

Being. Doing. Learning. That is what leadership is about, now and in the future

Deployable for peace and security anywhere and at all times. Doing a good job, connecting with your personnel, while continuously striving to improve the organisation: this all requires customised leadership. Both in the peacetime organisation and during deployments. Especially in today's society. The work of the Defence organisation is becoming increasingly complex amid growing uncertainty, and is requiring more and more cooperation with other parties. In addition, the way people work nowadays and the new generation of personnel call for a different emphasis in leadership. To an increasing extent, we are electing to inspire rather than monitor, to listen rather than speak and to unite rather than persuade.

Today's leaders have both character and skills. They are able to adjust their style of leadership quickly, effectively and consciously to the requirements of any given situation. They are also aware of the limitations of their particular leadership style and they continue to learn, both from their own experiences and from others.

Character forms the basis for good leadership in the Defence organisation. Leaders need a robust personality. Good leadership requires honesty, responsibility, courage and the will to serve. But these characteristics alone are not enough. You have to do these things in practice too, based on your knowledge and skills. In your dealings with other people as well as in your own tasks. Your role is not only that of a leader — your team need you to be a coach and a manager as well. And you set an example when it comes to getting the job done properly as well as being a role model in your particular field: you are an expert.

Your task is to improve the effectiveness of your unit continuously. On the one hand by taking a good look at yourself, and on the other hand by using feedback from other people to your advantage. For yourself, for your team and for the wider context. If as a leader you continue to learn from your own experiences and from others, you will not only successfully contribute to the mission of the Defence organisation, you will also improve the Defence organisation itself.

In other words, DO your task and LEARN, but above all... BE a leader!

"Leadership is increasing the ability of the community to shape its own future."

-Boonstra-

Leadership within the Defence organisation

Leadership is one of the key success factors of the Defence organisation. Good leadership is, and remains, the responsibility of the leader. The Defence-wide 'Vision on Leadership' (2013) gives leaders guidelines and leeway to navigate the complex environment of the Defence organisation. An environment that is undergoing rapid change. The concept of security has expanded and with it the concept of military action. The Vision on Leadership recognises this day-to-day environment and its complexity and ensures that leaders stay on track. Leaders and those being led - both military personnel and civilian personnel - from all layers of the organisation contributed to this vision. The Vision on Leadership is presented as a compass.

This document describes what is expected of leaders. It is intended for leaders at all levels and for employees whose position involves leadership selection or development. It provides in-depth information on the Vision on Leadership's three main elements: 'being, doing and learning'. Leaders develop leaders! Good leadership is only possible when leaders constantly develop themselves AND guide the leaders of tomorrow in their development. The leadership compass serves as a tool in this regard.

"The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."

- Ralph Nader -

BEING. DOING. LEARNING.

Character (being) and behaviour (doing) are core elements of leadership. The leadership compass indicates what within the Defence organisation has been identified as the desired character and the desired behaviour, although these alone do not guarantee success. The ability to adapt to and respond to situations, and the desire to improve (learn) are essential. In that regard, the Defence organisation does not prescribe a leadership theory or style, but instead calls on your ability to learn and reflect. Good leadership is doing what is needed. Knowing yourself, the other, the team and the wider context ensures that you do what is needed at the right time.

BEING: When are you a good leader?

You cannot achieve effective leadership by simply learning the right skills. It is about more than performing a 'trick'. Leaders and those being led are people. That means it's not only a question of what a leader should do, but certainly also what kind of person the leader is - the character of the leader.

Character is habitual behaviour that is the product of the convictions, values and standards, drive, motivations and personal characteristics of an individual. A characteristic is strengthened by repeatedly displaying the associated behaviour. Once a certain type of behaviour becomes habitual, we identify someone with that behaviour and refer to it as a characteristic. Having courageous thoughts does not necessarily make someone courageous, for example. Someone is said to have a courageous character if they repeatedly display courageous behaviour; he/she is not sometimes courageous and sometimes cowardly. In short, character is deeply rooted in the individual and is displayed in all circumstances.

