
Personnel Management

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Abstract

Everyone is a manager. A man may not have big factories and unions to manage, but he, as a house holder, may have a few children and some relatives and friends to manage. Wife has to manage her husband and husband has to manage his wife. Parents have to manage their children and children have to manage their parents to get things done. You find that management is involved everywhere, whether one occupies a managerial position or not. Thus everyone is a manager.

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Introduction

A manager is a leader and a leader must set an example. I find that the following verse of the Bhagavad Gita is very relevant to this:

Yadyadarati sresthastattadevetaro Jonah Sa yatpramanarh kurute lokastadanuvartate

Whatever a leader does, another person does that very thing. Whatever he upholds as authority, an ordinary person follows that.

(Bhagavad Gita III 21)

A srestha is a person who is looked up to by others: he or she is supposed to know, supposed to lead. In a family, the eldest person becomes the srestha and all others look upto him or her. In factories, mills and commercial organisations, you have a person at the top, a chairperson — who can be a man or a woman — who is also a srestha because the position gives that status to the person in the setup.

Then again, we find a hierarchy, a line of s'resthas. There may be a group of people reporting to the chairperson and every person in that group is a srestha for a few others working under him or her, and so on. Thus every person becomes srestha for some people and so it is clear that there is not just one person who is srestha. Everyone is a srestha for a few. Even if a man is a nobody, an unemployed, he is still a srestha for a few family members who have not yet given up their looking upto him.

This srestha, the one who is a leader, the one others look upto - whatever he does, whatever life style he follows - is followed by others who look upto him. If a man works for eighteen hours a day, without any expectation of appreciation or applause, if he works day in and day out in this manner, how can people who look upto him remain idle ? If you are a srestha in a given setup and keep doing whatever is to be done at a given time in a given situation, you find people who look upto you also doing whatever is to be done by them.

Again, whatever this srestha purusa accepts as pramana, whatever he upholds as authority, whatever he considers valuable, people around him will also follow that value.

Thus, Lord Krishna, in effect, says to Arjuna, "If you run away from this battle-field, I tell you, all others will also follow you. If you fail to do what is to be done, others will also do exactly that, because you are a srestha purusa, whether you like it or not".

If you are occupying a managerial position, you cannot afford to be lackadaisical, you cannot be loose in your value structure, because others will follow whatever you set as an example. If the top man in an organisation takes lakhs of rupees in bribe, the office peon will at least ask for five rupees to move papers from one desk to another!

So, this is a very simple element in managing things - set an example.

Love What You Do

You should have love for whatever you do. If you have lost love for what you are doing, you can change your job and take up another one where you can do what you love. Or, discover love for whatever you are doing at present. People often tell me, "Swamiji, I don't like my job." I tell them, "Why don't you give up this job and take up another one?" The reply comes, 'I love the money that the job brings, but not the job. I am satisfied with the emoluments, but not with the job!' You naturally will not have job-satisfaction because you do not love what you do.

There are some people who complain wherever they are. They manage to find some reason or the other for their dissatisfaction. But their problem is much deeper, connected to their own past.

You can find satisfaction from whatever you do, whether it is cooking or sweeping or anything.

There was a traffic policeman in Delhi. His post of duty was right in front of Rashtrapati Bhavan. The only thing he had to do was to watch the traffic and give signals with his hands. But do you know what I once found there? I found that the traffic was not moving even when signalled to move. Why? Because people were watching him! He was moving his hands in such an artistic manner that it was a joy to watch him. He had converted his job into an art. You could see how much this man was enjoying his job. A traffic policeman has one of the most mechanical jobs and I used to sympathise with these people because all they have to do, for the whole day, is to move their hands up and down and sideways. But this one was thoroughly enjoying his job. If you enjoy what you do, you will find others also enjoy whatever they do.

If you are dissatisfied with yourself, you can never manage anybody. Even when I am talking to you, if I keep saying something without myself being involved in the very subject-matter, you would prefer to do something other than listening to this talk.

Discover the Self-esteem

Your dissatisfaction with your job quite often has nothing to do with the job. It is the dissatisfaction with you as a person. You will find yourself dissatisfied, no matter what you do, if you are dissatisfied with yourself as a person. There will be no job in the world that will satisfy you.

Suppose, you are an engineer by profession, but you are not too happy with your job. Suppose, you happen to be good at music and you decide to turn into a professional musician. I tell you, it will take three days for you, to be dissatisfied with yourself as a professional musician.

