



IN HIS book *People and Performance* (1977) Drucker argues that the manager heading an organisation joins a leadership group within the institution, but to expect every manager to be a leader is futile. He also says that in a developed society there are thousands, if not millions, of managers, and leadership is always the rare exception, confined to very few individuals.

Brown (*The Psychology of Industry*, 1967) showed that leadership is always changing in groups of people, and depending on the task or situation of the group, a leader emerges. He uses J. M. Barrie's play *The Admirable Crichton* as an example.

Falk (*The Business of Management*, 1963) gives those qualities he considers necessary for managers. In an ideal world he talks about the ability to "think with crystal clarity . . . integrity, shrewdness, be enterprising and have a humane outlook". He ends with high intelligence and considerable powers of leadership.

Many papers have been written giving views on leadership roles. Some make a special point here or there. I have tried to show in those few opening paragraphs how many different views there are on the subject of "leadership". It is somewhat surprising that there is a lack of common consent on what leadership is; although it is often linked to a description of a manager's job, I believe it is more rarely demonstrated than generally thought.

Chambers' dictionary defines leadership as "... to show the way by going first, to guide, to direct, to conduct, to convey, to initiate". That last word gives a clue to what true leadership is. It is "the lead, first step, considered as determining the conditions for others: the right or power of beginning: energy and resourcefulness enabling one to act without prompting from others". One begins to picture a leader much more clearly with the idea of that all-embracing word "initiative".

There are many organisations that require good, sound managers or administrators. I think there is a difference between the two titles: "administration" means "to govern, to head or dispense as in a bureaucratic type of organisation like hospitals, schools or the church". Managers, however, can be found within those institutions. A manager is more likely to be found in industry, or commerce or, more rarely, in some of the service industries. He is not only in charge of a function that requires people under him to carry out work, but he can also initiate change under his own authority.

I think this element of introducing change is critical. It shows more clearly the dynamics of managing people. It speaks of growth, involvement and development. This is still different to true leadership. It is true that a senior manager does lead in a general sense, in that he is required to make decisions and generally exhibit a positive attitude towards the organisation

## Clues to a leading question

**Anthony Carr, Area Nursing Officer for Newcastle upon Tyne, attempts to define the qualities needed to be a true leader and what makes one person stand out among others for a leadership role.**

and persuade his people to go in a certain direction.

An organisation such as a health authority or a profession needs someone with different qualities to those of a manager. It is not easy to describe what these qualities are. A study of people who have been great leaders may, at first sight, be of help.

Take Sir Winston Churchill. His possession and use of words was extraordinary. It has been said that his vocabulary was the largest of any known Englishman of his time. Yet his speeches that roused the ordinary man and woman in the 1940s were comprised of words of one syllable; his delivery was not exceptionally good, yet the effects made upon the hearer were, at times, dramatic.

Here was a man who was in a political wilderness for years and was in effect brought out of retirement for this great leadership role. Field-Marshal Montgomery was another British "hero". He and Winston Churchill had at least one thing in common, in that they emerged to do a specific task. It is interesting to note that in the case of Churchill, once that task was completed he tended not to have the same impact.

I have noted that people in the leadership position are very different to each other as people, and their approaches

to their lives in particular, and work in general, are also dissimilar. It seems there are few clues as to why one person can really lead men and women along with the majority, those people enjoying the experience of the extra heartbeat as they work, while another is unable to inspire the same commitment. If this deficiency was discovered a few years ago, an intensive course in leadership would have been organised. Fortunately, there is not now the money to contemplate such a course of action, because it does not work like that.

I do wonder if there are some clues that could allow some speculation to be made on what makes a leader. The first principle is to be wholly committed to the major objective of the organisation. A person with an unswerving conviction inspires others. Some aims and objectives can be discussed and debated while others seem to be part of the very make-up of a leader and are beyond debate. Faith would not be too strong a word to use.

A leader has faith in himself and what he is doing. The Bible states that faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". This suggests that while others are far less sure of their situation, the leader with this confidence already sees plainly what others see only in dim outline. It is having a vision of what is to be achieved.

Perhaps the greatest attribute a true leader possesses is the ability to be at ease with himself. So often life forces people into a place where they have to live a life of pretence. How refreshing to meet people who like themselves as themselves and are free and released from negative thoughts about their actions. I do not mean they are not sensitive to how other people react to them, but they are positive in all their approaches to people.

I would suggest that all nurses in leadership positions take stock of where they are in terms of the leadership league. Ask the questions: "Do I like myself, am I free with my own company? If I am, how free do I feel in the company of my subordinate staff? If I feel free in that situation then I can be me and begin to develop genuine relationships."

I begin to understand more clearly now that relationships need working at continually both at work and at home. That needs time and commitment to each other and from each other. This expansion of energy produces trust in one another, which is the foundation of good organisation and leadership. Another principle that seems to emerge is that of courage. The ability to stand against current popular opinion and not just live life solely to win friends and influence people.

A long, cool look at ourselves, our motivations, our real hidden aims and objectives, may be just the catalyst that is needed to create the right attitudes which would allow a real leader to emerge at both ward and district level □