Our character is formed from our birth and is influenced by our environment, upbringing, religion, education, etc. Defence actively and consciously contributes to forming character. The professional attitude of military personnel is formed during initial training courses in particular. It is not easy to strengthen character, but this can be done if there is a strong will to grow, or if hard-hitting incidents are the motivation.

The Defence organisation calls for specific characteristics from leaders, such that they can act appropriately at all times and in all situations. When drawing up the Defence-wide Vision on Leadership, focus groups were asked to identify the characteristics required of Defence leaders. The four that came up the most often - courage, honesty, responsibility and serving - form the basis for good leadership at Defence and serve as a moral compass. In practice, the emphasis of these characteristics may vary according to time and place. They are in line with the core values of Defence (ready for battle and performance-oriented, professional and loyal, committed and reliable) and the Defence code of conduct (including "I am aware of my responsibilities.")

"Character is who we are when no-one's looking."

-Unknown source-

"Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones."

-Phillips Brooks-

"Courage combined with integrity is the foundation of character."

-Brian Tracy-

The character of the leader

COURAGEOUS

You are characterised as someone who stands up for what is right (even in difficult situations). Standing up for something means showing vulnerability and that calls for courage. You are someone who stands up when others remain seated, someone who faces their own fears. You face confrontation even when at risk of failure, uncertainty, injury or death. Where necessary, you take unpopular measures, break established habits and do not avoid sensitive issues.

HONEST

You are characterised as someone who speaks the truth and respects others as they are. You say what you think and do as you say. You put your cards on the table and admit mistakes. You act honourably and conscientiously, in line with personal values and generally applicable standards and regulations.

RESPONSIBLE

You are characterised as someone who is accountable for their behaviour and the team's behaviour and the consequences thereof. You take into account the impact of your decisions on processes and people. You do what you can and keep to agreements. You safeguard the interests of Defence and set a good example with regards to attitude, presentation and behaviour.

SERVING

You are characterised as someone who serves the team and the task, whereby you put the team, the organisation and society before your own interest. You create the circumstances in which your employees can perform and grow to their optimum level.

DOING: What does a good leader do?

Defence expects its leaders to perform the roles of leader, manager, coach and expert effectively and convincingly. The leader should be able to switch between these roles if the situation calls for it and find the right balance in doing so. The roles of the leader are distinguishable yet interwoven. Certain competencies are expected from the leader in order to be able to fulfil his/her roles properly.

“Leadership is action, not position.”

- Donald H. Mc Gannon -

The roles of the leader

LEADER

Formulates the desired direction for the future, inspires and takes timely and well thought-out decisions.

Competencies: *vision, influential, decisive*

MANAGER

Creates conditions, frameworks and priorities and applies available resources to an optimum level to realise targets and results.

Competencies: *planning & organising, results-oriented.*

COACH

Stimulates and guides the development of personnel and teams and empathises with others.

Competencies: *develops team members, people-oriented.*

EXPERT

Knows the organisation and the forces at play and is skilled and professional in his/her specific field.

Competencies: *organisation-oriented, 'dependent on the field'.*

LEARNING: How does a good leader learn?

It is the task of the leader to increase the effectiveness of him/herself and his/her team. A good leader is therefore a leader who is constantly learning. A well-developed ability to learn is therefore important, as well as the ability to adapt to what can be unpredictable and rapidly changing circumstances. In other words, the ability to anticipate and achieve optimally in dynamic and unpredictable circumstances, for which leaders cannot be given specific training. Flexibility, creativity and a strong nerve are needed to achieve this.

Reflection and dialogue form the foundation for learning. They improve the quality of BEING and DOING of the leader and result in growth. Reflection and dialogue are about learning from your own and others' experiences. Leaders should have the ability to look back on their actions and analyse those actions. Where necessary, they should put alternatives into practice. It is important that Defence leaders reflect on three levels: **ME, TEAM and CONTEXT.**

“When you can't change the direction of the wind – adjust your sails.”

