

# Women in Leadership

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*... If there are attributes called feminine (and I believe there are) which are different from attributes labeled as masculine (and I believe there are), I believe that that which women bring in their femininity in the best sense of that word, not just grace and style, but warmth and caring, is important in any organizational system.*

THE behaviors of a real leader generally include five roles:

1) To unify a group by cutting through and trying to distill the essence of the group's mission; alluding to it through articulation of goals, and at times in behaviors, as best demonstrated in the Israeli officer model: "After me".

2) To try to control conflicts that arise and channel them into positive directions. Conflict is not automatically bad and indeed is often healthful. The problem for a leader is how to resolve conflict, how to find ways of doing this without hurting those involved in the conflict. A good leader is able to do that.

3) To be able to establish a sense of order and purpose about whatever the group is trying to become.

4) To be able to encourage change and through that change to modify the behavior of the organization and of the people needed to bring about change.

5) To provide a set of strategies for achieving goals. There are, however, not only roles for leaders, but leadership styles. One theory differentiates between male and female leadership styles and is called the Alpha and Beta analysis of leadership styles.

The Alpha style is the traditional male style; the tendency to be rational, hierarchical and analytical; to approach a problem and try to deal with it without regard to the feelings that might be involved in the solution of that problem—without regard to the feelings that might even explain the presence of the problem. The Alpha style deals with

what is manifest, what is overt, what is observable without reference to that which is covert or latent as Parsons would put it. Some social scientists feel that in male-oriented societies and male-oriented organizations, the "boss" model emerges almost inevitably; "do it, get it done and it is done". The military and any other autocratic system personify this model in its purest form. Many organizations utilize the Alpha model even though their intentions or goals are not autocratic.

In this pattern, the tendency is to focus on short range problem-solving, reacting to problems once they arise in an immediate way within a narrow range of options, seeking agreement in the process, often at any cost. Often the thought communicated is "Don't disagree, and do it the way I want you to do it".

The people who use the Beta model of leadership tend (*tend*) to be more intuitive. They tend to feel. It is not that they do not analyze issues, but they also let their *kishkes* talk to them. Rather they make sure that their rational assessment is congruent with the feeling in the "gut". And if the two facets, the rational and emotional, do not coincide, the solution is not a good one; thus, facts "may be real", but the emotions will tell another story and, therefore, there may be hesitancy to act. The result is an attempt and desire to be more comprehensive in assessing options, including the consequences to people's feelings and their desire to be involved.

This tends to increase motivation and more often results in a collaborative way of working.

People within the organization are more likely to emphasize the need for learning, planning and examining alternatives more carefully before acting.

When communities work at their best, they represent the Beta model. The result is a slower time frame in solving problems; everybody that is involved is consulted or taken into consideration. If indeed the theory were provable, the need for women in leadership would be proven scientifically, rather than argued for, from the premise of democracy and egalitarianism.

Women, in turn, are at a disadvantage, because of the criticisms facing them; if they use the leadership attributes people want in a male, they are viewed as unfeminine and somehow unworthy of leadership. The male involved in leadership roles who is "sharp" and able to really bring things together, articulate, dynamic, exciting, able to marshal resources and energize people, is seen as a leader. The woman leader manifesting these self-same patterns "does not know her place," because she is using "unfeminine" attributes, that is to say, "masculine" attributes. Cultural baggage—what a load!

Remember *Life is with People*? One of the women interviewed is asked about her role in the family and says, "Well, I am not the boss and I do not run the family, but", and then proceeds to tell how she "manipulates" to have her husband think that he is the head of the family. Now that is a caricature, a stereotype at its worst in one sense, but it also shows how a woman felt she had to act and retain acceptance. If she was seen as being "up front", the overt head of the household, her peers would have turned on her; whereas she could act behind the scene, as so-called head of

the household and that was perfectly acceptable to all, including her husband and, most of all, the community. Today few modern women will play this game—nor should they.

The problem is that males do not yet want women to be in leadership roles, and the nature of the world is such that many men will probably continue to do everything they can to prevent it, to make sure that that remains the case. Jacob Rader Marcus put it in a very interesting way referring to the rabbinate. "As long as the women rabbis are the "nice girl assistants" who do education and youth work and remain assistants, it will be fine with the board and it will be fine with the senior rabbi. But let that girl try to become a woman in a real way, with real power, and there will be real war". Marcus has pointed out that after 130 years of women Congregationalist ministers, there has yet to be a "leader". This cannot be because of the quality and ability of the women ministers.

