



TOUCHSTONES

a monthly journal of Unitarian Universalism

January 2020

Authority & Leadership

Wisdom Story



Introduction to the Theme *Authority*

We Unitarian Universalists have struggled with external authority. This predisposition emerged in the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church held that scripture, tradition, and the magisterium (the teaching office of the Church) were the authority on matters of faith. For Martin Luther, scripture was the primary source of authority (*sola scriptura*). He insisted that doctrines of the Church not found in Scripture be discarded. Luther elevated laity to the “universal priesthood,” in which every member of the church had the responsibility for teaching and expounding on

Christianity. Ferenc Dávid (1510 –1579), the founder and first bishop of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, also rejected the authority of the Catholic Church when he asserted, “Egy Az Isten (God is One).” Unitarianism, as it evolved during the Reformation, stressed freedom in religion, the unrestricted use of reason in religion rather than reliance upon external authority of past tradition, and generous tolerance of differing religious views.

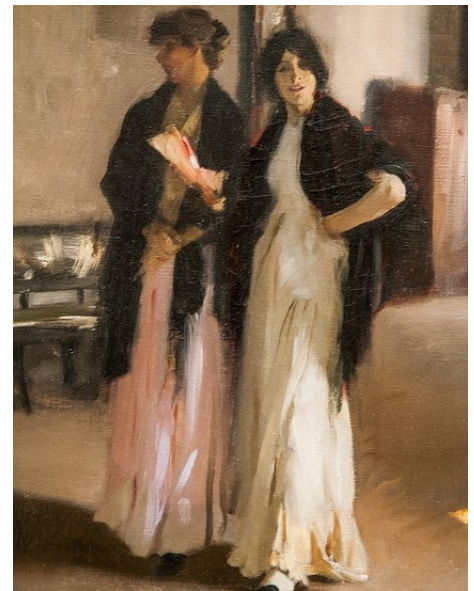
Our religious tradition was further shaped by the Enlightenment and by the Puritan’s *Cambridge Platform* of 1648, which established our form of governance. It made churches independent of any higher ecclesiastical authority. It also affirmed the authority for the gathered members of each congregation to choose officers, admit members, admonish or expel members, or restore those who had been expelled. The *Platform* affirmed the authority of clergy based

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Truth and Parable

a Yiddish folktale, retold by Brian Strum

Once, two beautiful women named Truth and Parable lived together on the outskirts of town. Each thought herself the most attractive, so they quarreled and argued until they finally decided to have a contest: whoever attracted the most attention while walking through the village would be considered the most attractive.



On the appointed day, they walked to the edge of the village and Truth decided to go first. She was confident that everyone seeks Truth and wants to know Truth, so she began to walk through the village, smiling and greeting people as she went. To her chagrin, everyone began to move back inside their houses, glancing suspiciously over their shoulders. As she reached the far side of the village, only a few people still stood outside their houses. Fearing that she would lose the contest, she decided to attract as

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Authority, Leadership & Building Beloved Community

One day, Jesus was walking in the temple courts and the chief priests, scribes, and elders, men who were actually plotting to kill Jesus, asked him, “By what authority are you doing these things?” That is a central question in any human endeavor. The authority for building beloved community comes from the members of a community who want to live into that new, empowering vision, but a leader is needed who shares their vision. The work of building a beloved community is daunting. It requires skillful leaders and dedicated followers. Warren Bennis and Jan Goldsmith write, “The distinctive role of leadership ... is to focus on ‘know-why’ before ‘know-how.’” The ‘know-why’ informs the vision and cultivates and expands commitment and motivation for all involved.

Touchstones is committed to exploring liberal theology. This journal is supported by subscriptions from Unitarian Universalist congregations. For daily meditations, photos, and more visit/like Touchstones at <https://www.facebook.com/Touchpossibility/>

Building Beloved Community

Truth Disguised

(Continued from page 1) **Wisdom Story**



much attention as possible, so she threw off her clothing and walked back through the town wearing nothing at all. Surely now she would attract

lots of attention.