- H. Jackson Brown Jr. -

ME

Those who want to lead others well, need first to learn to lead themselves; that is to say develop self-leadership. Leaders are expected not only to be able to lead themselves and others, but also to support others in developing their own self-leadership. Self-leadership starts with feeling responsible for your own actions, being in control and showing ownership. By developing self-awareness and self-guidance, you will ultimately become capable of developing into an authentic and effective leader.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is knowledge of yourself and the behaviour that you display. You know your strengths and your weaknesses and the impact you have on others. You can increase your self-awareness through self-reflection. The iceberg analogy is a useful tool in this regard. Everyone is an iceberg. Only a small part of an iceberg is visible above the surface of the water: behaviour. The largest part of the iceberg is not visible, because it is underwater, but this part (knowledge, skills, beliefs, standards and values, motivations, personal characteristics and intelligence) determines to a great extent the behaviour that you display. The deeper the iceberg, the harder it is to change. Another helpful tool for increasing self-awareness is feedback. Asking for and receiving feedback gives you more insight into how others see you. In this way, you also discover whether how you view yourself is in line with how others view you. Ultimately, this leads to greater self-awareness.

Self-guidance

Self-guidance entails you leading yourself to your desired goals of your own accord. Not only does this require self-discipline to complete difficult and less desirable tasks, but, in order to reach the goals, it also requires the ability to link intrinsic motivation to the tasks to be carried out. Self-guidance contributes to a feeling of self-confidence and autonomy, which in turn

has a direct impact on your performance.

Authenticity

Self-awareness is the basis for developing authentic leadership. Authenticity is about accepting yourself as you are and showing others who you really are. It is about being true to yourself, by acting in line with your own values, preferences and needs rather than by displaying socially desirable behaviour. Showing your true colours and expressing what you are feeling and thinking can mean that you will have to expose yourself to disapproval from others and that requires the ability to show both vulnerability and courage. Showing vulnerability is an important aspect of leadership when it comes to connecting with others. It is an essential part of the process of building trust between leaders and personnel.

In short, learning about 'Me' is about ownership, self-awareness and self-guidance. An authentic leader ensures not only that his actions lead to the goals being achieved, but also that his actions (DOING) are consistent with who he or she is (BEING). The result is better performance, higher productivity, increased job satisfaction, increased personal effectiveness, greater self-confidence, less stress, less absenteeism, and more ethically responsible behaviour.

Questions for reflection

- What do I want to achieve?
- What am I good at and what are my pitfalls?
- How do my beliefs, standards, values, motivations, etc., influence my behaviour?
- What effect does my behaviour have on others?
- What do I think is important and how do I act accordingly?
- Am I doing the right things and am I doing them well?
- Am I open, honest and true to myself?
- Do I say what I think?
- How do I see myself and is this in line with how others see me?
- Am I setting a good example?
- Am I effective in the role of leader/manager/coach/expert?
- How do I want to develop (further) as a leader?

“If you want to lead somebody, the first critical step is to lead yourself.”

- Manz & Sims -

TEAM

A team is more than a collection of individuals and more than a group. Within a team, members are dependent on each other to achieve a specific common goal. A team is effective if there is trust between members, whereby the common interest comes before individual interests or are in line with them. As a leader, it is your task to create a (learning) team from the individual components. In order to do this, you give direction (role of leader), connect the members of your team (role of coach) and constantly seek alignment with the context.

By reflecting with your team and entering into discussion with them, you gain insight into the group dynamics that you need to guide and develop the team. A new team, for example, has a greater need for clarity from the leader than an established team, while the challenge for teams that have been together for longer is to voice new insights and ideas, address confrontations between team members and be open to input from others.

Team spirit is of great importance, irrespective of the phase the team finds itself in. When it comes down to it, it's about the team rather than the individual. Engaging the team members with the task and connecting them with each other is achieved by creating challenges, by taking collective responsibility, by valuing differences, by effective interaction and by learning.

