Dilemmas of Charismatic Leadership

Fons Trompenaars | Peter Woolliams[1]

I   Abstract

A new logic is offered that challenges the traditional view that charisma is some magic gift given to some and not others. The new framework extends the seven key traits of charisma identified by Kozubska by identifying the conjugates that form tensions resulting from the momentum for change as the leader leads. A step-by-step approach is used to explore the dilemmas that inform the charismatic leader as a structured debate revealing approaches to the dilemmas' reconciliation.

The authors apply this new logic to demonstrate that charismatic leadership is about celebrating the extremes of opposites and combining them to provide solutions that secure the benefits of both sides. Individuals who can combine such opposites are truly charismatic in all cultures.

The concepts described owe their origin to extensive formal academic research and consulting practice and have been validated across multiple organization types in multiple countries across the globe

II   Introduction

Charismatic individuals have always held a fascination for others. Today we are bombarded by the media with the day-to-day 'goings-on' of so-called charismatic sport stars (about their latest super-cars), charismatic movie stars (about their personal relationships and what they are wearing), and charismatic politicians (about their latest indiscretions). It seems these individuals have 'something' that attracts our interest – something we lesser mortals don't.

And so we are led to believe that if only we had this magic ingredient - charisma, or we could acquire it somehow, we too could be 'successful' in our lives and as a business leader.

But charisma is cited as a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he/she is set apart from ordinary men/women and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. Clearly just having more money, faster cars, more outlandishly revealing clothes, plastic surgery, or more infamous affairs doesn't make just anyone charismatic – or an effective business leader.

The English term charisma comes from the Greek χάρισμα khárisma, which means "favor freely given" or "gift of grace". The term and its plural Χαρίσματα (charismata) derive from χάρις (charis), which means "grace", or in the modern sense of personality charisma, such as "filled with attractiveness or charm", "kindness", "to bestow a favor or service", or "to be favored or blessed".

In this paper, our interest is not A-list personalities and whether or not they are charismatic or accorded with this label, but in taking a critical look at the connection between this 'thing' we call charisma and leadership in business. Just who and what are charismatic leader? How do they lead, and can such capability be developed by any employee or employer?

III   Types of charisma

Since the 1950s, the term has become widely used, with varying meanings, in religion, the social sciences, the media, and throughout Western societies. Contemporary charisma maintains, however, the irreducible character ascribed to it by Weber: it retains a mysterious, elusive quality. Media commentators regularly describe charisma as the 'X-factor'. The enigmatic character of charisma also suggests a connection – at least to some degree – to the earliest manifestations of charisma as a spiritual gift.

Here Weber extends the concept of charisma beyond supernatural to superhuman and even to exceptional powers and qualities. He then indicates that followers endow the individual with powers, regard these powers as of divine origin or just exemplary, and treat him as a leader. In another passage, Weber emphasizes that "the recognition on the part of those subject to authority" is decisive for the validity of charisma. In other words, charisma can only be that which believers recognize as charismatic in those they treat as such.

Akin to the topic of 'leadership', there is a wealth of diverse literature which although extensive, ultimately fails to capture the essential elements and distil the bottom-line single root definition. An exhaustive review of this current knowledge of charisma in the context of charismatic business persona reveals two extreme paradigms: what can be described as either 'personalized charisma' in which the holder uses his/her magnetism to get his/her own way or 'socialized charisma' where the holder applies his/her charisma in the manner of a servant leader more in the spirit of altruism.

IV   A new paradigm for charismatic leadership

So what makes a good business leader, and what makes a leader remarkable and charismatic? Joanna Kozubska in particular through inductive research with business leaders has elicited seven key components of a charismatic personality: confidence; vision; communication; style; moving and shaking; visibility; and mystery and enigma.

The above is an army of traits of a charismatic leader but there are hundreds of such books describing similar lists of traits. We gradually begin to understand why there are numerous definitions. Reading the American literature, you find it is all about vision, mission, transparency and, above all, courage. You go to the French literature and read how great charismatic leaders are functions of their educational background and their Cartesian intelligence. Compare with the Asian literature that suggest you should be a male senior practicing martial arts and from the University of Tokyo. And that can also explain why the types of charisma are different between Jack Welsh, Richard Branson and Jacques Chirac (because Francois Hollande obviously is not rated as a typically charismatic person either within or outside of France).

Our own research (both formal academic and practitioner based) reveals that the essential distinguishing characteristic of leaders in a complex environment is their propensity to reconcile seemingly opposing values (originally published as Trompenaars and Woolliams 2008). In contrast, many dominant leadership paradigms ignore those dilemmas and follow the latest fashion. So it was 'courage' some ten years ago, now the real leader is 'cautious'. And you remember when we

all needed to focus as a leader, now it is better to see the whole picture and to find synergies between different activities. Wasn't it the humble leader with will power that Jim Collins found was creating great organizations? And now it is time to be authentic and charismatic. Just what (and who) do we need to believe?

One thing is quite clear: leaders frequently suffered from insomnia because they were not able to resolve a dilemma they faced. After all, it is difficult "to have a vision", but even more difficult not knowing "how to execute". Then, even worse – the successful integration of conflicting values frequently leads to the creation of one or more new dilemmas. It is a continuous process.

What are these dilemmas that charismatic leaders face? Of course you have to inspire as a leader and you also have to listen. You have to fulfill the global strategy and have to have local success by adapting to regional circumstances. You have to decide when to act yourself but also when and where to delegate. As a professional leader you need to set the tone for innovation and set deadlines. And you need to simultaneously use your brilliant thinking power and to frame them by your feelings. You need to develop an excellent organization while simultaneously having attention for the creative individuals in your team.

V   The new conceptual framework

The view of charismatic leadership we posit in this paper is that leaders find themselves *between* competing demands and are subject to an endless series of paradoxes and dilemmas. There are clashes, and by leadership we mean not simply the clashes between different operational demands, but those of different disciplines, functions, genders, classes, and so on. We will illustrate with some frequently occurring dilemmas faced by charismatic leaders.

However, a good charismatic leader will foremost need to make a choice between what is a dilemma and what is not, because not every challenge is a dilemma. Sometimes choices need to be made. But making a choice between the extremes of a dilemma leads to sub-optimal results, sometimes even dramatic ones.

From this perspective, charismatic leaders have a strongly developed capacity for paradoxical problem solving. This might explain why the academic and practical communities keep on writing more and yet more books on both charisma, and even more books on leadership.

They most often ignore the meta-competence that connects the new claim to fame with its opposite. The short-term transactional leader needs to include his or her actions in a longer term strategy. The transformational leader needs to find stability of endurance as a stepping stone to change. The visionary leader needs to execute.

And it is in **the integration of the opposites that the charismatic leaders show their greatness**. And because of this competence, there are few exceptions to their respect. Billions of people in all cultures, all organizations, and all institutions agree the greatness of Mandela, Gandhi, Mohammed Ali and the religious icons. And what do these leaders have in common that their respect crosses cultures and institutions? Indeed they have integrity, the art of creating wholeness through bridging opposites. The crucial questions for this paper is if charismatic leadership a reflection or a cause of this competence. It is indeed true that most worldly respected leaders are having something that can be described as charisma.

With the internationalization of organizations and increasing diversity of the workforce at home, we find that leaders increasingly have to face a multi-cultural workforce and customers. And culture today is not only defined by your passport only. It includes gender, generation and functional discipline, for example. What style of leadership is effective in these diverse circumstances? We submit that it requires a set of competencies that goes beyond charisma that we identify as trans-cultural competence.

A further fundamental question that doesn't seem to have even been addressed is whether one manifestation of charisma transfers directly to different cultures and situations of diversity. Individuals that exude a body language and a certain ambiance might be considered charismatic in cultures where the display of emotions is more overt (affective cultures) but does this also apply in cultures that tend to conceal emotions more (neutral cultures)?

To transcend this argument and seek a meta-level framework that applies in all cultures, we have identified that the significant and common factor among successful charismatic leaders today is their competence to reconcile the competing demands that they face on a continuing basis.

So what are these dilemmas that charismatic leaders face? How come that some charismatic leaders like Bill Clinton, Richard Branson, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Steve Jobs are respected throughout the globe? While other so called charismatic leaders seem to be popular in their own environment only, like Turkey's Receü Tayyip Erdogan, Italy's Silvio Berlusconi or Venezuela's Hugo Chávez?