The remaining people, however, saw her coming and scuttled into their houses, closed their doors, and closed their shutters, so that when she returned to Parable, the village appeared deserted. Hanging her head in shame, Truth told Parable that it was her turn.

Parable walked quietly into town, and as she passed, people began to come out of their houses, smiling and chatting together. They followed Parable through the streets, talking happily with her. By the time she had returned to Truth, the entire village was in the streets.

Truth looked at Parable in confusion and defeat. "Why is it," she asked, "that people flock to your side but spurn me? ...Do people no longer value Truth?"

"Ah," sighed Parable comfortingly.



"People do still love Truth, but they do not like the *naked* truth. If you wish people to accept you, you must clothe yourself in the mantle of story. Only then will people be able to accept and understand you." And with that, Parable took off her multi-colored robe and draped it around the shoulders of Truth, and when the two returned to the village, the people found that they did, indeed, still love Truth.

Source: http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/knowledgequest/kqwebarchives/v36/365/KQW36_5SturmRetellings.pdf

Universe Breathing

Religious Authority Personified

Rev. Tamara Lebak & Kate Starr

When Religious Authority was a young music student ...he played each note with precision, exactly as ... written.... His teachers encouraged him to imagine what mood or feeling the composer was trying to convey, and to play with more heart and soul. But Religious Authority was a literalist, and trusted neither his education nor his intuition....

...Religious Authority earned little money playing guitar and accordion on the street corners.... His music simply failed to inspire anyone.... ...[Then] he met Authenticity and Integrity, and they invited him to an improvisational jazz session.... With no sheet music to rely on, Religious Authority trusted the muscle memory, developed after years and years of practice, to make his fingers dance and linger in harmony with the others.

It was in these sessions that the pure desires of his heart recombined old melodies and familiar stanzas to create something new, something personal, meaningful, and exciting. Occasionally, Accountability, the appointed band leader, has to rein him in—sometimes to question his departure of key or tempo; other times to give the rest of band, especially Tradition, time to catch up and catch on.

The group of five friends now call themselves *Quint Essence* and they play at dance halls, nursing homes, and class reunions.... The core of their collection is original compositions.... Since joining the band, Religious Authority has added [other] wind instruments.... He especially likes the feel of B-flat as it resonates in his chest. He's convinced that sometimes he can recreate the sound of the universe breathing.

Source: Simple Gifts, The All Souls, February 2008



Courage & Clarity

Next Generation Leaders

Andy Stanley

Leaders instill courage in the hearts of those who follow. This rarely happens through words alone. It generally requires action. ...Somebody has to go first. By going first, the leader furnishes confidence to those who follow.

As a next generation leader, you will be called upon to go first. That will require courage.

...What has [already] been done is safe. But to attempt a solution to a problem that plagues ...the local church requires courage.

Unsolved problems are gateways to the future. To those who have the courage to ask the question and the tenacity to hang on until they discover or create an answer belongs the future.

...Leaders worth following are willing to face and embrace current reality....

...Be willing to face the truth regardless of how painful it might be. If fear causes you to retreat from your dreams, you will never give the world anything new.

It is impossible to lead without a dream. When leaders are no longer willing to dream, it is only a short time before followers are unwilling to follow.

...Uncertainty is a permanent part of the leadership landscape. It never goes away.

Where there is no uncertainty, there is no longer the need for leadership.

The greater the uncertainty, the greater the need for leadership.

...As leaders we can afford to be uncertain, but we cannot afford to be unclear. ...As a leader you must develop the elusive skill of leading confidently and purposefully onto uncertain terrain.

... Clarity is perceived as leadership.

Source: *Next Generation Leader: 5 Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* by Andy Stanley



Readings from the Common Bowl

Day 1: "We believe in the authority of reason and conscience.

The ultimate arbiter in religion is not a church, or a document, or an official, but the personal choice and decision of the individual." David O. Rankin

Day 2: "To vastly improve your country and truly make it great again, start by choosing a better leader." Suzy Kassem

Day 3: "You become mature when you become the authority of your own life." Unknown

Day 4: "Great leaders create more leaders, not followers." Roy T. Bennett

Day 5: "When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion — its message becomes meaningless." Abraham Joshua Heschel

Day 6: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." Peter Drucker

Day 7: "The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority." Ken Blanchard

Day 8: "Leadership is the challenge to be something more than average." Jim Rohn

Day 9: "Authority and example lead the world." Arthur Schopenhauer

Day 10: "Those leaders who never think they are wrong, who never question their judgments or perspectives, are a danger to the organizations and people they lead. In some cases, they are a danger to the nation and the world." James B. Comey

Day 11: "When you can truly understand how others experience your behavior, without defending or judging, you then have the ability to produce a breakthrough in your leadership.... Everything starts with your self-awareness. You cannot take charge without taking accountability, and



you cannot take accountability without understanding how you avoid it." Loretta Malandro

Day 12: "Courage is essential to leadership." Andy Stanley

Day 13: "Moral authority comes from following universal and timeless principles like honesty, integrity, treating people with respect." Stephen Covey

Day 14: "Those who are not true leaders will just affirm people at their own immature level." Richard Rohr



Day 15: "You can delegate authority, but not responsibility." Stephen W. Comiskey

Day 16: "Good leaders inspire people to have confidence in their leader. Great leaders inspire people to have confidence in themselves." Eleanor Roosevelt

Day 17: "Authority is not a quality one person 'has,' in the sense that ...[one] has property or physical qualities. Authority refers to an interpersonal relation[ship]" Erich Fromm

Day 18: "Leadership requires two things: a vision of the world that does not yet exist and the ability to communicate it." Simon Sinek

Day 19: "Liberty is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying 'No' to any authority...." Ignazio Silone

Day 20: "The ability to inspire rather than enforce loyalty is a critical quality of leadership." Geoffrey Hindley

Day 21: "A position of authority is neither necessary nor sufficient for the exercise of leadership." Eric Werkowitz

Day 22: "Most churches do not grow beyond the spiritual health of their leadership." Darrin Patrick

Day 23: "Effective leadership is putting first things first. Effective management is discipline, carrying it out." Stephen Covey

Day 24: "Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy." Norman Schwarzkopf

Day 25: "Power can be legitimate—that is, accepted by the members of society as right and just—or it can be illegitimate. Authority is power that is perceived by others as legitimate, emerging from the exercise of power and the belief of constituents that the power is legitimate." Margaret L. Anderson

Day 26: "That's the burden of leadership...: making the choice when none of the choices are good." Brent Weeks

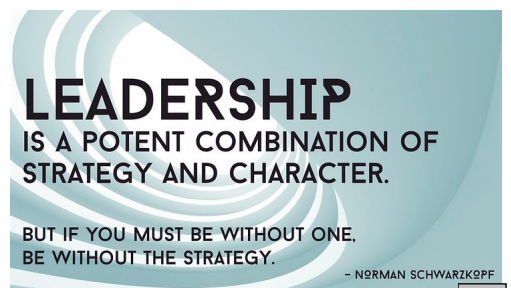
Day 27: "Authority founded on injustice is never of long duration." Seneca

Day 28: "The task of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there." John Buchan

Day 29: "If you wish to know what a man is, place him in authority." Yugoslavian Proverb

Day 30: "Ethical leaders do not run from criticism, especially self-criticism, and they don't hide from uncomfortable questions. They welcome them." James B. Comey

Day 31: "Authority is granted to people who are perceived as authoring their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts." Parker Palmer





Faith and Theology

Sources of Our Authority

While we value personal experience as a source of authority, the sources of Unitarian Universalism in our Principles & Purposes are also a foundation that inform and ground our collective authority.

CONNECTION: *Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.*

EXPERIENCE AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: Religion begins with experience, not words. Our first source focuses on experience, for it is through our direct experience of existence that enduring and nurturing connections are created, knowledge is gained, and wisdom distilled. The primacy of experience roots authority in the individual.

