First commandment” – (it puts life in a proper context, under the right authority and set of principles)

3. Conclusions: