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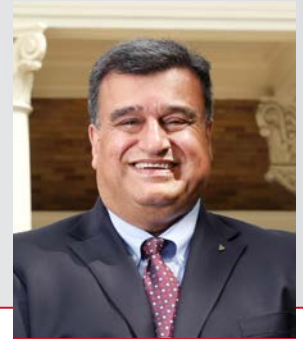
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> 2024 Leadership Summit

## Leadership Lessons from Two Queens: Elizabeth I vs. Elizabeth II

By F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D.



F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D.

It was a sad day last September when Queen Elizabeth died after being on the British throne for over 70 glorious years. She was the longest living monarch in history after Louis XIV who reached 72 years of being on the throne. No woman had a reign this long in the known history of mankind. This was also the case for the first Elizabeth who reigned for 45 years being the longest female monarch in history of her period.

Oftentimes people ask why business leadership educators use monarchs, presidents, or political leaders as examples to teach leadership. The truth is that most of our business decisions have included in them: issues regarding financials and budgets, human resources, the art of dealing with one's subjects (employees), and the art of leading people and leading nations that are similar to business leadership in nature but not in scope. This may be too much of a simplification and for that reason one can explore what made the two Elizabeths an interesting study and why there are important,

valuable lessons to be learned in business leadership for all of us. Below is a list of similarities in the two women's leadership styles which is not exhaustive and not in any order of importance:

### 1. Leaders need data to lead, and procrastination is not always a weakness

Elizabeth I took long periods for making crucial decisions and sought out many who would guide her. Sometimes accusations were made of her tardy decision making because she was a female. Her father Henry VIII made quick decisions which were costly to the crown and his rule. Elizabeth I was willing to investigate, taking many viewpoints and was flexible in making decisions. Elizabeth II was not in many ways different but she was open to change. Such as having the first televised coronation of any monarch despite prime minister Churchill's objection, use of emails by a head of state for correspondence and playing the U.S.



Photograph of Queen Elizabeth II taken by Julian Calder for Governor-General of New Zealand, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

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## Leadership and What Matters Most

national anthem following the 9-11 terrorist attack in front of Buckingham Palace. Business leaders are sometimes pressured to make quick decisions which may be costly to the organization. Pondering and making calculated risks are always good instead of rushing into decisions that can wait.

### 2. Leaders can use symbolism to gain success.

Not much has been written on symbolism in leadership and its importance. Elizabeth's dealing with Mary Queen of Scots and understanding how the monarchy could be compromised by marrying a suitor was a symbolic move to create stability and not bringing a co-ruler into the mix. Her not marrying despite 16th century mindset was beneficial to the country. Similarly, Elizabeth II's going to West Germany after World War II showed that the unification of Europe was necessary to keep peace as well as her flexibility to meet with IRA leaders after decades of Irish conflict. All organizations have symbols and the use of them strengthens the leaders and the company image.

### 3. Leaders need to lead with their hearts.

Elizabeth I is known for stating that: "I know I have a body of a weak, feeble woman, but I have a heart and stomach of a King." She was willing to lead her country, which had become economically poor through high inflation, had a debased currency, was far behind others in literature and arts, and was weak militarily. She made a major turnaround with her victories and policies that would once more make England among leading European powers. Elizabeth II also inherited a post-World War II England ravaged by war. Both queens were in their mid 20s with similar challenges. The successes of both queens, historians agree, was a full dedication to the country with their entire soul and mind. Industry, education or other business leaders must do the same to be successful. There is an old adage: "If

you are all not in the game, you are not there to fully lead your people."

### 4. Successful leaders need to predict what comes next.

Everybody knows the present, but no one knows the future. A successful chess player is always calculating several moves ahead in the game. Elizabeth I was very shrewd and was willing to do whatever was necessary to achieve her objectives. Her success depended on how she could calculate several moves ahead of the game. Her success in leadership and achievements were noted hundreds of years later due to this ability. Elizabeth II's leadership was also successful in calculating what is to come next. In addition to having good counsel, she worked every day to see her people. Elizabeth II was actively curious in what went on in the country, individuals she met and took a personal interest in everyone and everything. Business leaders sometimes make a mistake in thinking that all they have to do is think of their competition. Some are successful by luck but those who truly get ahead are those who can sense beyond competitors or what comes next in a dynamic world of AI, ChatGPT and more.