JUSTICE: *Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.*

CHARISMA AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: In every age they arise, some known to history and revered as exemplars—people for us to emulate in word, deed, and spirit. The vast majority of these prophetic women and men, however, became anonymous with the passage of time, but their legacy of courage endures. They used the life they were given doing the work that they believed would help bend the moral arc of the universe toward justice. When future generations speak of prophetic women and men, may they also be speaking about us.

WISDOM: *Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.*

SCRIPTURE AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: It is the wisdom of our religious tradition to seek wisdom far and wide, rather than arrogantly assuming that we already possess it or that it is the province of some peoples, some cultures, some

religions, and not others. In this, we construct a liberal canon of scripture, our Bible, if you will, but it also includes

poetry, fiction, music, art, science, and more.

Unitarian Universalist minister Jacob Trapp likened the world's religions to the strings of a harp, each with a distinctive note, but not the same note. Each one addressing a unique and urgent existential dilemma, asking different questions about the meaning, purpose, and challenge of life, and arriving at different, though compelling answers.

LOVE: *Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.*

LOVE AND COVENANT AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: Love is a gift to our religious tradition from both Judaism and Christianity. As someone once said, "We do not need to think alike, to love alike." This phrase recalls the words of Jesus who demanded a radical and transforming love as both the basis for human relationship and the gateway to the kingdom of God. We gather as religious communities based on love, not intellectual propositions; on covenant, not creed; on orthopraxy or right practice, not orthodoxy or right belief. We have taken the foundation of love from liberal Judaism and liberal Christianity and used it to build Unitarian Universalism. We have always been on the side of love.

UNITY: *Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.*

SCIENCE AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: Perhaps it was Galileo in the 17th century or Darwin in the 19th century, but someone opened the door of religion and in walked this interloper called science. Neither religion nor science has been the same since. Galileo's assertion that the earth revolved around the sun was believed to be false, which is why the Inquisition forced him to recant his

discovery under oath in 1633. It is alleged that, after recanting, he said of the earth in barely a whisper, "*E pur si mouve!*" ("But it [the earth] does move!"). Darwin's theory of evolution set off an even larger firestorm of protest through the citadels of religion, except, as you might expect, among the Unitarians and Universalists. It must be noted that even our capacity to reason is a product of evolution.

The constructive work of science involves hypothesis, which is fundamentally a process of imagination, and synthesis, seeking order out of chaos. As physicist Niels Bohr observed, "The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth."

EMBODIMENT: *Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.*

NATURE AS A SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: Annie Dillard writes, "At a certain point you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, the world, 'Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive.' You empty yourself and wait, listening." Dillard knew what our forebears, the Transcendentalists, knew: nature itself is a scripture to be read, studied, and understood. The cathedral that provided them with the most profound inspiration was the world of nature.

Creation did not end on the sixth day. It is a continuous process and we have become co-creators with nature.

Our appropriate role is not to dominate the earth, but to use our technology to allow us to live human lives with dignity and meaning within the earth's ecological means. We must change our relationship with the earth to awaken in us and in all humanity a reverence for the earth.

PROMISE: *Unitarian Universalism, our own tradition and its history is, in fact, our seventh source. Our theology of one light, Unitarianism, which is seen through many windows, and Universalism, which offers the*

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Because I Said So— Parents as Religious Authority

Gabrielle Ricketts

“Because I said so” was the most frustrating answer I heard as a child. Maybe that is why when it comes to religion, I don’t want to tell my children what to believe. I used to think that sharing my beliefs ...would influence them too much.... I don’t think I am alone in this.... Still..., “What authority do I have over my children’s spirituality and religious practices?”

...I remember when I would have rather given the dreaded “sex talk” over the “religion talk,” ...because I felt so ill-prepared.... I don’t have concrete answers for my kids (and kids love black and white answers). ...I saw the “religion talk” as one conversation instead of many questions..., talks after many stories, answers after the many questions....

