

# A conversation about Leadership

Tom Gausvik

Associate Vice President for Human Resources

University of Georgia

# What I do...

- As an Associate Vice President for HR, provide strategic leadership and management for a workforce of 20,000 employees (10,000 benefits-eligible; 3,000 graduate assistants, 7,000 temporaries), 5,000 retirees, 4,000 students with health insurance (36,000+ students), and 10,000 volunteers.
- Chiefly responsible for all University human resource-related programs including recruitment, compensation, benefits, retirement, training, professional and leadership development.
- A highly-talented professional staff of 44 (Staff: Employee Ratio of 1:300; One of highest in higher education. The standard ration is 1:150)

# My background...



**Military Brat. Moved 19 times before College.**



**Graduated Bachelors of History from The Citadel**



**Graduated Masters of HRD from The American University**



**Seven years as an Infantry Officer in the U.S. Army**

**Chief Human Resources Officer at the University of Virginia for over 11 years**



**Spent 23 years at UVA in a variety of leadership positions, each one successively higher within the HR organization.**

**Associate VP for HR at UGA since December 2005**



# My leadership style...



## Qualities

- An authentic leader is more interested in empowering employees than in money or personal power, and is guided by compassion and heart in everything they do.

## Inspiration

- Authentic leaders draw their inspiration from their own lives.

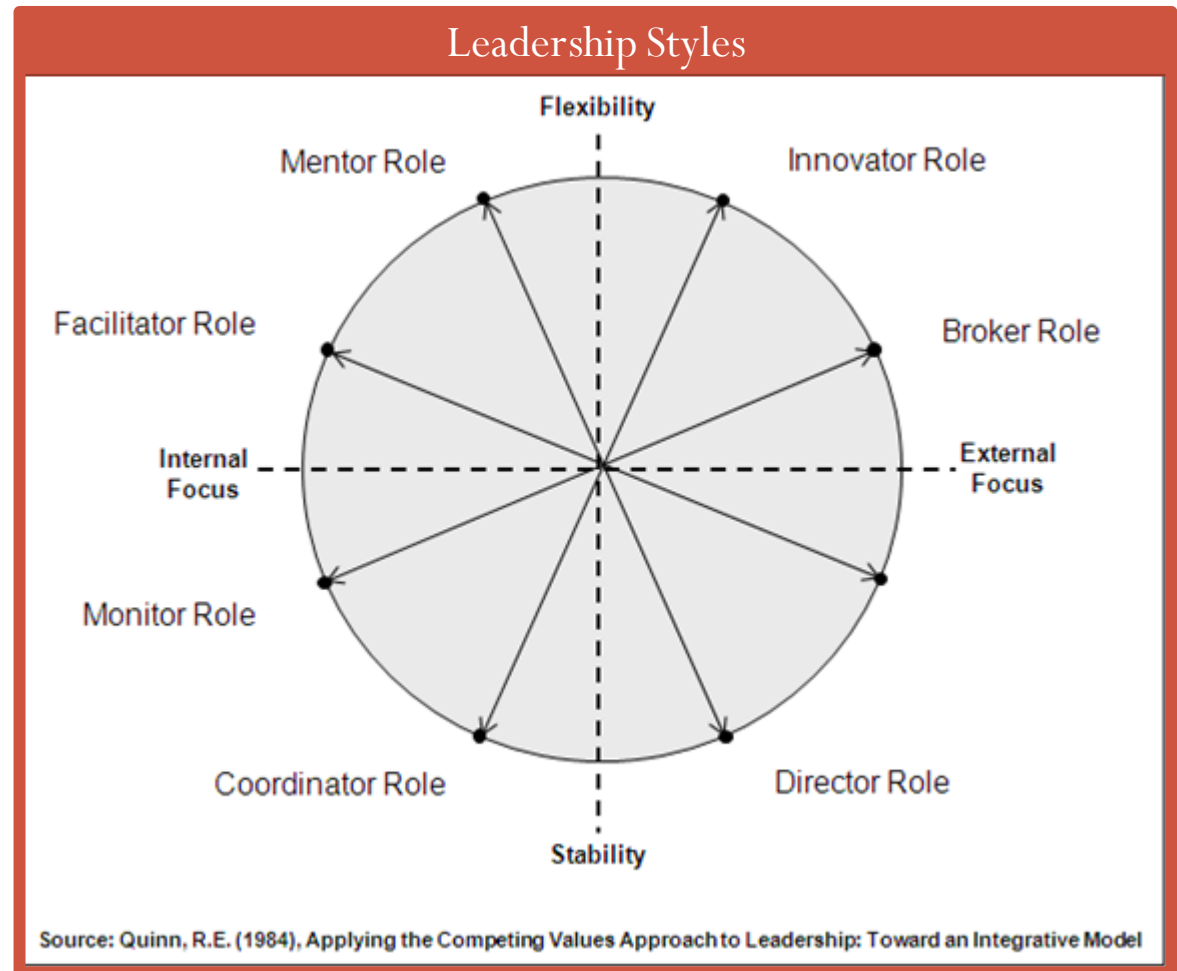
## Personal Growth

- An authentic leader is not afraid to admit mistakes and work to overcome shortcomings. By facing their weaknesses and refusing to compromise with them, authentic leaders can find ways to overcome their weaknesses and this makes them stronger leaders.

**Authentic Leadership**

# My preference ...

There's no one greatest type of leadership, as all leaders must develop a style that's consistent with their personality and what they wish to accomplish. The setting or situation likewise determines the type of leader required like a group of school children needs a leader that is different from a group of soldiers going to combat.