We observe that most competences and traits described by most authors are only one leg of two. What makes charismatic leaders is to complement the left with the right leg of each of their list of traits. Are charismatic leaders the "authors" of strategy and policy or do they orchestrate the necessary participation? Do leaders deal in high-level abstractions or in concrete details? Can a charismatic leader be also a servant? Such questions culminate in what is, perhaps, the biggest crisis of the day. Are leaders people hired by shareholders to channel the lion's share of profits in their direction, or do they lead a learning, developing community?

We all know that walking consists of using both legs in coordination. So if we take Kozubska's definitions of key traits of a charismatic personality as one side of the dilemmas, we need to extend them to their opposite by redefining them, not as 'confidence' alone but in association with 'self-questioning'; not solely as 'vision' but through 'execution'; not solely as 'communication' but through 'observing'; not simply 'style' by being true to others but though being true to your self; moving and shaking through stability; visibility through embedding it implicitly; and mystery and enigma through being obvious.

Redefining Kozubska's keys* as the golden dilemmas of charismatic leadership

On the one hand	On the other hand
Confidence*	Self-questioning
Vision*	Execution
Communication*	Observing
Style*	True to others
Moving and shaking*	Stability
Visible*	Embedding implicitly
Mystery and Enigma*	Obvious

Source: Koszubska, Joanna. The seven keys of charisma, 1997.

VI   The values of a charismatic leader are not things but differences

Leaders organize fairly elaborate systems of values so we must first decide and describe what values are.

Values are neither things nor objects. This is an error made by fundamentalists, absolutists and bigots. Values are *differences or contrasts.* Indeed we do not know what value the leader has in mind unless we know the contrast. Courage contrasts with caution, self-interest with concern for others. Passion with dispassion, doubt with certainty, risk with security, and so on.

It follows from this that values *at both ends of these continua are appropriate in given circumstances.* There is a time for passion and for dispassion, for risking yourself and your company and for securing it. There are times to exhibit courage and other times to be cautious. So far from one value being right and the other wrong we need to move back and forth on values continua and do what is most appropriate. We need to think of others (e.g. our customers) and of ourselves (e.g. profitability). We need to make rules, but also look out for particular exceptions to those rules.

Values and the leaders which embody them are good when *values at the contrasting ends of continua harmonize with and strengthen one another.* For example, where we show considerable concern for the customers and delight them, then their revenue will greatly enhance our self-interest and our profitability. Altruism and egoism increase one another. Our thinking is that values are not "added" by leaders, since only simple values "add up". Leaders combine values: a fast **and** a safe car, good food **yet** easy to prepare. Nobody claims that combining values is easy, but it is possible. A computer that is able to make complex calculations can also be customer-friendly. It is the more extended systems of values that will be the context in which international leadership will prove its excellence.

Productive, charismatic and effective leaders have values that are not just equal but *synergistic* (from the Greek "to work together"). They are mutually optimizing. We gain *through* customer satisfaction and create wealth between us. Stagnating and failing cultures have values that are grossly unequal and fight against their contrasting values, so that you try to make money by exploiting customers, or use your imagined certainties to escape all doubt. You become addicted to taking risks and wreck the whole financial system. Some of these situations may be familiar.

VII   How the charismatic deal with dilemmas

We will now explore our framework by considering the main dilemmas faced by charismatic leaders. We will consider the first few dilemmas in more detail because it is not simply the dilemma itself that needs to be explored, but the **process of reconciling the opposite values** and this **same logic** is appropriate to all the other dilemmas faced by the charismatic leader.

Our conceptual framework takes each meta-level dilemma, initially as a tension between two opposites or opposing values, and then examine sub-dilemmas that manifest in practice.

We will re-craft the dilemmas on an x-y grid where each axis represents each opposing value such that 10, 1 (x=10 and y = 1) position represents the x orientation taken to the extreme and 1, 10 (x=1 and y=10) represents the y orientation taken to the extreme.

In this framework, the 5, 5 position is a merely compromise with some benefits of both but also much lost to achieve compromise.

The charismatic leader achieves the 10, 10 position in which both the extremes of x and y are integrated to harness the business benefits of both. He or she may initially start from the 10, 1 or 1, 10 and by accommodating the other through a number of iterations will finally spiral towards the 10, 10 position in which the competing demands have been reconciled.

For reasons of space limitations and clarity, we only show either a clockwise or anti-clockwise direction of spiraling.

1.   The Golden Dilemma between confidence versus self-questioning

Daniel Goleman, in his book Emotional Intelligence cites research by Dr. T Berry Brazelton, in which (self-) confidence is listed as one of the key ingredients of a child's crucial capacity to learn. - "Confidence - A sense of control and mastery of one's body, behavior and world; the child's sense that he is more likely than not to succeed at what he undertakes and that adults will be helpful."

Confidence comes from belief in oneself, from knowledge, experience and expertise. If we have confidence we can behave confidently! The core of confidence is self-esteem and what we believe about ourselves.

However, one's self-confidence as espoused by Joanna Kozubska also needs continuous feedback and openness from and to the environment in which we are living. Otherwise we become over-confident and courage moves into recklessness.

This quality of today's effective leaders is the competence to integrate the feedback from the market and the technology developed in the organization, **and** vice versa. Again, it is not a competition between technology push or market pull with a choice between the extremes. The charismatic leader knows that a push of technology will eventually lead to the *ultimate* niche market, that part of the market without customers. Conversely, a monolithic focus on the market will leave the leader at the mercy of its clients.

Self-confidence makes charismatic leaders courageous. A good definition of true courage is that it is the most cautious conduct possible given the dire circumstances. If you are brave enough, you will go home again to live a more cautious life, as can those you are protecting.
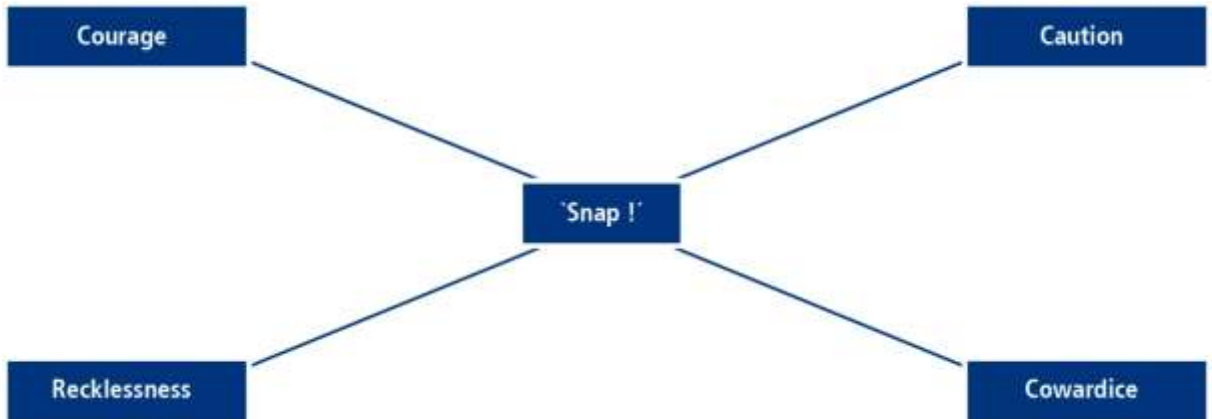
Let us explore the following:

"Hence I need to be courageous enough to enter the water and save someone who would otherwise drown, while being cautious enough to avoid being drowned by his desperate grip on my person."

It is this synthesis of courage and caution that can save both of us, *not* one *or* the other. We create science by first *doubting* a proposition and trying to *falsify* it, and only if we can surmount that obstacle can we become more *certain* of its *truth*. We *risk* our investment when we start a business but quickly *secure* in a bank any money we have made. The bigger we grow the more we can put at risk and more we can secure. Each contrasting value strengthens its opposite.

At first sight, we would appear to have a (linear) continuum between these extremes, where more of one implies less of the other.

Recall that the successful rescue requires enough **Courage** to enter the water but enough **Caution** to stop the drowning person killing the rescuer. However the same crisis may provoke a split in the values continuum, which looks like this:

Above our would-be rescuer has severed Courage from Caution. By abandoning any precautions he has proved *reckless* and will kill himself while also letting the victim drown. Alternatively by clinging to Caution and not entering the water he has descended into *cowardice* so that again the victim drowns and his failed, would-be rescuer attempt is disgraced.
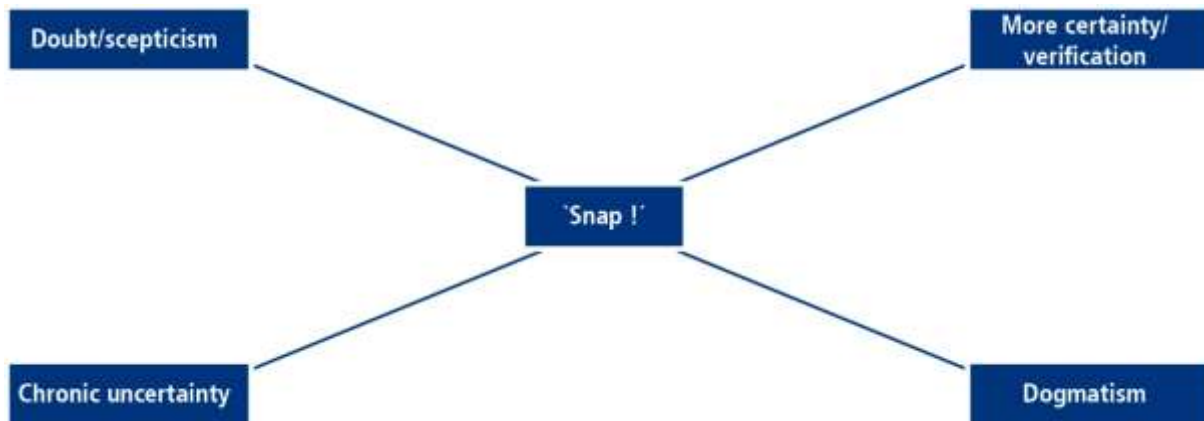
In both scenarios the individual is stuck fast at one or the other end of the continuum and cannot move laterally to combine the contrasting values. It appears the rescuer has an 'either/or' choice.

As a further example let us take Doubt/Scepticism as contrasted with growing Certainty/Verification.

Again, these appear to belong to a single continuum. Scholars and scientists alike doubt their own propositions so that these must be tested and verified so that the scientists may become more certain of their validity. The continuum looks like this:

Virtue moves to the right and back again on the continuum. We doubt and are sceptical so that nature can verify our propositions and make us more certain. However, this does not always happen. People find it hard to doubt their own convictions and where they fail to do this, the continuum snaps and they become *dogmatic.* Alternatively their doubt grows and grows because they have not verified it and they become **chronically uncertain.** In both cases the continuum has snapped in this manner:

Dogmatism comes to the rescue of chronic uncertainty and represses it. Chronic uncertainty haunts the faithful. The vices at the bottom of the diagram are unredeemed by the virtues above. As WH Yeats wrote so prophetically about of the coming of fascism. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold. Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The best lack all conviction while the worst. Are full of passionate intensity."

2. The Golden Dilemma between vision and execution

We agree with Joanna Kozubska that articulating a vision is crucial for a charismatic leader. However, as serial entrepreneur Steve Adams states, "Vision without Execution Is Just Hallucination."

A great vision is the table stakes for building a valuable business. A great vision:

- Is clear, concise, and understandable to a broad constituency
- Is inspiring and motivational to those who are trying to execute on it, or buy into it (e.g.: customers, partners, consumers, etc.)
- Expresses the most universal core values and purpose (Jim Collins' core ideology) and aspirations (Jim Collins' "Big hairy audacious goal" or BHAG) of the contemplated business (Ford's "Democratizing the automobile")

But to move from hallucination to reality, requires hard-nosed execution.

So in short we quote Jack Welch, a business leader of the last century: "Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion." So the success of a charismatic leader will be that vision is continuously rebuilt by execution.

The evidence from our research and consulting practice confirms that execution is integral to strategy, as the major job of the business leader and as the core element of company culture. Nothing less will do.
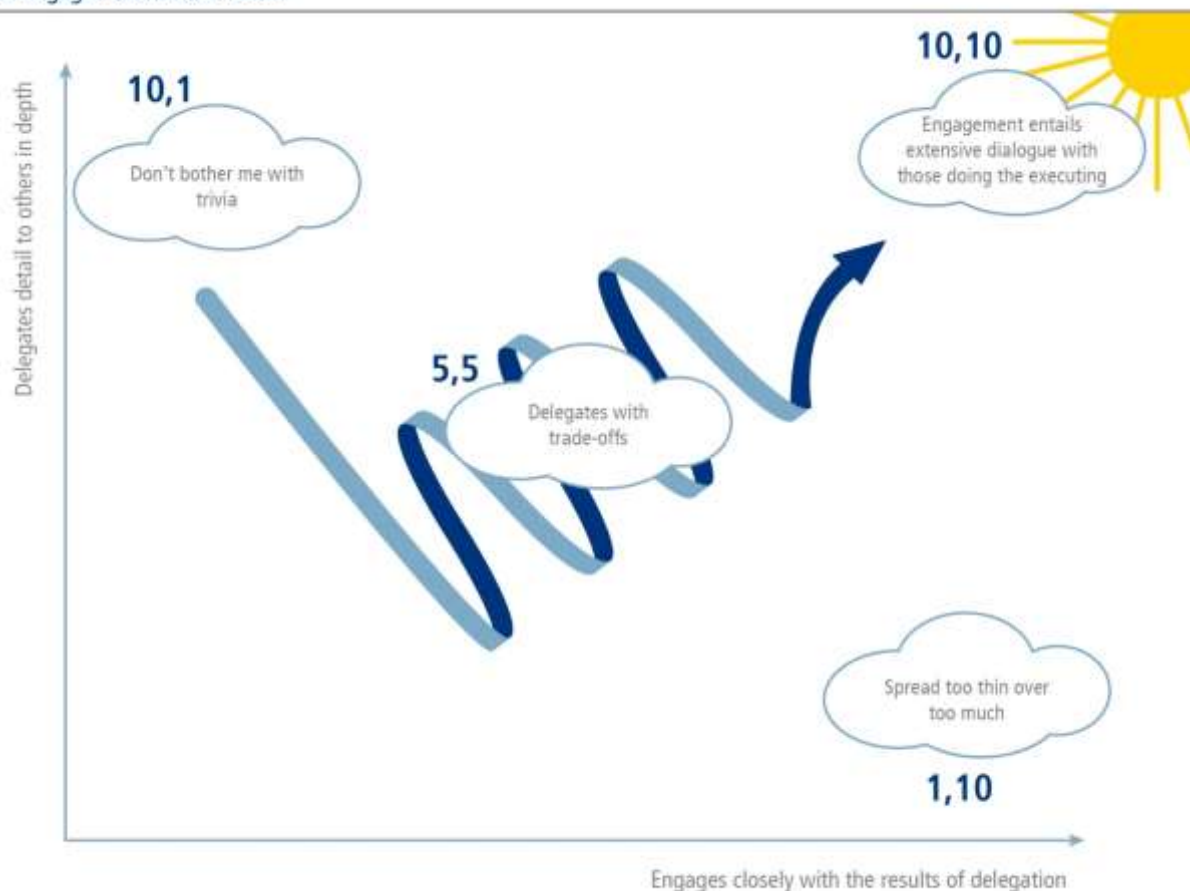
By execution, constituting a discipline is meant a systematic way of discovering and shaping reality. Jack Welch is cited as an example. It is a people process, a strategic process and an operations process in the style of continuous improvement as rooted in the Japanese automobile industry.

A key requirement is that the leader be deeply *engaged* with the way the company does things day by day. This has been called helicopter leadership and/or dolphin leadership because the leader sees "the big picture" from on high but dives downward to examine the details at the level of execution. The leader does not simply engage but immerses him/herself in dialogue, in hard questions and in true answers. If you are serious about people being your principal asset then you do not leave this to HR; you engage them personally.

Using our conceptual framework for the 'Engaged Charismatic Leader' looks like this:

Each dilemma graphic that follows shows a spiral. This indicates that a charismatic leader begins from one extreme side of the dilemma and then asks 'how can I get more of extreme Y through combining with extreme X?' He/she spirals back and forth (iterating) between the extremes and finishes in the top right corner having developed a reconciled solution that combines the best of both side of the dilemma. For clarity, we only show a clockwise spiral starting from the top left, but it is equally valid to begin from the bottom right with an anti-clockwise spiral iterating between the extremes.

The engaged charismatic leader

Of course leaders must delegate. They cannot do everything. But delegation is NOT abdication. You are responsible for those you have entrusted and for what you entrusted them to do. Leaders
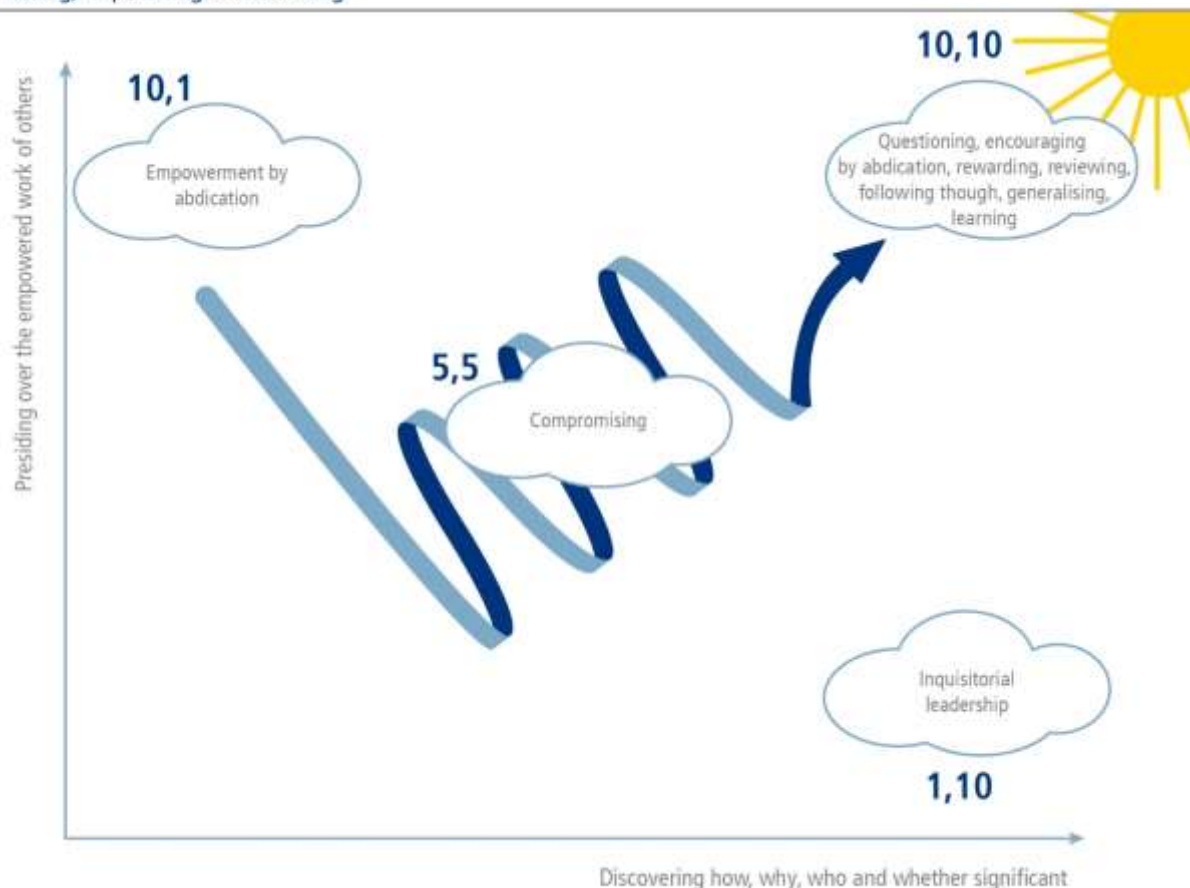
can delegate powers but their responsibility never lessens and the leader needs to check on how that power was used and why it failed or succeeded.

What needs to happen is extensive debates and trade-offs in the center which will lead in time to engagement at top right. The engaged charismatic leader is deep in dialogue and periodic reviews of the performance of those who are doing the executing. What he/she is after is hard truths and actual results compared to expectations. The charismatic leader wants everyone to learn from experience and that means ceaseless inquiry into actual operations.

Execution is an intellectual strategy every bit as challenging as grand plans. A manager with a goal to increase sales by 8 percent in a flat market should be able to tell the leader where this increase will come from, what products have gained, who accomplished this and how. What reaction is expected from customers and competitors and what are the milestones leading up to this accomplishment. Whose assistance was required and have they been rewarded? The executing leader needs to know WHY all this happened and whether others could benefit from this example. He/she must "drill down" to find the answers. It is therefore important to distinguish presiding form empowering from executing.

Using our conceptual framework for presiding, empowering and executing looks like this:

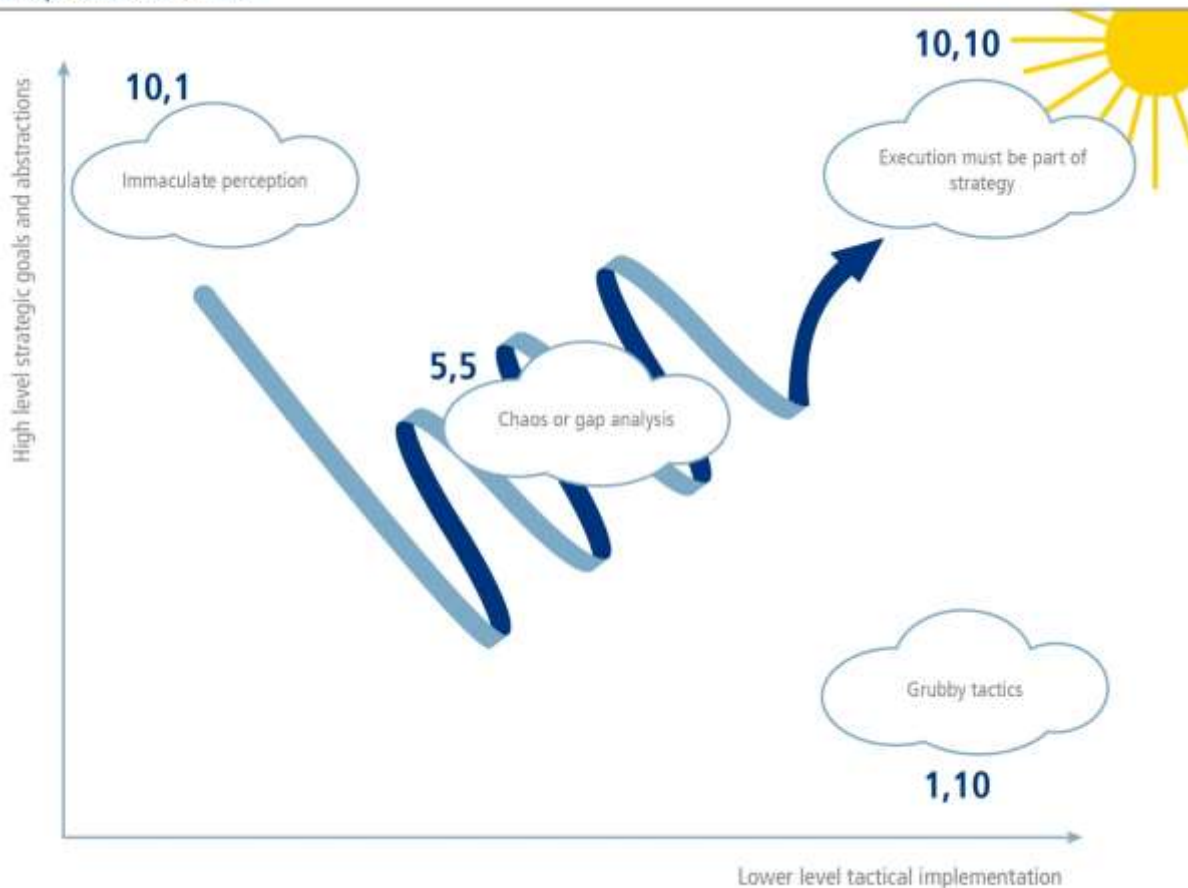Presiding, empowering and executing

Source: Authors.

This is an example of "hands-on" leadership. You do not tell people what to do but you inquire diligently into any reasons for success.

Let us now look at what Bossidy and Charan are saying, but as expressed in our framework.

There is an invidious distinction between strategy at senior levels and mere tactics. Those at the top think in high level abstractions while those in the middle struggle to implement this. Often strategy fails to get enacted. This creates a "gap" and interestingly the Greek word for gap is "chaos" the failure of *harmonia.*

We can represent this as follows:
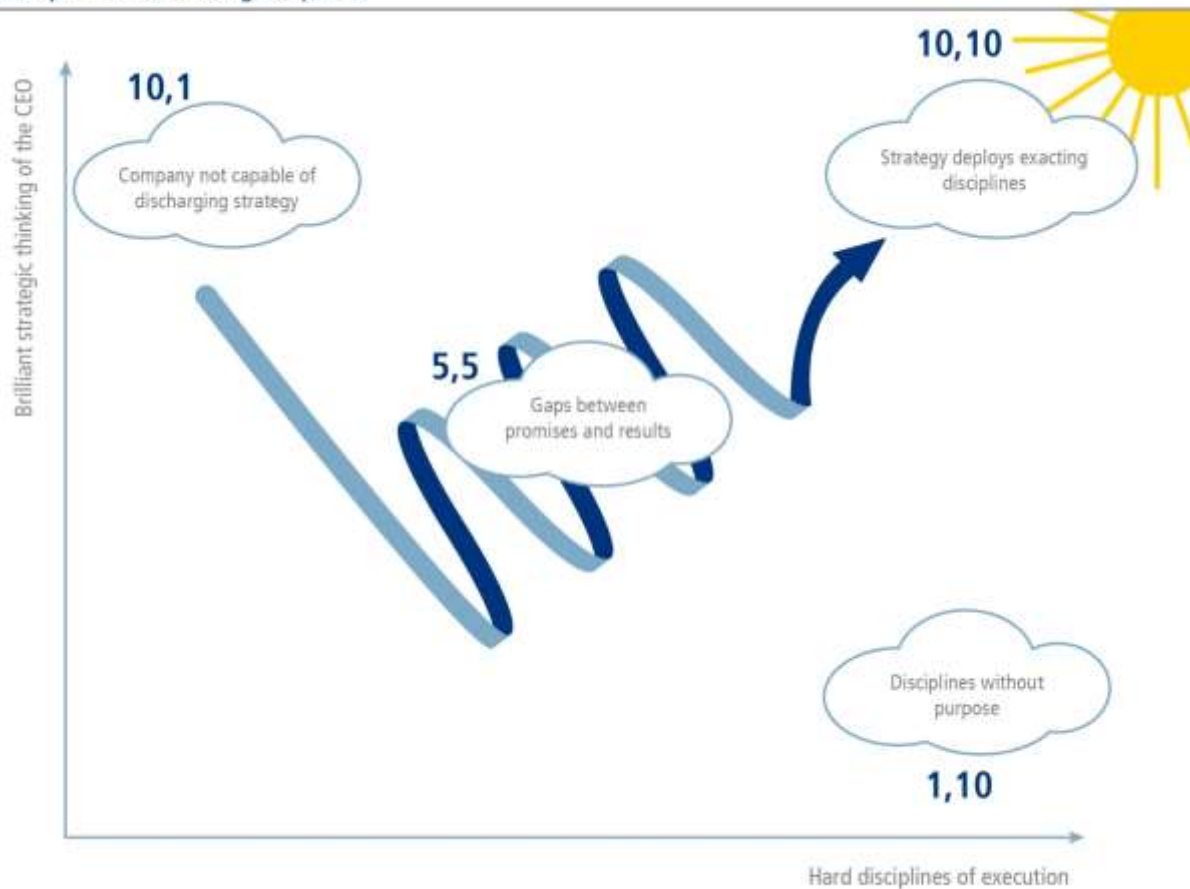
The importance of execution

Source: Authors.

What the authors are saying is that tactical implementation is not "low level" at all but must transcend the Grubby Tactics (bottom right) to become a vital part of strategic thinking at top right. However immaculate one's perceptions (top left), only whatever is translated into action will make a difference.

In "the gap no one knows" the authors explain that when strategy fails to work the CEO is often believed to have erred. Alternatively it is said that the company is not capable of delivering these goals. What is required in such cases is *the disciplines of execution* as witnessed in companies like GE, the key ingrained capacities to get things done and complete actions successfully. However inspired the strategic thinking of the CEO without the disciplines of execution these will fail. On the other hand these disciplines require purpose and direction or they cannot be deployed successfully.

The dilemma looks like this:
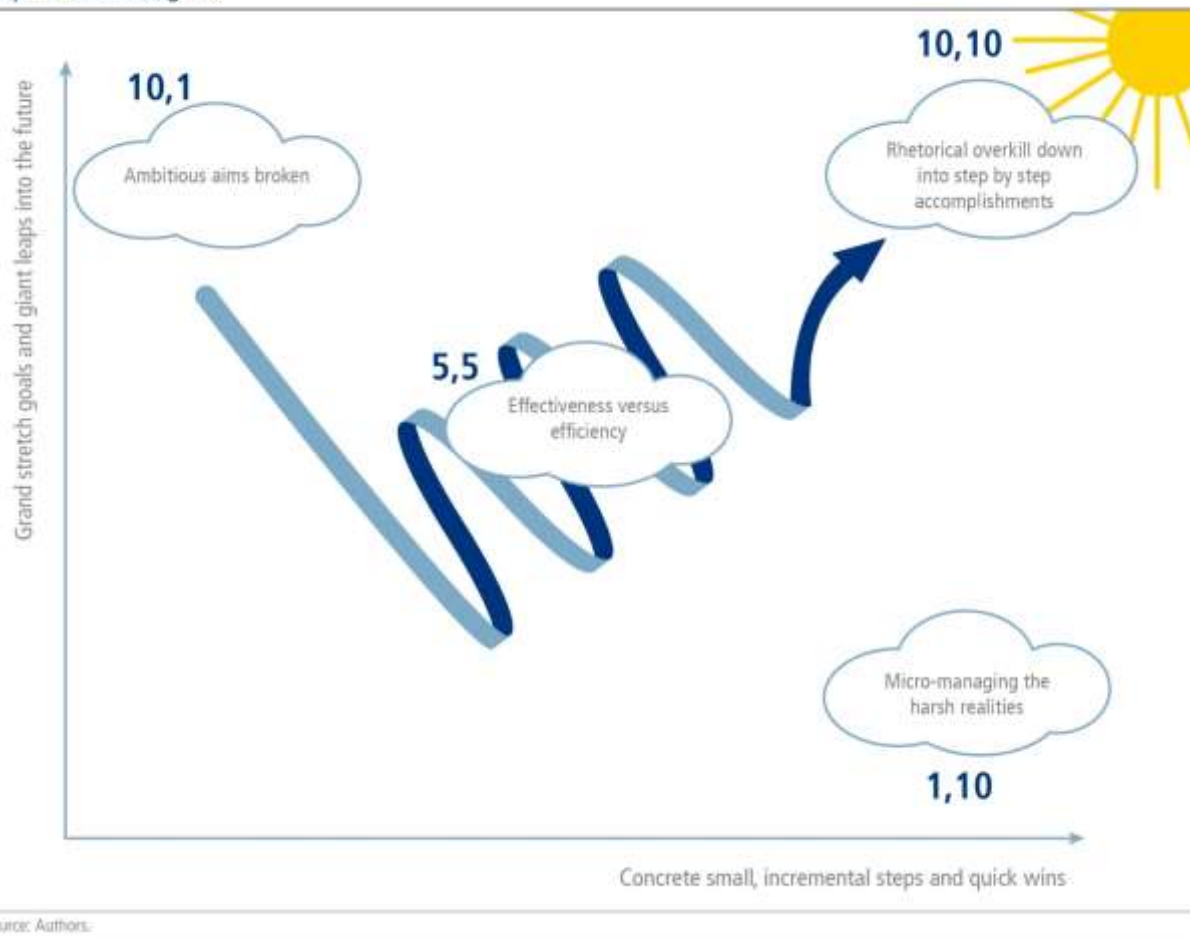
The requirement of exacting disciplines

Source: Authors.

3. The requirement of exacting disciplines

At top left the company is incapable of discharging strategy because the disciplines are lacking. At bottom right it has the disciplines but no direction. The failure to deliver promises reliably in the center reminds us of the gap, while strategy is only complete if hard disciplines are encompassed and deployed at top right.

The authors think there is too much talk of stretch goals, bold strides into the future, giant leaps of faith, all of which results in rhetorical overkill. Although they skim over it, one assumes they do not want micro managing and harsh realities either. What can and must happen is that (overly) ambition goals get broken down into concrete steps delivered in an agreed sequence of accomplishments.

Steps to ambitious goals

10,1

Ambitious aims broken

10,10

Rhetorical overkill down into step by step accomplishments

5,5

Effectiveness versus efficiency

Micro-managing the harsh realities

1,10

Grand stretch goals and giant leaps into the future

Concrete small, incremental steps and quick wins

Source: Authors.

Once again we have sailed between the rock and the whirlpool, or between the values of efficiency and effectiveness. It was a matter of time before efficiency staged a comeback, and here we have it.

4. The Golden Dilemma between communicating and listening

Joanna Kozubska claims that for a leader to be charismatic it is extremely important to have the right communication skills to express oneself completely and confidently. This means to express oneself with passion, feelings, enthusiasm and emotion. Moreover, the charismatic leader needs to develop the ability to use his/her instinct and project chosen images with using humor with care. In that sense the charismatic person will develop excellent presentation skills.

And charismatic lleaders need to be capable of recognizing both soft and hard signals identifying appropriate modes of communication, through active listening. Leaders need to easily identify the relevance of what they observe and hear, being aware of the vulnerability and sloppy management in complex systems. Central to these leadership skills are those of recognizing what the relevant "noises" are emanating from the complex pattern of interactions, what an operator on a BP oil rig in the North Sea once described as "the singing in the wires".
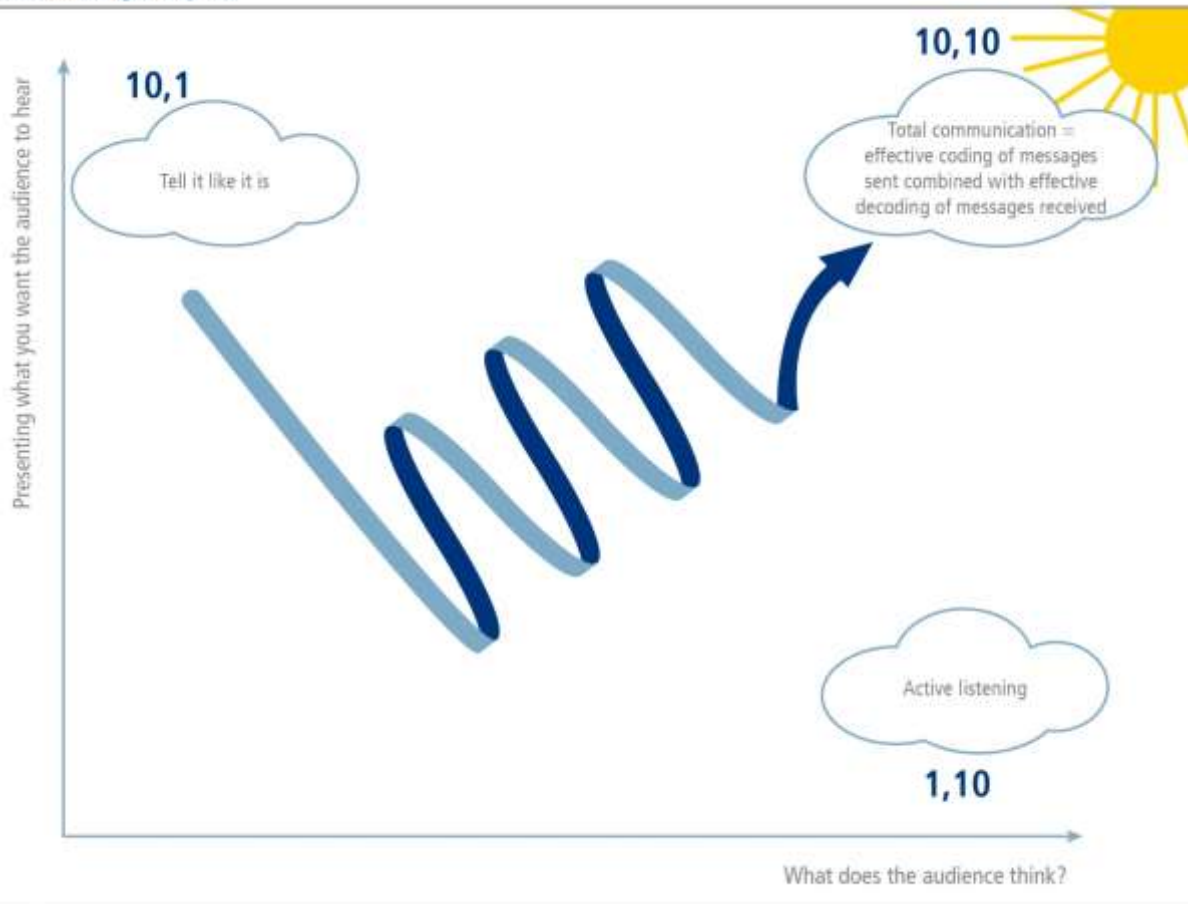
Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening – otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying 'yes' or simply 'mmm hmm' to encourage them to continue. By providing this 'feedback' the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly, and honestly.

Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills. Listening is not something that just happens (that is, hearing); listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker. Listeners should remain neutral and non-judgmental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially early in the conversation. Active listening is also about patience - pauses and short periods of silence should be accepted. Listeners should not be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence. Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings, they should, therefore, be given adequate time for that.

Active listening not only means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening. Generally speakers want listeners to demonstrate 'active listening' by responding appropriately to what they are saying. Appropriate responses to listening can be both verbal and non-verbal.

Shannon and Weaver's treatise on communication shows that messaging must be duplex (two-way) and that the de-coding of thoughts and content received must be identical to the original coding from the transmitter otherwise the result is 'Chinese whispers'. This is what charismatic leaders achieve.
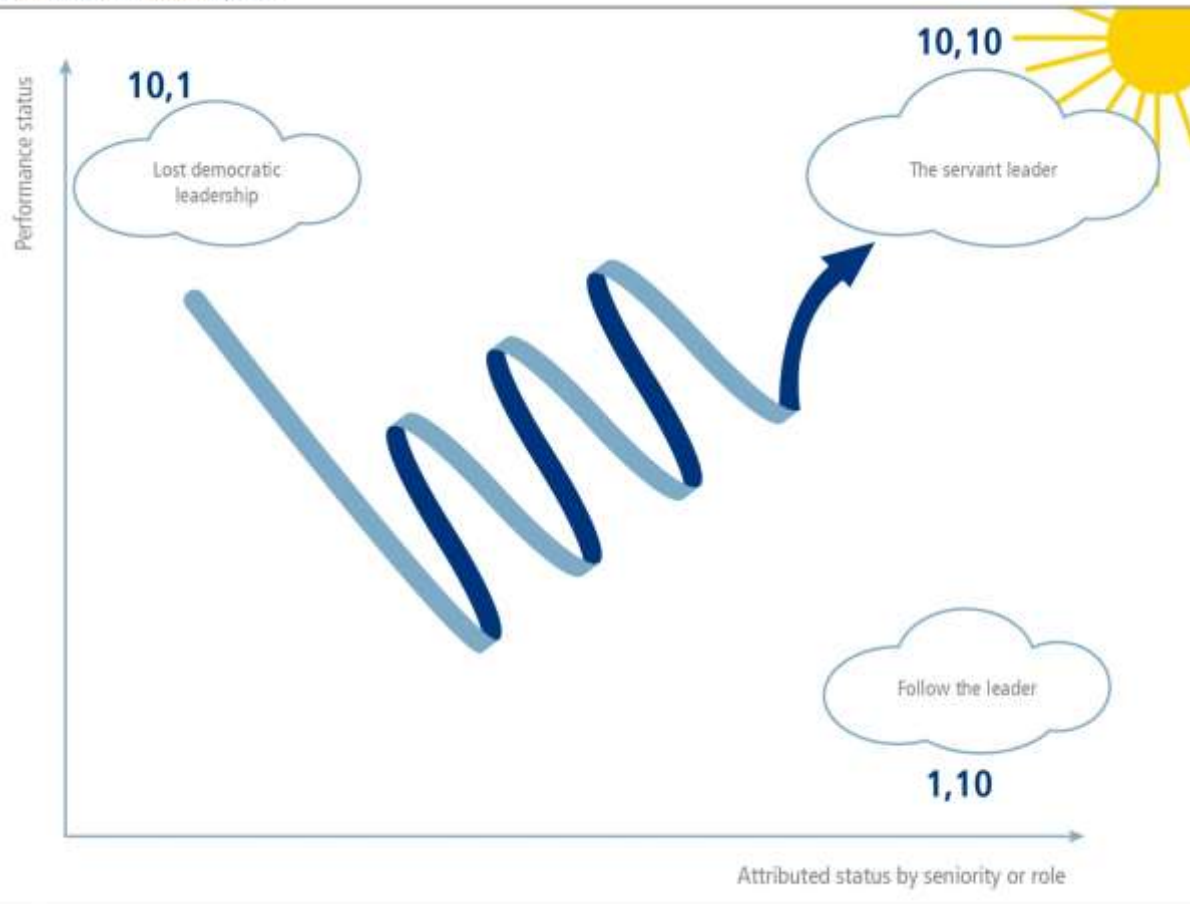
Communicating in duplex