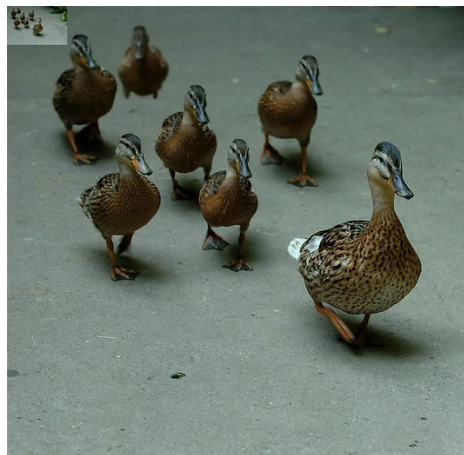
...Over the years many people have shared their beliefs with my kids. ...A friend was driving with her daughter and a playmate, when from the backseat the playmate asked her daughter, “Do you have Jesus in your Heart?” I know the 5-year-old friend was repeating what she had heard in her church and from her parents.

...There have been times my children have been told things I don’t believe, and I’m sure there will be many more. As they grow up, I look forward to my kids being exposed to many ideas about God and religious practice, and try many ways to develop their spirituality and find the Holy. They will do this not only because they live in a diverse world, but because this type of exploration is the basis of Unitarian Universalist Religious Education.... [A] comprehensive religious education is the best way to encourage my children to think for themselves. And I will give them my thoughts on religion and spirituality ... because ...when has “Because I said so!” ever worked to get a kid to believe anything?

Family Activity: Follow the Leader

Play a modified version of follow the leader. The game is played two times. The first time is a blind walk. Everyone holds on to a long rope, make sure everyone has room to hold the rope and walk at the same time. Everyone but the Leader closes their eyes. No one is allowed to talk. The leader takes everyone around the house to a destination only the leader knows.

The second time is different. Everyone keeps their eyes open. The leader tells everyone where they are going. Along the way the leader points out things that might be dangerous or detours in their route. Anyone can ask questions as long as they take turns. After the game, choose which game you prefer and why. Ask how this game was like being a leader and a follower at other times your life?



Family Activity: Allow Leadership

Encourage responsible leadership in your family by allowing children to choose a family activity or project, research it, create a budget and shopping list, and lead the activity for the whole family. Parents are encouraged to relinquish their roles of authority to the leader of the activity and everyone tries on the role of being a good follower. Try to avoid complete disaster, but allow natural consequences to occur so children see that with “great power comes great responsibility.”

Source for Family Matters: All Souls Parent Resource Network, February 2011

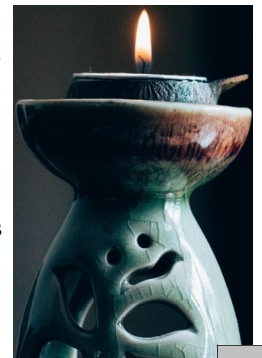
(Continued from page 4) Sources world the promise of hope, healing, and transformation, are compelling.

TRADITION & MISSION AS SOURCES OF AUTHORITY: In her sermon at the installation of the Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich as the senior minister of All Souls Unitarian Church on October 28, 2007, Diana Eck, a professor at Harvard and one of the world’s leading scholars of religion, said, in referring to Unitarian Universalism, “If there ever were a time that we need to spin out a new fabric of belonging and a wider sense of ‘we’ for the human community, it is certainly now.... Developing a consciousness of our growing religious inter-relatedness, developing a moral compass that will give us guidance in the years ahead—these are certainly among the most important tasks of our time. ...

“You are, in my estimation, the church of the new millennium. In this era, Unitarian Universalism is not the lowest common denominator, but the highest common calling.... In a world divided by race and by religion and ideology, the very presence of a church like this, committed to the oneness of God, the love of God, the love of neighbor and service to humanity is a beacon. The Unitarian [Universalist] theology, and yes you have one, does not reduce the mystery of the divine, the transcendent, but amplifies it, broadens it to include the investigation of the many, many ways in which the divine is known and yet unknown... You do have a mission. The world is in need of your theology.”