# My personal leadership philosophy...

*You Lead People.*

*You Manage Things.*

*You Sit a Seat of Privilege.*

*You Lead By Example.*

*You Lead From the Front.*

# philosophy cont. ...

- Great leaders had keen insight and ability to see the forest through the trees and not get fixated on a single tree in the forest. Looking back to my time in the U.S. Army, I can vividly recall the Infantry's motto of "Follow Me," the motto of the U.S. Army Rangers--"Rangers Lead The Way," and the motto of the 2nd Battalion 87th Infantry--"Vires Montesque Vincimus" (We Conquer Might & Mountains).
- Leaders act, act, and act some more.

# 7 Fundamentals of Leadership & Organizational Right Alignment

- I have had the good fortune to work for and with a number of great leaders who continually *rethink, reinvent, and reinvigorate* themselves and their organizations.
- They consistently do the same things well all the time, which I call the 7 Fundaments of Leadership and Organizational Right Alignment.





# As a leader, how do I interact with and how am impacted by followers?

- I prefer to treat and interact with people as equals; as colleagues.
- I do not wear my position and prefer not to use my position to get things done.
- I strive to minimize a person's weakness and accentuate a person's strengths and do this on an individual basis.
- I do not seek to fix a person, rather, I will work to develop and grow a person's abilities, skills, knowledge, confidence and competencies.
- Those I have the privilege of leading, energize me.
- I am an extrovert by nature, so I garner my energy from others.
- I believe we are all followers, so followership is as important as leadership.

# Thoughts on leadership and group process...

- I believe leadership is a team endeavor; albeit, it is individual in nature in terms of “Self”
- By this I mean, leadership is situational and rotational (moving/shifting) depending on the circumstance, event and/or situation
- Usually, leadership is moving from member-to-member in a group



# Day-to-day issues of leadership and decision making ...

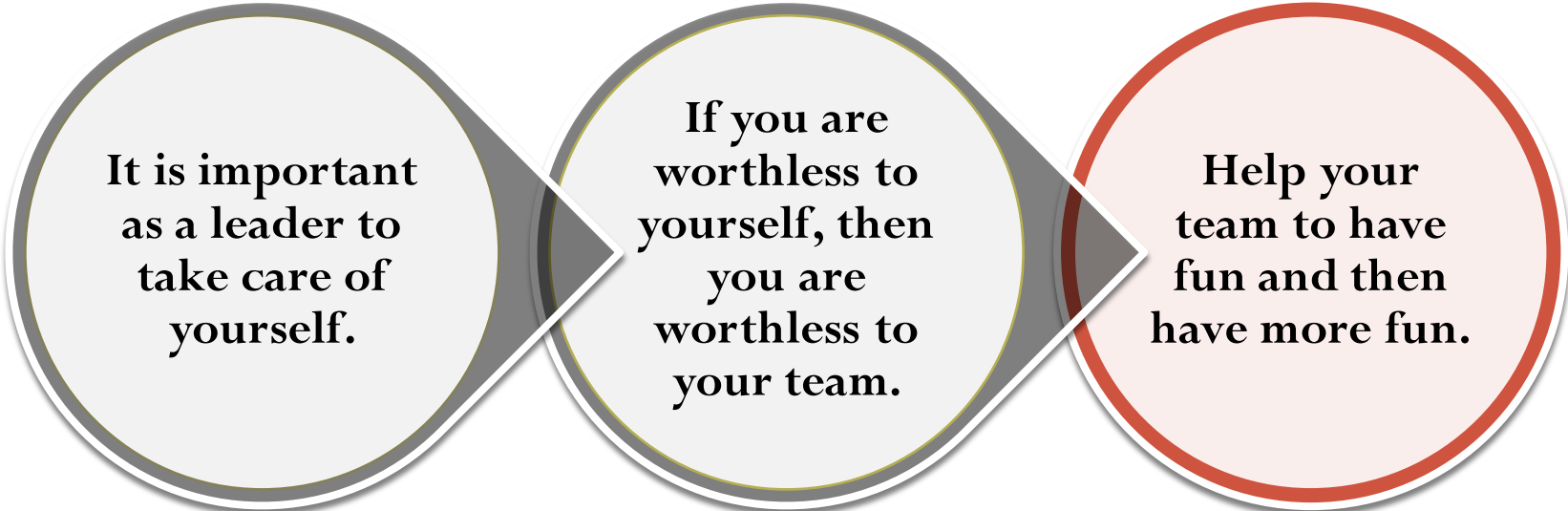
- Obtaining as many facts as possible is important in my day-to-day to decision-making.
- When practical, I take time to reflect and pause when making decisions.
- The old saying, “haste makes waste” is a good reminder.
- I feel comfortable with making decisions.
- I have learned how to decipher and process a lot of information, and feel that I have pretty good intuition.
- I usually ask, “*what does my head and heart say, then I listen to my gut.*”

# Leading through change...

- My advice is to get through the change as quickly as possible.
- I use Kurt Lewin's Theory of Change (Unfreeze, Move, Refreeze).
- If possible, prepare your people (the culture) for the upcoming/impending change.
- It is like training for a marathon. You do not wait until the day of the marathon, go out and run it. You spend months training to run it. This is no different in dealing with change in an organization. You train for it. You prepare for it.
- You "lead" through Change.



# Thoughts on personal or group renewal strategies ...



**It is important  
as a leader to  
take care of  
yourself.**

**If you are  
worthless to  
yourself, then  
you are  
worthless to  
your team.**

**Help your  
team to have  
fun and then  
have more fun.**

To end with a favorite quote, which I live and lead by...

*"Whatever I think is right for me to do, I do. I do the things that I believe ought to be done. And when I make up my mind to do a thing, I act."*

- Theodore Roosevelt

Q&A