Presently, you enjoy singing and your friends enjoy listening to you. But, once you become a professional, the situation would be very demanding. There is a keen competition. You may not find an applauding audience. The old problem may return. So, you should look into yourself and find out the reasons why you are not satisfied with yourself.

There are a number of reasons why you may be dissatisfied with yourself. You may have an opinion, a complex about yourself. There are people who always criticise themselves no matter what the situation is. This is due to what they call internalizing. Especially in India, people keep internalizing a lot. Someone else does something and I consider myself responsible for it. We generally have our worth estimated by the opinions of others. If you ask someone, "Why did you get married when you don't have a job as yet?" the answer is likely to be, "What will others think if I don't get married?" Even about dowry, some people tell me, "I was not interested in dowry, but what would my parents think?" If you ask the parents as to why they accepted the dowry, they would say, "We don't want dowry, but what will the people think of us?"

All the time, we think about what others would think of us. It is one thing to consider what others think about us, but it is a great weakness if we take the opinion of others as a basis of our judgement about ourselves. We have such a low opinion about ourselves that even if others say we are wonderful, we continue to think we are useless, worthless. Even if the whole humanity says I am wonderful, I think within myself, "These people do not know me. They would not say this if they really knew me."

Please understand that you are as much worth as you value yourself. Your value has nothing to do with what others think of you. You are worthy as much as you think of yourself as a person. You are valuable to the extent you respect yourself and to the extent you have some dignity, some self-esteem about yourself. You can manage things if you think you are somebody. If you think you are nobody, you are unfortunate. Your superiors have committed a mistake in appointing you in this position because you can never command respect, and therefore, you cannot manage other people.

The trick of managing people is that you command respect, not demand it. In that case, you find that people respect you the moment you walk into a situation. They respect you because they know that you know your job well. Your self-esteem manifests itself in all your perceptions, decisions and actions. So, every person in a managerial position should look into the self and discover a self-worth. There is no way of commanding respect unless you discover your self-worth.

Care for the People

Another important thing is that you care for the person whom you want to manage. Even if you are managing a machine, you should take care of the machine. Is it not true? If you want that your car should serve you well, should not leave you in a lurch, you must take good care of it. If this is so about a machine, what to talk of the people whom you are supposed to manage? They are much more than machines. They work for you, not so much out of love for you, but out of love for themselves. They work for you as long as they do not have an opportunity to do something better. If they are offered a visa to the U.S.A., perhaps most of your staff and even some of your

managers will leave! A person is working for you because he or she does not have a better job than this and so naturally, you have to think as to how to win that person. Every person has to be won and you cannot win people by demand.

What is it that wins the person who is working for you? What is it that is needed over and above the salary and the privileges you offer to the person? What is it that makes the other person work for you with love and freedom and a certain sense of service? It is care. This is the new thing they are paying attention to. They give holidays to the employees, give them open tickets, and so on. But, is this care? Not really. Such benefits are considered to be care in the beginning, but after sometime, the employees consider them to be their privilege. For example, bonus was considered to be a favour in the olden days, but nowadays, it has become a part of the salary, regardless of whether the employer makes profit or not. In the beginning, it is viewed as an act of kindness, but in course of time, it becomes a part of the deal. So, care is not merely economic consideration: it is something that comes from an individual. Management certainly involves a number of things, but the most important is the benign care for the other person who is working for you or along with you. That calls for an understanding of the concept of duty and sanctity of work.

Duty v/s Rights

The concept of duty has always been there in our society, in our culture. Nowhere was the concept of duty given as much importance as it was given in our culture. In fact, we did not have any rights at all.

This was a society of dharma, of duty, and not a society of adhikars, rights. Western society gives a great deal of importance to rights. When there are rights, duties must also be spelt out. You have no rights without the corresponding duties. If you have the right to earn, you have the duty to pay taxes also. If you have the right to drive on the road, it is your duty to observe the traffic rules also. In a society where rights are emphasised, duties must also be spelt out. In our society, however, we emphasised the duties and spelt out the rights.

The duty of the citizen is the right of the state. The duty of the employer is the right of the employees. Even in personal relationship, the duty of the husband is the right of the wife and vice versa. The duty of the parents becomes the right of the children, and the duty of the children becomes the right of the parents. This was our society.

Some element continues even today. That is why we have not had a coup in our country. Many countries have become independent after the World War II, but most of them have had coups. Ours is a vast country, not a very happy country either, and we have been having many problems too, and thus, the conditions of a coup have been there. But we have not had a coup. What is the reason? People give many reasons, but in my opinion, there is really one reason and that is this duty that remains in our blood. We may not understand this concept very well, but it is there with us.