An overarching mission of our faith is to transform individuals and communities who will transform the world. In this, Unitarian Universalism and our congregations are a means, not an end.

Source: Touchstones



(Continued from page 1) Introduction

on vocation (i.e., the call to ministry) and education. This authority was tempered by the congregational authority to hire and fire a minister. Authority was also vested in lay members who were called as ruling elders to attend to governing and church discipline.

Social ethicist and theologian Gary Dorrien wrote that, "The essential idea of liberal theology is that all claims to truth, in theology as in other disciplines, must be made on the basis of reason and experience, not by appeal to external authority."

Still, there are sources of external authority that are valuable to Unitarian Universalism. Foremost among these our principles and sources. The principles articulate our values, while the sources

provide criteria as to how we will utilize the external authority of tradition.

According to the UUA's Commission on Appraisal (*Who's in charge here? the complex relationship between ministry and authority*, June 2013), "lay members of our congregations have always contributed to the ministry and have always enjoyed a certain degree of authority within [our]

... congregations. Once

Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the 19th century, relocated the center of religious authority from the realm of hierarchy to individual experience, that sense of personal authority increased." The Commission defined authority as "the ability to influence and bring about growth and change in an institution, or the ability to block and derail growth and change in an institution."

Leadership

Authority, however it is conferred or seized, is the basis of leadership. Within Unitarian Universalism there are two broad models of leadership. One is the model of lay leadership for those con-

gregations that have either a called or consulting minister. Shared leadership is often called shared ministry. However, shared leadership also applies to lay-led congregations, since the greater the number of empowered lay-leaders, the more effective the results.

There is a yin-yang operating in vibrant congregations: leadership and followership. Both are essential, and each done well enhances the other. Rob Asghar likens it to a dance in which each partner's moves are critical to the dance. A dance partner, whether leading or following, can be unskilled and ungracious. The result is not pretty. The partners are never in sync, the result is clumsy at best, and distressing at worst, and synergy is impossible. But there are also skilled and gracious partners. Such a partner, though following the other who may be somewhat less skilled, can help lead through his or her follower role. These partners, according to Asghar, are invaluable. He writes, "They encourage, they create space for risk and improvisation, they keep the mood light, and they create a great experience for both...." Given the yin-yang, good followers make a leader better, and good leaders help lead their followers to new levels.

Asghar concludes, "The dance metaphor gets close to that noble but elusive leadership ideal wherein organizations become arenas in which, no matter our roles, we help one another to shine. A skilled follower helps an inexperienced leader to shine. As the leader grows in skill, he or she is then able to help the followers to shine. And as they all grow in experience and skill; the interplay grows more productive and life-affirming."

While some believe that leaders are born, and not made, research has shown that leadership can be learned and refined. Effective models of leadership are not cookie-cutter replicas. There are many ways to lead well. And now, leadership development has begun to focus on the qualities of effective followers. As Unitarian Universalist songwriter Ric Masten wrote, "Let it be a dance we do."

(See #311 in *Singing the Living Tradition* or see a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3s1XkTZEos>)

Leadership as Empowerment

Richard Stengel



He turned to me and said, "You have never herded cattle, have you, Richard?" I said I had not. He nodded. As a young boy—as early as eight or nine years old—Mandela had spent long afternoons herding cattle. His mother owned some cattle of her own, but there was a collective herd belonging to the village that he and other boys would look after. He then explained to me the rudiments of herding cattle.

"You know, when you want to get the cattle to move in a certain direction, you stand at the back with a stick, and then you get a few of the cleverer cattle to go to the front and move in the direction that you want them to go. The rest of the cattle follow the few more energetic cattle in the front, but you are really guiding them from the back."

He paused. "That is how a leader should do his work."

