

The odyssey from Rationality to Spirituality
exploring the relationship of the two concepts in the context
of the present crisis

Academy of Management 2010

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Jacques Rojot

Lynne Sedgmore

Saturday, August 07, 2010

5:00:00 PM - 7:00:00 PM The Queen Elizabeth, Mackenzie

Scheduling

[5 - 5.13] -

- 10' delay starting
- 3' intro / yochanan

[5.13 - 5.33] – French Rationality

- 20' : Jacques Rojot
- 10' : questions

[5.33 - 5.58] – The context of the crisis

- 20' : Lynn Sedgmore
- 5' : translation by Yochanan

[5.58 - 6.23] – Awakening with a practical exercise

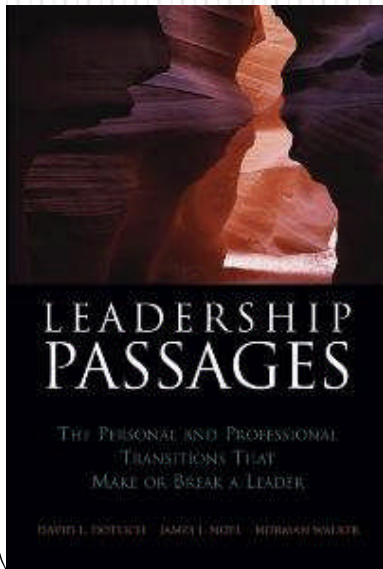
- 25' : exercices / Nathalie Estellat (cardiac coherence)

[6.23 – 7.00] – Spiritual development model

- 15' : Integrating Model of leaders / Catherine Voynet
- 20' : Discussion / exchange of ideas, experience and know-how

Catherine Voynnet Fourboul

Leadership passages and spirituality A Qualitative Research



Methodology

- **Qualitative research**
- **Grounded theory approach**
- **Question raised**: what is the role of spirituality in helping to arouse, direct, mediate and sustain leaders in periods of passage?
- **Sample**: 20 french leaders evolving in medium and large french companies
- **20 recorded interviews** (1h30 average length) in 2009-2010

Sample description

#	Title	M/F age	Company (workforce- sector)
1	Financial Director	M 49	26000 - Retailing
2	Branch CEO	M 60	32000 - Retailing, Mines, Food industry
3	HRD	M 63	53700 - Construction industry
4	Managing Director	F 45	1000 - Energy
5	CEO	M 50	13300 - Construction industry
6	HRD	M 49	65000 - Water & Waste management
7	CEO	M 51	170 - Textile Industry (member of the steering committee of the employer association MEDEF)
8	HRD then coach	F 48	30 000 - Catering (independent)
9	HRD (former)	F 60	89 000 - Bank (now retired)
10	Managing Director of a Division	M 48	18 000 - Steel tubes Industry

Synthesis (1/2)

N°	Leaders	Passages	Spirituality
#1	Financial Director	Being acquired/merging,	Difficulty to define spirituality due to bad consideration on previous religion experience : mistrust but alignment with values (respect) – dominance of rationality
#2	Branch CEO	Coping with a bad boss, Accepting a stretch assignment	Positive connection between spirituality and religion even if spirituality is seen as different. Link between passages (hardship) and spirituality – other possibilities of dev. Helped by friend.
#3	HRD	Firing people	Difficulty to express himself about spirituality – focused on values and alignment with his own mission - introversion
#4	Managing Director	Living in a different country or culture, Personal upheavals : illness, and death	Very at ease and talkative about spirituality and the connection between two leadership passages and her spiritual experience. Use of coaching.
#5	CEO	Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible	Not at ease about defining spirituality but implementing it through love and talent development. Considered as exemplar and iconoclast in the Cie

Synthesis (2/2)