Presenting what you want the audience to hear

10,1
Tell it like it is

10,10
Total communication = effective coding of messages sent combined with effective decoding of messages received

Active listening
1,10

What does the audience think?

Source: Authors.

5. The Golden Dilemma between being true to others though being true to your self

Joanna Kozubska called this the 'style key' for the charismatic leader. This key is based on developing curiosity by learning to play again. It focuses on developing a passion for learning and being courageous by developing one's own style with pride. To be true to others, it is first important to be true to yourself and be yourself. However, this can only be materialized through others. A charismatic leader is therefore a servant leader. By serving others you grow yourself and your authority, according to Greenleaf. According to him the servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? This aspect is so important for the charismatic leader. Charisma grows by growing others.

And again if you only serve by listening and bottom-up processes, you might end up in the lost democratic leadership corner where the leader can't make any decisions, because we need to involve more people. This is also known as the Dutch and Swedish disease. On the other hand, if you like to give directions top-down you might have a lack of feedback leading to the extreme of follow the leader and have every follower drop down the cliff. No the charismatic leader combines.

Achievement versus ascription

Source: Authors.

6. The Golden Dilemma between moving and shaking through stability

So what about the 'moving and shaking' that Kozubska quotes as a key trait of charismatic leaders? It's OK, but just moving or shaking makes you a rock star, not a leader, and change will not be sustainable.

If you need to change you need endurance. Organizational members need stable stepping stones to be able to change.

Charismatic leaders in today's organizations face some bewildering challenges. Paul Evans (2000) states that 21st century leadership of change issues is not simple; he sees modern leadership as a balancing act. Though we don't support the word balance because it assumes mutually excluding ends, we subscribe to his main message of the need for leaders to accept the challenge of navigating between opposites. Leaders have to integrate a track record of success with the ability to admit mistakes and meet failure well. They also have to integrate short-term and long-term goals, focus on global and local issues, encourage individual accountability at the same time as enabling team work and lead and manage. Consider the dilemmas of leadership that inspires every manager Evans found at Lego:
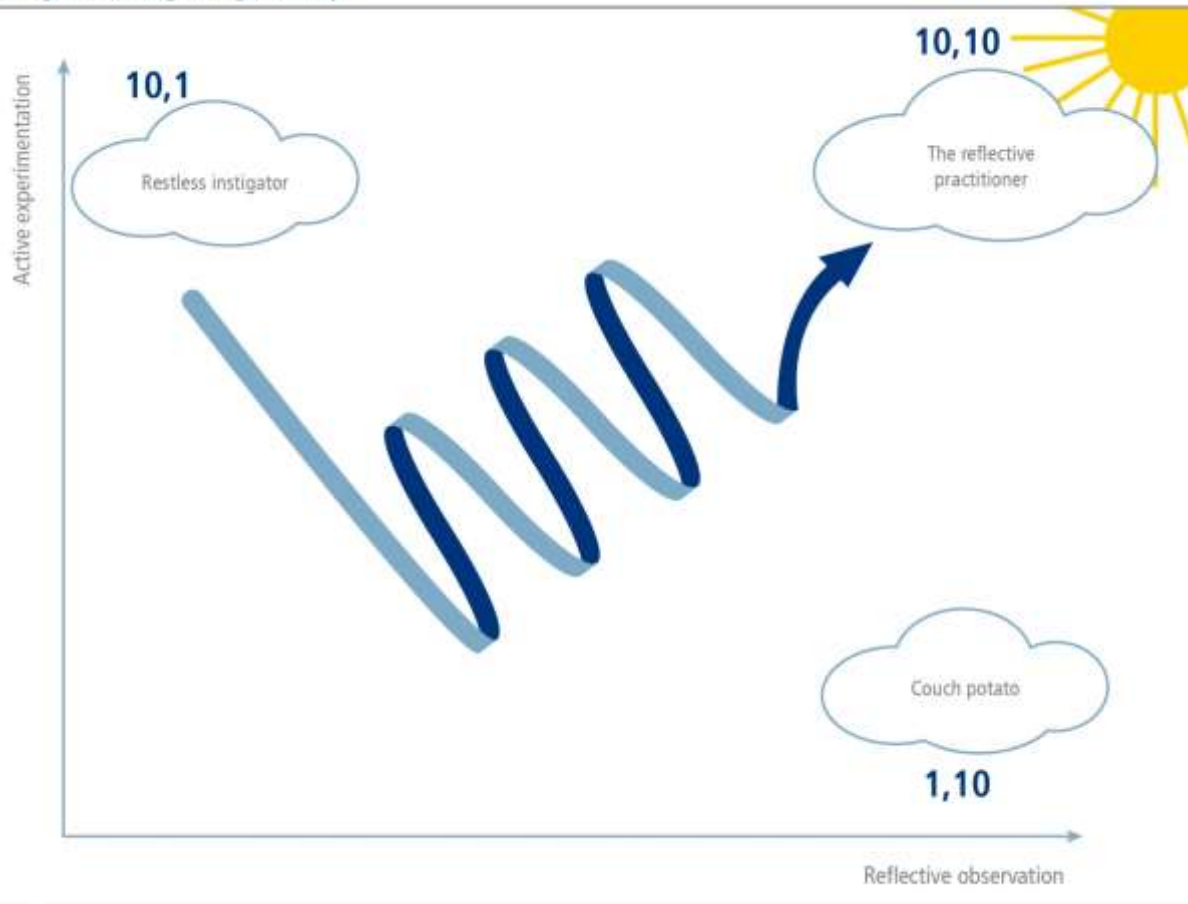
- To be able to build a close relationship with one's staff, and to keep a suitable distance.
- To be able to lead, and to hold oneself in the background.
- To trust one's staff, and to keep an eye on what is happening.
- To be tolerant, and to know how you want things to function.

- To keep the goals of one's department in mind, and at the same time to be loyal to the whole firm.
- To do a good job of planning your own time, and to be flexible with your schedule.
- To freely express your view, and to be diplomatic.
- To be a visionary, and to keep one's feet on the ground.
- To try to win consensus, and to be able to cut through.
- To be dynamic, and to be reflective.
- To be sure of yourself, and to be humble.

Inspired by the work of Kurt Lewin, David Kolb provides one of the most useful descriptive models available of the adult learning process. How can we apply this to the charismatic leader? Yes he moves and shakes but he is also able to take distance and give the turbulence context.