The story is a parable, but the idea is that leadership at its most fundamental is about moving people in a certain direction—usually through changing the direction of their thinking and their actions. And the way to do that is not necessarily by charging out front and saying, "Follow me," but by empowering ... others to move forward ahead of you. It is through empowering others that we impart our own leadership or ideas. It is valuable in every arena of life.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/19841>

By What Authority

Rev. Lisa Doege

...By what authority does any UU minister or lay person preach or teach? By my own authority. By our own authority. ...United Methodists base their theological work on ...the Wesleyan Quadrilateral [which,] ...calls ...the mature Christian to [use] ...four sources of authority...: scripture, doctrine, personal experience, and reason. Fundamentalist Christians insist ...on the primacy of the Bible, ...on its inerrancy, and claim it as the sole source of religious authority.

...Walt Whitman wrote, "*We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say they are not divine; I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out of you still; it is not they who give the life—it is you who give the life.*" These lines sum up ...the Unitarian Universalist attitude toward scripture and religious authority. Ideas of right and wrong, explanations of the origins of things, rules about how to behave and relate..., understanding of life and the universe in which we live it, the totality of the religious impulse is simply too vast to be narrowed down to a single text....

...Our lack of a single authority, scripture, or authoritative law, ...calls us to do the demanding, often subtle, at times confusing, at times exhilarating work of examining each text or idea.... Refusing to accept something as true or even good, simply because tradition or someone else tells us it is so, we must instead learn to read carefully, to listen closely,



...to know ourselves more deeply and more fully, so that we might hear ...our heart's and mind's reaction to the idea.

Source: excerpt from sermon, *By What Authority*, October 11, 2009

The Masthead to the Hatches: The Sources of Authority in the Liberal Pulpit

Rev. David O. Rankin

First, there is *the academic authority of the pulpit*. Though it is often forgotten, all ministers are certified by an educational process which is long, arduous, and expensive. ...The standard of excellence required of a liberal preacher is as high as that of a Rabbi or a Jesuit. ...



Second, there is *the denominational authority of the pulpit*. ...The Unitarian Universalist Association's Department of Ministry and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee ...evaluate the intelligence, personality, and loyalty of the candidate. There are probably more people involved in the judging of a liberal minister than in any other denomination.

Third, there is *the authority of tradition of in the pulpit*. ...All ministers are imbued with a religious tradition which provides a framework and a perspective for communication. ...The liberal preacher walks and talks with the heroes and heroines of the faith; lives and breathes ...freedom and toleration; and the ...principles of a rich tradition.

Fourth, there is *the authority of community in the pulpit*. ...Much of the power of the pulpit flows from the ...[covenantal] relationship between the minister and the people. ...The laying on of hands is a sacred ceremony, where the authority is passed from the hatches to the masthead.

Fifth, there is *the authority of a personal faith*. ...The liberal preacher must also be called to the pulpit by a deep personal conviction....

...Each appeal to a religious authority is the product of a multitude of personal choices and decisions based on those life experiences.... So the arrow points back to the individual.... Truth is a series of choices made in time.

Source: *The Masthead to the Hatches: The Sources of Authority in the Liberal Pulpit* in *Transforming Words: Six Essays on Preaching*, edited by William F. Schulz

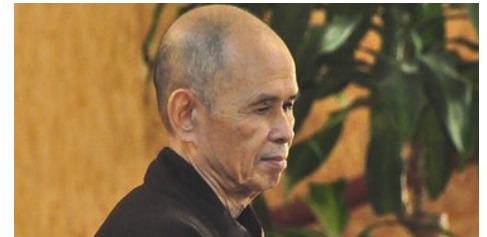
Three Virtues for Leaders

Thích Nhất Hạnh

Three virtues are required if we are to be true leaders: the virtue of cutting off, the virtue of loving, and the virtue of insight.

The first virtue you need to use your power skillfully is *the virtue of cutting off*. Cutting off what? You cut off your anger, your craving, and your ignorance. Another way of saying this is "letting go." You gradually transform your craving, anger, fear, and delusion.

...A good leader also has *the virtue of loving*. You have the capacity to be affectionate, to accept, forgive, and embrace the other person with loving kindness and compassion.



...A good leader also has to have *the virtue of insight*. Knowledge is not the same as insight. There are people with numerous PhDs, ...but they don't have insight, they don't have wisdom. Wisdom or insight is born from looking deeply.