Sanctity of Work

There is nothing superior or inferior in duty. Just as there are different components in a machine and they all perform their respective functions, so also different members of the society

perform their respective functions without the notion of superiority or inferiority. Each job is as sacred as any other job. In India, dignity of labour was total. It is not what you do which makes the action great; it is the attitude with which you do that makes it great. We must assimilate this. Everyone who is supposed to manage some people must understand this very well, understand it intimately.

I should see the sanctity of work in any job I manage. In the olden days, kings felt that to rule was their duty. They looked upon themselves only as instruments. The ruler thought it to be his duty to rule, and the ruled thought it to be their duty to pay tribute to the state. The ruler was happy ruling the subjects who in turn, were happy being ruled by a person who was conscious of his duty. And so one has to appreciate the dignity of labour. The management should see that the workers enjoy a dignity. We have to realise that the man who does even a menial job for us, is in no way inferior to us. Then there is humanity. Then we meet the person. I consider this very important.

I myself have managed a number of institutions and I continue to manage some even now. This implies management of persons on my part. I think I have been very successful in management of persons. People who work with me do not complain. They do not have anything against me, or against the work they do. They seem to enjoy any work given to them; in fact, they seem to be waiting for an opportunity to work, and naturally therefore, I have something to say in this matter. If I find it easy to manage people, it is because I do not assume an air of superiority, even though people like to look upon me as someone superior. And I find that they feel they are understood. They feel they are one with me and I find there is no inferiority or superiority, there is no complex.

Make people feel they are understood

Can you operate in a manner that the person who is working for you, or the person talking to you, does not develop a complex? The person may be your secretary or an officer or just a labourer. Can you talk to a person without creating in him a complex? "I am talking to my boss"? If you do that, I tell you, you are the greatest personnel manager, because that person will give everything to you. A human being is a human being. Money cannot buy a human being. If a person is able to understand you, he or she gets satisfaction. That person discovers self-esteem and self-respect. At least, you do not contribute to the self-disrespect of the other person. Everyone feels elevated in your presence.

I have been fairly successful in communicating with my audiences. I am able to convey profound ideas to an audience without any difficulty even when the audience is not adequately prepared. Do you know why? As I respect my audience, I never look down upon my audience. I also never look down upon my students who therefore, always look upon themselves as people capable of learning, and even if they are not capable in the beginning they become capable in time. That is the best way of communication. You respect your audience and you find the audience also begins to understand you, and that makes you also talk to them. The listeners feel they are understood, they are cared.

And so, care for the people and make them understand. If you want to make them understand, make sure you do not create in them a complex that they are in any way inferior. You must intimately realise the dignity, the sanctity of work. Whether the person you are dealing with is a sweeper or an attendant or a supervisor or even your chairman, you do not lose your dignity addressing that person, because you have respect for yourself. Then, you find that management becomes very natural to you, because you begin to talk to people. People are not machines. Even machines require maintenance; people require recognition that they are people.

In fact, there are no people; there are only persons. When you call them 'people', it means you treat them as a flock of sheep, while if you recognize them as persons, you find a relationship. Managing people is called personnel management. When you have relationship with people, management becomes natural.

Every person in a position of management has to make those, whom he or she happens to manage, feel that they are understood. It is said that a manager should clearly spell out instructions and responsibilities. That is fine, but this aspect is more important: Do you make them feel they are understood? It is not difficult - and it is difficult if you do not care, if you do not know. Even in personal life, it is important that you make the other person feel that he or she is understood. If you can make one person, just one person in life, feel understood, it is a great gift you have given.

All you have to do to make the other person feel understood, is to listen to the person, listen with care. Then the person is one with you. Then there is a mingling of hearts. Then the person does not have any fear. Then he or she works for you. The other person takes your orders or instructions as his or her. In fact, there are no orders; there is just work to be done. In a given setup, it may be your job to make decisions, give instructions, and it may be the job of some others to execute them. Everyone in an organisation has a different job to do. You have one job, the other person has another. Both are jobs all right, and everyone has to work, and things get done.

Thus, there are two things involved in winning a person:

- 1) To make sure that a complex is not created in another person, that the other person does not feel that he or she is being judged by you and
- 2) To make the other person feel that he or she is understood. For them to feel they are understood, you just have to listen, that is all. You may have to listen even if you know what the other person is going to say.

Personal Management

Lastly, for managing others, it is necessary that the person first manages oneself - personal management comes before personnel management!