Kolb's model suggests that there are four stages that follow from each other: *concrete experience* is followed by reflection on that experience (*reflective observation*). This may then be followed by the application of known theories or general rules (*abstract conceptualization*), and then the modification of the next occurrence of the experience (*active experimentation*), leading in turn to the next concrete experience. Our research indicates that the full charismatic leadership process lies in the integration of these opposites, i.e. the reconciliation of active experimentation and reflective observation, and of concrete experience and abstract conceptualization. Again, where opposites connect, the charismatic juices flow. Moving and shaking is contextualized by reflection and stability.

As such the charismatic leader is a *Reflective Practitioner*. In summary, the charismatic leader, in reconciling active experimentation with reflective observation, also needs to integrate abstractions with concrete experiences in order to be creative and avoid making the same mistakes forever. This complementary process leads to what George Lakoff calls the *conceptualizing experience* or *experiential conceptualization*.
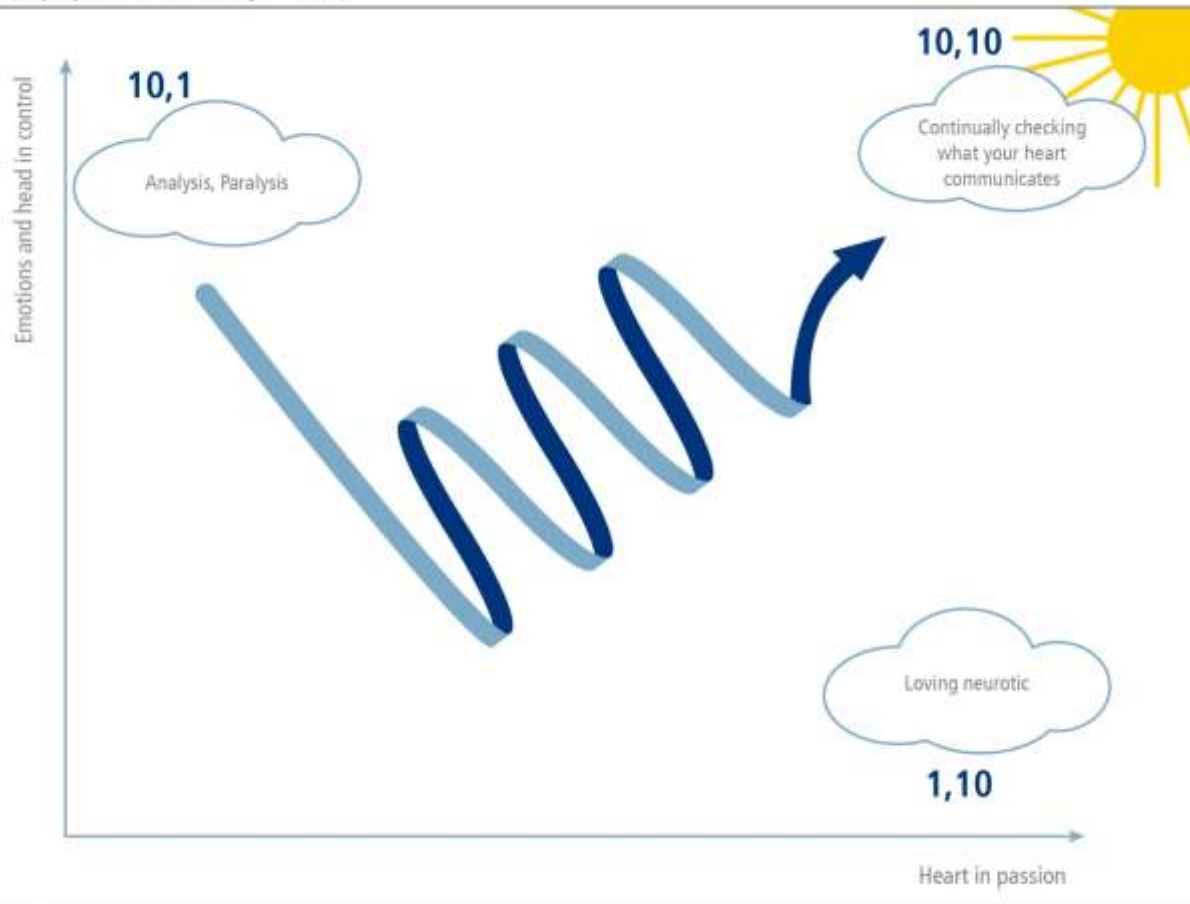
Moving and shaking through stability

Active experimentation

10,1 — Restless instigator

10,10 — The reflective practitioner

Couch potato — 1,10

Reflective observation

Source: Authors.

7. The Golden Dilemma between visibilities through embedding it implicitly

The charismatic leader needs to use the visibility key by standing up and being counted. He or she expresses views assertively, and seeks visibility and manages the consequences. In that process, he/she always treats others with respect, courtesy and care. This view of what gives a leader charisma is true, but, once again, only half true. Both quite neutral leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King and expressive leaders such as Bill Clinton and Richard Branson can be labeled charismatic. Is it done verbally or rather non-verbally, visibly or implicitly? However the neutral person is easily accused of being ice-cold with no heart; the affective and expressive person is seen as out of control and inconsistent. Charismatic leaders have the power of reconciliation. This can be shown if we observe what happens when seemingly opposing values are disconnected. Emotions that are expressed without any "neutral" brake easily verge on the uncontrolled "neurotic." Likewise, an overly neutral person may become an iceman who dies of a heart attack because of unexpressed emotions. So we see that the charismatic leader continually checks what his or her heart communicates. We see that the charisma of Richard Branson is effectively built on the fact that he is surrounded by neutral bean counters. And both Nelson Mandela.

Mandela and Martin Luther King were masters in taking advantage of long pauses, so that when they said something it made a huge impression. And their non-verbals, like the expression of their eyes and hands did the rest. And when leaders reconcile their emotional expressions with their cool calculations charisma turn into a trait that becomes very effective in every culture it is practiced.

Displaying versus concealing emotions

Source: Authors.

8. The Dilemma between mystery and enigma through being obvious

By now the reader will have seen the common logic across each of Kozubska's keys. We can continue with the same logic by extending her key of being mysterious to the other side of the dilemma of being obvious.

Again, the charismatic leader will seek to use through-through thinking in which the benefits of being mysterious are combined with the benefits of being obvious.

Rather than show this reconciliation here, we invite you create this for yourself. You can then test yourself as a charismatic leader with the extended seven keys: - go to our website: www.thtconsulting.com and use the password "Charismatic Leadership" to explore your own orientation and propensity for charismatic leadership. You can check out our solution for this last Golden Dilemma.

In this way, we ourselves are being a little mysterious before you can see the obvious solution online!

Can charismatic leadership be developed, or is it innate?

From our extensive, reflective critique of our evidence, we find that this newly identified competence of reconciling dilemmas is not simply just learned or innate. It needs a systemic

approach. The whole organization needs to provide a framework that supports, stimulates, and facilitates people to reconcile.

We have seen individuals with high potential, yet not able to progress further than a (lose-lose) compromise because their work environment did not appreciate creative solutions.

Conversely, we have found less effective individuals that achieved significant reconciliation by their stimulating and supportive environment.

How to create such? It begins with leaders who practice what they preach. And it is of utmost importance that rewards are created that motivate individuals and teams to do so.

Our message is to link reconciliation to business issues and business results and make it into a continuous process so that it becomes a way of living rather than a conceptual exercise.

Through the above methodology, we have helped many client organizations reconcile such dilemmas. Of course, as soon as you remove one, another pops up. But in today's rapidly changing, ever oligopolistic world, it is the very essence of organizations. Our aim has been to raise the debate for a new logic for the interpretation and development of charisma.

So our agenda follows the logic that in order to secure long-term success as an organization, the cultural dilemmas between the various stakeholders need to be reconciled. Since essentially charisma can be defined as combining values that are not easily joined, this process is essentially created by and leads to innovation. It is the charismatic capability of such individuals, from process to product, from R&D to HR that will make an organization sustainable.

And so, ultimately, charismatic leadership is about celebrating the extremes of opposites and combining them to provide solutions that secure the benefits of both.

Individuals who can combine such opposites are truly charismatic, and not those desperate A-list individuals you might see in their Kirlian photograph.

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