At the least, there is great ambivalence about changing roles, and imbedded stereotypes of what we want to believe about our delineated roles as men and women, and when I use the word "we", I mean most people, whether male or female.

It will be the task of all of us in this period ahead to confront ourselves and really see whether or not we can pass the litmus test within. Do we truly believe there is something called egalitarianism in leadership, and if there is, what does that mean beyond having "show women" people, so we can say we now have two vice presidents who are women, one who is chairman of the budget and planning department, etc?

Whether or not the premise of Alpha and Beta leadership styles is feminine or masculine is, I think, less important than whether or not one kind of style can lead to more incorporation of Beta style

people in leadership roles, regardless of sex.

At the same time, if there are attributes called feminine (and I believe there are), which are different from attributes labeled as masculine (and I believe there are), I believe that that which women bring in their femininity in the best sense of that word, not just grace and style, but warmth and caring, is important in any organizational system. The Jewish community organizations, because they are so bureaucratic, because they can be so impersonal, because they need to develop an ever sharpened model image of caring, can then take the best of Beta model and combine it with leadership roles identified at the beginning of this paper. Then will Jewish organizations profit from merging management and humanities theories into a relevant and productive blend for the hard times ahead.

#### Ethel Taft Responds with "Still Another Dimension"\*

Once again we hear the clarion call for egalitarianism in the achievement of leadership in the Jewish communal life. It is, sadly, a familiar refrain, one which we have heard repeatedly for the last decade without evidence of significant movement towards the desired goal.

There is no doubt that Bubis' analysis of the five aspects of leadership is correct. There is also much evidence to support that the competent leadership required by the Jewish community must reflect the best of the "Alpha" and the "Beta" models.

The issue, however, that is quite basic to the whole discussion of "Women In Leadership" and that has not been suffi-

ciently addressed, at least not in our arena, is the very fundamental issue of power. Leadership entails power, and those who have it are loathe to surrender it and those who want it do not necessarily know how to attain it, even if they are completely comfortable with the wish to do so.

Natasha Josefowitz, in her book *Paths to Power*, talks about roadblocks to women's achievement of power being internal and external. The internal barriers are those of past socialization, current expectations, and current responsibilities (e.g. handling family and career), whereas the external roadblocks include, in addition to the latter two, prejudice, stereotyping and organizational discrimination as reflected in hiring and promotion practices<sup>1</sup>.

For many years now, we have primarily confronted the external barriers and by no means should we back away from this aspect of the struggle. Quite the contrary, we need to intensify our efforts using all legitimate means in all appropriate arenas. However, we appear to have neglected a more concerted effort at developing mechanisms that offer meaningful means for dealing with the internal issues, those issues that are in a sense more difficult to get at because they are matters of core identity and self image.

Women must seek the means to reinforce in one another those behaviors which characterize quality leadership and the exercise of power. Women must not allow themselves to be trapped by the "he's assertive and she's aggressive" syndrome. Mutual support and the willingness to confront the counter-productive aspects of the female socialization process are crucial if women

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<sup>1</sup> Natasha Josefowitz, *Paths to Power*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesely Publishing Company, 1980, p. 5.

wish to achieve the strength needed to diminish and eventually eradicate the external barriers to the achievement of power.

Indeed, as Bubis states it, "Cultural baggage . . . what a load!". But if we are

to lighten the load and thereby provide the broadest base possible from which to draw quality leadership, we must begin to take a more comprehensive view of the dynamics inherent in the process of acceptance and attainment of power.

**From the Minutes of the CJCS Executive Committee Meeting March 1982**

Jane Rogul reported on the work of The Committee on Opportunities for Women in Jewish communal service. The Committee felt that too much of the responsibility in this area had been left to women, with insufficient participation by men in the field. It was clear to the group that the concerns of women and the need to utilize more fully the yet untapped resources which women could bring to the field were the concern of the entire field, both men and women. Specifically, it was necessary for the Conference to act more affirmatively to assure that women were provided with all of the benefits and career opportunities in the field. Despite the general acceptance of the formal po-

sitions taken by the Conference on this issue, there continued to be serious problems. It was necessary to move to assure that women received all of the benefits and enjoyed the same security and opportunities for advancement now accorded to men in the field. One way of achieving that goal was to develop an information network for women to learn and to make applications for the openings in advanced administrative positions. Special efforts should be made both that women were represented on the various committees, and that the committees themselves really concerned themselves with the different aspects of the problem of advancing the role of women in the field.