...When we have insight, we can easily take care of difficulties, tension, and contradictions. If we don't have it, we just go around in circles, haunted and controlled by our suffering, fear, and worries.

...If you lead with the three virtues of cutting off, offering love, and cultivating insight, you have real authority. Simply having the title of leader is not enough. Titles do not give true power. When you practice mindfulness well and you radiate joy, stability, and peace, you acquire a much deeper authority.

... You can evaluate the quality of your authority by looking deeply to see if compassion is the foundation of your leadership.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/17181>

Theme for Discussion Leadership & Authority

Preparation prior to Gathering: (Read this issue of the journal and *Living the Questions* in the next column.)

Business: Deal with any housekeeping items (e.g., scheduling the next gathering).

Opening Words: “Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.” *Buddha*

Chalice Lighting (James Vila Blake) (adapted) (In unison) *Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our covenant: to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, to serve human need, and to help one another.*

Check-In: How is it with your spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? (2-3 sentences)

Claim Time for Deeper Listening: This comes at the end of the gathering where you can be listened to uninterrupted for more time if needed. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes, and to honor the limit of that time.

Read the Wisdom Story: Take turns reading aloud parts of the wisdom story on page one and two.

Readings from the Common Bowl: Group members read selections from *Readings from the Common Bowl* (page 3). Leave a few moments of silence after each to invite reflection on the meaning of the words.

Sitting In Silence: Sit in silence together, allowing the *Readings from the Common Bowl* to resonate. Cultivate a sense of calm and attention to the readings and the discussion that follows (*Living the Questions*).

Reading: “Our evolution depends on our memory. If we keep forgetting the mistakes of the past, only to keep repeating them, then we will never change. And if we keep

recycling through the exact same kind of leaders—the kind who do not propel us forward, but only hold us back—then perhaps what we really need now is a completely different style of leadership altogether. We need heart-driven leaders, not strictly mind-driven ones. We need compassionate humanitarians.... Peacemakers.... We need unity, not division. Angels, not devils.” *Suzy Kassem*

Living the Questions: Explore as many of these questions as time allows. Fully explore one question before moving on.

1. What is your reaction to the word authority? Why?
2. What were/are your experiences with “authority/authorities?” Were they helpful or harmful?
3. Who and what are sources of authority in your life?
4. Do you have a sense of inner authority? Where did it come from?
5. The word “author” is a root of the word authority. How are you the author of your own life? How have you/do you attend to other sources of authority in your life?
6. Are leaders born or made?
7. What is the meaning of the statement “Leadership is relationship?”
8. What are some characteristics of leadership that you admire? Why?
9. How do good followers help make good leaders?
10. Share an example of good leadership?

The facilitator or group members are invited to propose additional questions that they would like to explore.

Deeper Listening: If time was claimed by individuals, the group listens without interruption to each person who claimed time.

Checking-Out: One sentence about where you are now as a result of the time spent together exploring the theme.

Extinguishing Chalice

(Elizabeth Selle Jones) (In unison)

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Closing Words

Rev. Philip R. Giles (In unison) *May the quality of our lives be our benediction and a blessing to all we touch.*

How to Fight the Man

David Brooks

This seems to be a moment when many people... are disgusted by current institutions, but ...are vague about what sorts of institutions should replace them. ...For generations people have been told: Think for yourself; come up with your own independent worldview. ...The paradox of reform movements is that, if you want to defy authority, you probably shouldn't think entirely for yourself. You should attach yourself to a counter-tradition ...that has been developed over the centuries and that seems true.

...These belief systems helped people envision alternate realities. They helped people explain why the things society values are not the things that should be valued. ...Joining a tradition doesn't mean suppressing your individuality. Applying an ancient tradition to a new situation is a creative, stimulating, and empowering act.

...Effective rebellion ...means replacing one set of authorities and institutions with a better set.... Authorities and institutions don't repress the passions of the heart... They give them ...a means to turn passion into change.

Source: *The New York Times*, 2/2/2012

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