### 5. Good leaders work harder than everyone else.

Elizabeth I knew that as a woman she was underestimated by the men of the 16th century. She played along as she took the upper hand by knowing and learning more and running the monarchy like a business better than a man. Queen Elizabeth II's long rule to the age of 92 also showed that when most people are retiring at 65, she was not going to, and her service was until the end. Queenship is not a retiring job but working to the end, which both monarchs did.

### 6. Leadership is making hard decisions.

Elizabeth I faced many difficult decisions including the beheading of her admirer, Thomas Seymour. Seymour, may have been known to have loved the queen but his betrayal made him lose his head. Elizabeth I knew that some smart people lack the judgment to keep their heads. Elizabeth II also knew that the most difficult decisions end in the leader's hands. With monarchy the good come

with the bad but she knew there was no room for negativity. Resilience and perseverance would make her rise above any tragedies that come one's way.

### 7. A leader does not need to be liked.

Elizabeth I mentioned many times in her speeches that her long reign and success was attributed to the almighty. In those days, all monarchs considered themselves god's servants on earth. How could she have survived with so many unpopular decisions and still was able remain a viable leader? Elizabeth II's reign did not have one day without something negative in the tabloids or somebody or something in the royal family without a scandal or negative coverage. The queen stomached it and went on with business as usual. Both queens understood that there was no room for negativity or need to be liked in reigning over a country.

### 8. Leadership wisdom comes with age.

Age is not a bad thing. It's possible we may have two presidential candidates this year in the U.S., one from each major party, who will be around or close to 80 years in age. Aging gracefully is another issue. When Queen Victoria had her jubilee (60th) year of reign she was 78 and was unable to walk. Both Elizabeths were in relatively good health until almost the end relative to their time. Elizabeth I lived only to 70 but that was a good age in the 16th century as opposed today where life expectancies are a few additional decades. Both Elizabeths became more established and fuller in their rule in the last third of their reign than in the first two thirds.

There are many things to learn about leadership in ancient and contemporary history books!

## Fighting the Odds

By Danny Persaud, President/Chief Executive Officer, MidFlorida Armored

On a cold winter night when I was a child, my family was evicted from our home in Tampa. We had recently come to America from Guyana, trying to escape the poverty and violence there. We wanted a better life.

In the hopes of pursuing the American dream, we were now on the street, needing help from a generous stranger to survive. I saw the uncertainty in my mother's eyes that night. This was the moment when I became a leader because I had to.

Since my father had a serious disability, I had no choice but to become the leader of my family. I started working when I was 7 years old, and I quickly realized that if you don't have any skills, any training or an education, your opportunities are limited. In addition, there were racial issues which further added complexity and hardship to our lives. A neighbor would even encourage his German Shepherd to intimidate me, as I made my way to and from school. This man would encourage his German Shepherd to badger me while calling me every name in the book even though I was only 10 years old.

While some would be discouraged or weakened by these experiences, my situation only gave me the fire to beat the odds. We weren't going to fail, not if I could help it.

At an early age, I recognized that education would provide my family and I with a better life. In high school, I was a good student. I was in honor roll classes and involved in sports, such as basketball, football, baseball, and track. I had a grueling schedule with school and sports, and worked odd jobs as much as I could. I often would only have a few hours at home each night.

After graduating high school, I had dreams of attending college. However, I didn't have a way to pay for my schooling. Rather than settling for whatever job I was qualified to do, I wanted to help my family and make the world a better place. While it would have been easier to settle for any job I was qualified to do, I knew that to make a difference I couldn't start just any job.

I began my career in the armored industry, gaining valuable experience in the financial sector before branching out into security services. Later on, I founded Mid Florida Armored & ATM Services, a company specializing in secure cash transportation, ATM management, and other security-related services in 2002. Under my leadership, the company grew significantly, serving clients throughout the state of Florida and beyond.

In addition to my work at Mid Florida Armored, I am a passionate advocate for philanthropy and community engagement. I am motivated to help others in need and assist them to turn their difficult situations around. One of my key priorities has been to promote education and academic achievement in the broader community, where I have supported a range of programs and initiatives aimed at promoting academic success and providing educational opportunities for all.

In addition to my work in the education sector, I am also involved in a range of charitable organizations and initiatives, providing support for causes related to healthcare, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Perhaps one of my most notable achievements as a philanthropist has been my support for the Wheelchairs 4 Kids. I have been a strong advocate for research and have provided

significant financial support to the organization, helping to advance its mission.

As I reflect on my leadership journey, I am grateful that I have been able to give back to my community and to making a positive impact in the world. If you were to ask me the main ingredients on how to defy the odds, I would say:

### 1. Consistency

Every morning, I woke up and focused on the remaining objectives to accomplish. For example, I was determined to start my own company and become successful. No matter how many pitfalls, I still continuously give everything 100%.

### 2. Integrity

To create a trusted name throughout the armored industry, I always stayed true to myself. I didn't change my ethics to accommodate to what other people wanted me to be.

### 3. Grit

There were many days where I could not cash my paycheck, pay the rent, or pay the bills but I never gave up. I persevered despite the challenges. Failure was not an option.

Just as I have beat the odds, I encourage others to make a powerful difference in the lives of others. As Roy T. Bennett, author of *The Light in the Heart*, notes, "Success is not how high you have climbed but how you make a positive difference in the world."



Danny Persaud

### About the author:

Danny Persaud was named CEO of the Year and Philanthropist of the Year in 2022 and US Indo Businesses Man of the Year in 2023. Persaud has also been recognized for his leadership,

entrepreneurship, and commitment to making a positive impact in the world. He has been honored by a range of organizations, including the U.S. Senate, Commissioner of Education, Tampa Bay

Business and Wealth and the Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce for his contributions to the local community and his dedication to building a better future for all.



# Leadership lessons from the front lines

By Emily Fletty

I truly believe that everyone wakes up each day wanting to do the best job they can or at least not to do a bad one. This belief is also true of leaders. And leadership, like any other skill, can and should be learned. Being a good leader requires work. Being a bad leader also requires work, just not value-added work.

As an HR person, I am often the one called in to resolve an issue when leadership has gone badly. In over 30 years of helping to develop more effective leaders and cleaning up after ineffective ones, I've seen several patterns emerge that differentiate the two.

Not surprisingly, they are mirror images of each other.

Ineffective leaders often:

- Are unclear about expectations and performance
- Treat employees as if they must be contained within certain constraints to prevent them from misbehaving
- Are manipulative and passive aggressive

Effective leaders:

- Paint a compelling vision of the purpose and desired outcomes for the work and give regular, specific and constructive feedback
- Value employees as creative and capable with positive intentions who may need help removing roadblocks to succeed
- Are authentic and appropriately transparent

Below, I will discuss seven areas that differentiate ineffective and effective leaders.

## Expectations and Performance

I wish I had a dollar for every time a manager came to me with the intention to fire an under-performer. My first response is always to ask for their documentation of performance expectations and feedback. I can count on one hand how many times a manager had this.

The conversation usually turns to how frustrated the manager is and that they are at the end of their patience. Then they tell me about how the employee "should know" what is expected of them. It is "clear by my reactions" that they aren't

meeting those expectations. Usually this means the manager is being passive-aggressive and making their employee miserable.

When I ask for the job description and/or performance goals, these seldom exist. In fact, these managers may not even be able to articulate the expectations. They will just "know it when they see it." And yet, the employee is meant to intuit them. The employee probably does know that their manager is not happy, but without specific feedback, they may not know how to correct it.

When I ask, why haven't you told the employee that they aren't doing things properly, I often hear, "I don't want to be rude, or I don't want to hurt their feelings." Like that would be worse than losing your job and not knowing why. I often quote



Emily Fletty

Brene Brown, who is a brilliant research professor at the University of Houston, author of many great books including Dare to Lead, and motivational speaker. If you haven't seen her TED Talks, I highly recommend it. The quote I use most often is, "Being clear is kind."

I once had a client ask me to draw up a severance agreement for a leader in his organization. He asked me to offer him a choice between leaving the organization or committing to do the work to improve his leadership capabilities and style. My assumption, which I shared with my client, was that this leader would agree to the plan only to buy himself time to look for a new job. I also told my client that if he put in the work, I would too. We got this leader a coach, and I provided very specific feedback from his team about what wasn't working for them. The expectations were then clear and set.

His leadership style had been, in a word, tyrannical. His long-time leader had led the same way, and when my client replaced him, the expectations changed. This leader embraced the feedback and the process. At the end of an intensive six-month period of coaching, observation, feedback, etc. he was leading with heart, respect, and empowerment. He learned to set clear and reasonable expectations. Not all his employees made the journey with him, but most did. He later told me that not only had this experience saved his job, but it had saved his marriage too.

## Management by Control

In order to avoid difficult conversations and taking ownership for difficult decisions (you know, being a leader) some managers resort to treating employees like mischievous children, creating excessive policies that govern everything from how long sleeves need to be, to when one can use the restroom. This can, and usually does, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. When people feel overly controlled, they become resentful and spend their creativity and capability finding new and inventive ways to thwart the system.

I've often been asked to write policies that seem unnecessary, and when I probe the request, almost

always it is because someone has done something they shouldn't and the manager, rather than talk to the employee and manage the situation, wants a policy to stand behind.

One of my favorite examples of this is a request I had to create a policy against having livestock in a high-rise office building. I of course asked, "is this a regular problem that we are faced with?" Then I was told a story about an employee who had brought her llama to work. Yes, her llama. It came up on the elevator and hung out in her office most of the day. I went to speak with the employee. She told me that she was taking the llama to the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo after work and didn't want to drive all the way home to get her llama. I explained that in the future, she was not to bring any livestock to the office as it was potentially disruptive and inconsistent with our building lease. She told me she understood. No more llamas at work. Even without a policy.

We can't realistically legislate every possible goofy thing people can come up with. This restrictive leadership style will always have unintended consequences. It is a great way to get people to follow the rule of law while doing the bare minimum required rather than inspiring them to tap into their discretionary effort and their natural creativity and capability.

## Manipulation and Passive Aggressiveness

Of course, legislation is not the only form of manipulation. I've seen managers tell employees that other employees are critical of or complaining about them in order to pit them against one another with a strategy of "divide and conquer" only to have them all exchange notes, realize what was happening and present a united front to that manager's boss.

The more common type of manipulation I see is in the interview process. Hiring managers are trying to determine, can this person do the job? Can they be reliable, will they stay long enough to recoup the cost of acquisition and training? Rather than asking, "Can you get here every day and on time?" "Do you believe you can do the job as I've described it to you?" "Tell me about a time when you..." (performed a skill relevant to this job). They

ask, "Do you own a car? Do you have kids? Do you plan to have kids?" All these questions can result in a claim of discrimination and don't necessarily answer the questions the manager really has.

## Vision and Feedback

I have also seen examples of real leadership at all levels of organizations. People who have followership. Their results are extraordinary. Not only do their teams perform, but people want to work with them, they have a pipeline of talent just waiting for a chance to join.

They know what their mission is, and they can translate that to the day-to-day work. That is a skill. It takes practice. And it is so worth it. Particularly with some of the newer generations in our workforce. These employees need to understand how they contribute to the bigger picture and believe that the bigger picture is worthwhile.

Good leaders paint a picture of what success looks like and engage employees in the process of breaking down the work into measurable, manageable goals. Then they give useful feedback. They don't wait until the annual appraisal and try to remember what went well and what didn't. They help people adjust in real time with feedback that is specific, timely, balanced, unemotional, solution-oriented, etc.

More importantly, they ask empowering questions. "What would you have done differently?" "How can I help you be more effective next time?" "What made this such a success?" "What more do you need from me?"

## Leading People as Well-intentioned

Great leaders assume that people are naturally motivated, creative, and capable. They see their role to provide direction, feedback, recognition, rewards, connection to the bigger mission and the removal of roadblocks.

A great example of this is an employee who complained regularly about the lack of data and systems support needed to do her job effectively. A poor leader may have become frustrated and told her to shut up and do her job. Luckily, she had a



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## Leadership lessons from the front lines

great leader. He asked her how she would fix it. He listened, he made suggestions, and he told her to fix it. He gave her the remit and when she asked for resources, he told her to do a business case to justify them. He made her present her ideas and request for significant investment to the executive team. She did and got the funding she asked for. Then, she fixed the problem. She made the work much easier for many of her colleagues, learned some new skills and gained confidence.

### Transparency and Trust

Why is it important for leaders to be appropriately transparent? Aren't they supposed to seem all knowing and buttoned up? The answer is no. The best leaders share all the information that it is appropriate to share. Obviously, some things are confidential, and it is okay to tell people, "That is confidential, and I can't talk about it yet." Most things are not.

People who hoard information think that it gives them power. What it really does is keep people from having the information they need to make the best decisions possible in creating outcomes to support the team. It also makes people distrustful. In *Leading at the Speed of Trust*, Stephen Covey talks about the need to extend smart trust to receive trust. When people have a trusting relationship (and assume positive intent) they can work more quickly and efficiently.

Smart trust does not mean being naïve and having no controls in place. That would be trust, but not smart trust. According to Stephen Covey, smart trust means: "believe in trust, start with yourself, declare your intent, do what you promise and lead in extending trust to others." In classic Covey style, he uses a matrix with Propensity to Trust on the Y axis and Analysis on the X axis. The alternatives to smart trust are gullibility, indecision and suspicion.

Declaring your intent is one of the most powerful tools I've seen. When you start the conversation by declaring your intended outcome, it cuts through

the distraction of trying to decide what the end game of the conversation is, or worse, the worst-case scenario planning that often accompanies the question, "Can I please talk to you for minute?"

Imagine instead you hear, "Hi, I would like to discuss with you the best way we can improve the billing process so that we maximize the automation and efficiency and free your time up to do more value-added work." Now everyone is working towards the same goal.

Another way to think about Trust is the trust Equation from the Trusted Advisor Associates, LLC:

$$T = C + R + I / S$$

Where T is Trustworthiness, C is Credibility (do we know what we are talking about), R is Reliability (do we do what we say we are going to do), I is Intimacy (I know this person) and S is Self-Orientation (how much of this person's focus is on themselves and self-interest vs. that of the team or the organization.)

The intimacy part of the equation immediately makes the HR person in me squirm because the wrong types of intimacy in the office is something I've had to deal with throughout my HR career. I like to use the words authenticity and vulnerability instead.

### Authenticity

That brings me to the last common trait I've noticed in incredible leaders. They are authentic. Being authentic is scary. Again, to quote Brene Brown, "To be authentic, we must cultivate the courage to be imperfect—and vulnerable. You either walk inside your story and own it or you stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness."

What does this mean? How do you do it? It is about sharing your humanity with others and creating opportunity for others to share theirs. Talk about your fears and hopes, share with others those things that you are working on for your own development. Talk about what is at stake for you, what drives you. Ask others what drives them. Be curious. Don't turn away from the emotions of others, instead say, "tell me more."

When I think back to the leaders like this, that I have worked for, I remember having fun at work while delivering some truly amazing outcomes. It wasn't easy, but it was fun. There was laughter, there were tough conversations, there were midstream adjustments, but because we knew each other well, and trusted each other, we could make them quickly.

One thing these leaders did NOT do was criticize the organization or their leadership. They were realistic about challenges, but they were mature enough never to vent down, only to vent up. I see inexperienced leaders bond with staff by complaining about their own managers and their sense of not being empowered. The outcome of this is a false sense of comradery (us against them) which ultimately leads to employees losing respect for those leaders and feeling disengaged. Those leaders usually have high turnover. Or worse, people leave without leaving.

So, in summary, great leaders know what they are working for, can explain it to others, provide good feedback about performance, do what they say they will do, empower the creative humans who work for them, and engage with them on a human-to-human level. It takes courage, work and practice, but doesn't it sound more fun than hiding behind a mask, and being passive aggressive because you aren't getting what you need?



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Tom Kolditz is a social psychologist who develops leaders. He is currently the managing member of Saxon Castle LLC, a coaching and leader development consultancy. He founded the Ann & John Doerr Institute for New Leaders at Rice University and led it for seven years. His most recent book, *Leadership Reckoning: Can Higher Education Develop the Leaders We Need*, launched a national movement to improve the quality and quantity of leader development across higher education.

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