N°	Leaders	Passages	Spirituality
#6	HRD	Accepting a stretch assignment Personal upheavals : illness, and death	Very talkative about spirituality, identified as a catholic HRD, responsibility and balance are guiding his reflection. Deep self reflection (self development) also about great leaders in France.
#7	CEO	Moving into a leadership role for the first time, Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible	The notion of grace and the use of intuition help him to overcome the second passage. His family gives him a strong balance. He is not inclined at looking for an external spiritual help, has an attitude of observation and analysis.
#8	HRD then coach	Losing faith in the system	The connection passage and spirituality is obvious. She is deeply rooted in spirituality even if French institution are not a facilitator. Use of coaching.
#9	HRD (former)	Accepting a stretch assignment	Opposed to hyper rationality. Intellectual demand. Ability to position oneself into sth larger. Tension pulling oneself towards sth ideal.
#10	Managing Director of a Division	Accepting a stretch assignment	Not at ease about defining spirituality . Synonym of values like fidelity, transparency and religion.

Spirituality and rationality – tension and evolution journey for leaders

		Spirituality	
		-	+
Rationality	-	<p>1- Insists on the limits of rationality and is not open to spirituality</p> <p>Low awareness, the starting point of learning</p>	<p>3- Questioning the assumptions of rationality on account of an event, an awareness of our own limits, a desire to open up to other possibilities – A difficulty to reconcile the two dimensions - Crises and rejection of the limits of rationality</p>
	+	<p>2- Rationality as considered as an ideal, a reference that is shared and politically correct, acceptable et reproducible</p> <p>Rationality as being implemented and experienced</p>	<p>4-Synchronicity: the unification of both concepts, reconciling and enriching both dimensions</p>

Quadrant 2: high rationality, low spirituality / the purely rational approach



Quadrant 3: low rationality, high spirituality / leaders focused solely on spirituality

*My upbringing and my environment have given me a good relational capacity and acceptance of others, which enables me to be accepted easily by everyone. I am always sensitive to others, it is always something very important for me to get to understand others, to show empathy, and I can empathize and connect well with people. I feel easily connected to others. People can easily get along with me . . . **I hate pure, hard rationality.** It's something I try to inculcate to my colleagues. First and foremost, try to get a feeling of things. # 2*

*One **must be credible in day by day action**, be in line with what you say and to **make them dream**, to ensure that people say: this is the chance I've been waiting for. It is essential. This is **related to the spiritual, to the extent one believes in man.** There is always something good to get out of every person. # 2*

Quadrant 4: high rationality, high spirituality



Something is missing because the enterprise does not foster spirituality. I am passionate about sustainable development and I see that it is beginning to lead to a spiritual dimension. It is somewhat the same as, a little while ago, what was said about corporate citizenship. This concretely means training drives, the fact of getting the staff to evolve within partnerships with developing countries like Cuba, which we have been conducting for ten years with over 3000 people, with all the infrastructure that it implies. # 5

Evolutions inside the model

In the French context, the path is:
1 → 2 rationality only
→ 3 rejection of the logic of rationality in favor of spirituality
→ 4 synchronization by combinations, reconciliation of *soft* and *hard skills*

“in this life, I feel like I need to reconcile who I am with what I do, and not vice versa. It is not what I do that determines what I am, and yet I realize I have been formatted along these lines. Suddenly it gave me more freedom, and now I'm actually no more a prisoner of those models, for better or for worse.” female leader. # 4

- Disruption of the normative rationalizing model, shaking off the initial model of rationality, to transcend it
- French reluctance to spirituality

In the U.S., they are a lot of positive psychology ... Today, the effort to understand who we are is still much too superior to the effort we have to make to know who we must be and who we want to be. In France it is not really politically correct to go into personal development, the more complicated things get, and the less resource one has available. I am very worried that the country ... and I'm even going further, I'd rather have a guy who is going to land with Scientology because it is a little dorky, than to have him take Prozac pills for three years. For he would have far less of a chance to cope than by being reconnected to an entity. Today in France, one must admit we still have a level of development regarding spirituality, religion and the problems of personal development which is close to zero.