The five aspects of a successful team are:

- **Challenge.** The goals set should inspire the members and challenge personal development. Achieving realistic and challenging

goals engenders a feeling of pride regarding the collectively achieved result and each individual's contribution to it. Goals that are pitched at too low a level can lead to boredom, while unrealistic goals often create resistance to commitment.

- **Joint responsibility.** Joint responsibility is more than responsibility for your own individual task. If team members feel responsible for the collective result, they will be willing to make extra effort and help others achieve their tasks.
- **Valuing differences.** By valuing differences, you recognise that every individual team member is different and has specific qualities. Do you focus on the similarities or the differences? Do you accept others as they are or do you judge them? If you value differences, you can go further than acceptance; by using the specific qualities of individuals, you get the best out of your team members. This will benefit the performance of the team.
- **Team learning.** To be effective in every situation, teams and team members must be able to learn. A team that learns is able to adapt and develop.
- **Interaction.** Interaction is the process that connects the team members to each other. How can we formulate our mission and vision together? How do we treat each other? How do we give feedback to each other? How do we deal with differences of opinion or conflicts?

Bear in mind that leaders are also members of the team. In addition, leaders have an important impact on the effective performance of the team.

Questions for reflection:

- Who shape the team?
- What does the team know, what are its abilities, what does it think and want?
- To what extent is it a real team?
- In what phase of group development is the team and, on that basis, what are its needs?
- What initiatives do the team members take on that are beyond their individual responsibilities?
- How well do the team members know each other (motivations, values, qualities and irritants)?
- What can we still learn about each other in this team?
- To what extent can everyone be themselves and to what extent are the different qualities of the individual team members put to use?
- How does the team deal with changing circumstances (now and in the future)?
- How do we shape the interaction in our team (feedback, listening, dealing with conflicts)?
- What does the team understand by courageous, serving, responsible and honest behaviour? (being)
- Which role (leader, manager, coach, expert) does the team have a greater need for at this point in time? (doing)
- How do I challenge the individual team members at their own level?
- How do I encourage ideas and joint ambitions?
- How do I enhance the team members' ownership regarding collaboration and results?

"For it is not from 'me' and 'them', but from 'us', that good things are created."

- CHOD (ret'd) Peter van Uhm

"Trusting others is extremely important. It is essential that you invest in your personnel, in order to get to know them. I tried to understand everyone's home circumstances by holding individual meetings. As your relationship with others strengthens, the work becomes easier."

-Erik, Battle Group 5, of Junior Leadership in Afghanistan-

CONTEXT

Choosing the right leadership style is not only based on your own preferred style, but also the needs of the team. The right

leadership style is largely determined by the context. Defence is not only deployed for combating conflict, but increasingly for supporting civil authorities, for disaster relief and for counteracting potential threats. Asymmetric operations against an irregular adversary have become the order of the day, in combination with joint and combined operations in inaccessible areas or on endless seas. Often, the whole spectrum of force is involved. During a fire fight, for example, split-second decisions are expected, while a peacetime operational management situation may call for consultations and consensus due to political sensitivities. Are you a leader in the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, the Royal Netherlands Air Force or the Royal Netherlands Army? Culture and structure have an impact on the leadership style, which in turn have an impact on the culture and structure.

The context in which Defence leaders operate is changeable and unpredictable. The way to deal with this context is to increase adaptability. That is to say, the ability to respond and perform optimally in dynamic, complex and changing circumstances for which leaders cannot be given specific training.

Questions or reflection:

- What are the characteristics of the context?
- What forms of communication and interaction are commonplace in this context?
- Who has an interest in the impact of my actions?
- When am I effective in this context?
- Which alternatives does the context offer?
- What does the context ask of me as leader?
- What do courageous, serving, responsible and honest mean in this context? (being)
- Do those around me need a leader, manager, expert or coach? (doing)

“It is not the strongest one who survives, but the one who is most adaptable to change...”

-Darwin-

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