

Are Top Australian Leaders Made or Born?

For centuries there has been a debate whether it is our personalities or experiences that mould our behaviour. Are we born to be a certain way or can we learn to be a certain way with hard work and effort?

Can a leader who is aspiring to reach great heights succeed through effective leadership training and executive coaching programs or is there a time when we need to accept that we can't change who we are and that we just don't have leadership greatness stamped inside of us?

To begin tackling this question it is important to differentiate between personality and behaviour. Who we are is a factor of our personality. What we do is a factor of our actions. This being the case is leadership greatness about who we are or what we do?

If you think about a great leader do you think about her inner make up or do you think about what she has done in her leadership role that made a profound difference?

If it is the latter then the case for any leadership training or executive coaching program may hold water. If the leadership training is about focusing on those behaviours that make leaders successful and use the actions of great leaders as the benchmark of aspiration then surely the investment is worthwhile. If however the leadership training is more about trying to emulate the way other leader leads or trying to become like a particular leader in personality, the investment is questionable.

Executive coaching is about developing constructive leadership behaviours and minimising counter productive and defensive behavioural styles. What is interesting is the fact that many great leaders share similar ways of behaviour. When these can be identified as preferred styles in any leadership training or executive coaching program then one need not recreate the wheel but rather mirror the one that is most outstanding.

The success factor in leadership training is degree to which these behaviours are practically and appropriately applied within the working environment. What may be appropriate in one culture may not be in another and therefore the leadership training or executive coaching methodologies need to be tailor made and non generic.

For this to occur the leadership training program needs to factor in all the variables that affect that people and culture of that particular organisation and to ensure that the leadership styles are those that will yield the best results.

Can anyone learn these effective leadership styles of behaviour? Yes. Can anyone action them in the same way as a great leader does? Well that depends on how great you are!