- In France, leaders prefer to use drugs and medications to cope with unease and stress.
- the French still do not turn to an in-depth analysis (except for cases of personal initiatives).
- Fear of manipulation

There is a polarization: we see so many people switch, we see bosses with great charisma whom we love spending time and share ideas with, and with whom we are on the same wavelength; and then we also see people who are an antithesis in terms of behavior. Behaviors are polarizing. They become caricatures of themselves. #4

- Polarization of attitudes among executives

Paradoxically, the crisis that we are going through today can serve as the basis for very unusual associations such as spirituality and management, leadership and religion. This is a new trend, because normally management leadership goes hand in hand with success and accountability; we did not use to have this ability to combine soft and hard skills and finally, by doing this, only one part of a person's sensitivity used to be enhanced, on the side of reason, objectives, measurability and quantitative components, and not necessarily related to the qualitative, the measurement of the atmosphere, happiness and things that are softer. # 4

- crisis consequences: a new emergent behavior
- Y generation demands, qualitative measuring, attention to well-being and the reference to soft skills

Results

Rationality: a limit to the development of spirituality

- Stagnation at the rational point / confusion between pre-rational and traditional universes / fear of regression to the religious pre-rational one (Wilber 1996)

Rationality and spirituality : a duality

- The preference for one mechanism does not exclude the possibility of resorting to another (comfort vs effort)
- Temporary suppression of rationality after spiritual enlightenment - conciliation efforts led to reach a balance

Leaders are not all receptive

- narcissistic, unbalanced people, personal ambition, lust for power
- few inclination for the common good and spirituality
- Spirituality places must be private, easily considered as sects

Significant differences between men and women

- Prudential way for the men
- Daring attitude for women

Leaders Exemplarity

- Acceptance of differences (exposure to different situations, different people and teams) and legitimacy (by loving others and developing their talents)

Passages of leadership

- Emphasize the ability to get out of fixed models of rationality
- (inner voice, intuition, sensitivity)

Quadrant 3: low rationality, high spirituality / leaders focused solely on spirituality

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- A Moroccan CEO, who graduated from a French high school
- Immediately at ease with spirituality
- Closeness that develops with nature and rural settings
- Relational activity leads to rejection of the excesses of rationality.

*One must be credible in day by day action, be in line with what you say and to **make them dream**, to ensure that people say: this is the chance I've been waiting for. It is essential. This is **related to the spiritual, to the extent one believes in man.** There is always something good to get out of every person. # 2*

- he managed to make the business the most efficient of all the holding company.
- Success reasons: choosing the right team, establishment of trust with the entire staff, ability to generate visibility, helping others to project themselves into the future, making sure they feel that what you say is the truth.
- The relational dimension is widely mentioned as a means toward success
- His family, his religious education have enabled him to develop an open attitude to spirituality.
- Religion in this case can open up both a new and different dimension.

Questions

Question 1 - Methodology

- **Which kind of methodology do I see as the most appropriate to study leadership passages and spirituality?**
 - Which kind of sample (age, position, background) ?
 - Which kind of methods for collecting qualitative information?
Individual vs collective interviews?
Sharing among “connaisseurs” – insiders only?
- Which kind of “tricks” could be used to conduce people to confide (ways to overcome difficulty to make people talk about personal shortcomings, failure situations – to express intimate feelings)
- Is there room for a quantitative approach of the subject? If so, how?

Question 2 – Leadership passages and spirituality

- What links could be construed between spirituality and leadership dimensions or roles (decision-making, ability to mobilize and create sense making at work)?
- What can spirituality bring about in strategic actions, decisions, practices?
- Does it make a particular and significant difference?
- Conversely, how can personal and professional experiences nourish leaders' spiritual beliefs?

Question 3 – From leadership passages to personal passages

- Are there some leadership passages that are more significant to develop leaders spirituality?
- Considering my personal experience, which kind of passages were the most significant in the development of my own spirituality?
- Is it necessary to experience significant passages to open oneself to spirituality?
 - Are there other ways of developing our spirituality?
 - What do I do to enable my spiritual development?

Question 4 – Rationality vs spirituality for leaders

- Is rationality an obstacle in developing spirituality? Conversely, is spirituality an obstacle to rationality? Is it possible to be both spiritual and rational?
 - On a leader point of view?
 - On your own point of view?
- Expressing ones spirituality: is spirituality fully expressible and conscious?
 - what is the added value of expressing our spirituality? Is it necessary to explicit our spirituality to guide our action?