For managing myself, I must have the capacity to remain free from internalizing the situations, because internalization is one of the important reasons for my not being efficient. I am, no doubt, responsible for my actions, my behaviour, my feelings, but I am not responsible for the behaviour and feelings of others - unless I am. If my action has caused some problem to some person, I am responsible for it, but Otherwise I am not responsible for the feelings, behaviour and

actions of other people. We must see this very clearly. Otherwise we keep on internalizing, in which case, we do not deal with situations objectively and feel sad and frustrated. Somebody feels sad, I internalize it, and then I feel sad! This is an old thinking habit, a good old childhood feeling.

For example, when parents quarrel in the presence of their child, the child feels helpless and therefore feels guilty that it is responsible for the quarrel. This feeling remains in the mind even when the person is grown up and when someone else feels sad and frustrated, this person feels responsible for it. This internalization has no truth at all, and the person cannot set an example because he or she keeps reacting all the time. One feels depressed, sad and angry naturally, because sadness always ends up in anger. Anger is an expression of sadness, the pain that you feel within. Anger is only a release, but you feel depressed when it has gone away. Since sadness is the cause of anger, you feel sad after the outburst of anger. That is why you find some people are either angry or sad. If you ask the reason for their sadness, they become angry! And they become sad once the anger has gone. Non-fulfilment of a desire leaves you sad, frustrated, and that gets transformed into anger.

Some people have a notion that they must become angry in order to manage. People around someone who often gets angry, are always anxious because this person would get angry any time. They work on anger psychosis. But this does not work. They try to keep you in good humour because you are prone to get angry any time. They try to find methods to see that you do not get angry. They will not work for you because they have no respect for you.

There was an officer in an organisation, and this man used to get angry on certain issues. So, whenever a new recruit came, the seniors used to warn him, "Don't talk about these things to this officer because he gets angry". Then they used to demonstrate. They would take the new recruit to the officer and raise the particular topic. The officer would immediately get angry and thus, the new recruit was taught how to handle the officer. This means the officer was predictable. Every woman knows when the husband would get angry. Every child knows what would arouse the anger of the father. Mothers educate their children about the areas in which the father is vulnerable. Everyone has a set of buttons - red buttons - and if anyone happens to touch any of them, the person jumps! This is vulnerability.

If you think you can get things done by being angry, you are wrong. You will never be a good manager. You are unfit for a managerial position, if you are a rigid man, an angry man. You cannot even be a good husband. So you have to learn. You should learn that anger does not pay. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes anger as an enemy sitting in your own heart.

How to deal with this anger? The first thing is to know that anger does not pay. It is like dealing with alcohol. The first thing in dealing with alcohol, to stop alcohol, is to know that alcohol is no good.

The second is to realise that one has no power over it. Then one can change in no time. Similarly, you can change if you realise that you have no power over anger, because anger does not consult you, does not seek your permission before coming. It possesses you, takes hold of you.

An angry man cannot manage himself, let alone managing others. He cannot manage his own words. He would even tell his son, "You are the son of an idiot!" You have no control over your actions because you have no control over your words. Once angry, you cannot manage anything. Then people have to manage you! In fact, the subordinates manage the anger of their superiors. It is hard to determine whether the manager manages the staff or they manage the manager! They know exactly when he will get angry and what to do then. They know how to flatter him, keep him in good humour, because an angry man is vulnerable.

A person who is objective can neither be flattered nor can be made angry. The person who is subject to anger, is also subject to flattery. You have no opinion about yourself when you get angry and when you have no opinion about yourself, you can be easily flattered. And therefore, there are always people who get things done by flattering you. That destroys the whole setup.

When once you say you have no power over anger, your heart opens for prayers. Prayer becomes meaningful when you see your helplessness. Otherwise, prayer is a routine. When you recognise that you have no power over anger, then you can pray, "O Lord, please give the composure, the serenity, the poise in dealing with situations objectively." Then you find that anger goes away in no time.

Thus, you first have to recognise that anger is a bad management, that it does not pay, and secondly, you have to see that you have no power over anger. Then you open your heart to the Lord. Then you will find that anger is not unmanageable. To manage your anger is personal management which comes before personnel management. If you first manage yourself, you will find you can manage any number of people.

To sum up, your ability to manage others depends upon what you are, your self-esteem and your self-worth. When you deal with other people, make sure that you do not cause any anxiety, any fear and any complex in the other person. Do not create a feeling in the other person that he or she is being judged by you. In your communication, see that the other person feels that he or she is understood. That is very important besides your being understandable! Lastly, you manage yourself by managing your anger, frustration etc., by being prayerful. With these, you will certainly be a good manager of yourself and the people you happen to manage.

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Om Tat Sat