

# Leadership and Emotions. Lessons from Sant'Ignazio de Loyola and Martha Nussbaum

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**Abstract.** The article proposes to highlight the link between leadership and emotions starting from the Ignatian lesson and Nussbaum's lesson. The leadership of discernment, characterised by Saint Ignatius' pedagogy, is proposed in its formative practices and in the possibility of coexisting in the practices of working and professional life. Relational leadership, suggested by the reading of capabilities and the factors that regulate emotions, also becomes an engine of social and work transformation. The training practices that have the Humanistic Approach as a method find in the proposed Lessons a solid tool to deal with a liquid theme.

**Keywords.** leadership - emotions - Sant'Ignazio - Martha Nussbaum - learning processes

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## 1. Leadership and Emotion Management

During the last decade we have attended, stunned and mystified, a wicked proliferation of 'training courses', conducted by improbable personalities, self-styled experts and, where strategic, veritable gurus of human nothingness: techniques of effective communication, empathy as the panacea for every malaise, leadership and emotion management<sup>1</sup>.

Intelligences of all possible and imaginable types, creativity inoculated as needed, personality astrology complete with personalised horoscopes, and everything else that product marketing of the lowest order has been able to come up with; all of this, often accompanied by an abominable literature of instructions for use and decalogues for becoming good, powerful and happy (that's all they promise). Business, after all, knows no bounds.

In Huxley's 'The New World', a powerful and disturbing fresco of an imaginary society where technology and hedonism achieve a union aimed at normalising the individu-

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<sup>1</sup> The last decades a profleracy Literature relative to Leadership and Magement: Ashkanasy, N. M., and Humphrey, R. H. (2011). "A multi-level view of leadership and emotions: leading with emotional labor.; Webb, T. L., Miles, E., and Sheeran, P. (2012). *Dealing with feeling: a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of strategies derived from the process model of emotion regulation.*

al, the world is perfectly organised and is the result of standardised processes and structured by classes, so as to neutralise social conflicts and maximise productive efficiency. The knowledge subject to education and and learning are exclusively those related to of immediate evidence and utility (Ashkanasy, Humphrey, 2011, p.62).

Emblematic in this sense is a passage in the description that the Director of the 'Central London Incubation and Conditioning Centre' gives to a group of students visiting the facility: 'For, as everyone knows, particulars lead to virtue and happiness; while generalities are, from the intellectual point of view, inevitable evils. Not philosophers, but woodcutters and stamp collectors make up the backbone of society'( Chitrakar, 2020, pag.288).

This consequently leads to an iron hierarchy, which sees all those disciplines inherent to the human being and his free forms of expression, such as the study of poetry, literature, art, ancient languages, music and creative languages, or philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, heavily penalised (Caggiano, D'Amante, 2020). Disciplines that technocratic triumphalism considers ancient, outdated, belonging now to a numismatics of knowledge, completely useless from a practical point of view; unproductive knowledge because it generates generic and not specific skills.

There is no doubt that if one adopts as sole criterion of evaluation the concept of operational applicability of knowledge, disciplines related to the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, engineering and – above all – computer science dominate the proscenium.(Purswell, 2019, p. 121).

"To think courageously about the necessary educational programmes," Knowles..., "we need men and women who carry convictions based on intelligence and knowledge, as well as on confidence; therefore, they cannot be fearful people, nor people who believe that their students are – or should become – fearful men and women (Knowles, 2018, p. 26). If such an education truly seeks to educate the values of an enquiring mind and an independent, 'autonomous' and creative person. independent, 'self-reliant' and creative person, then it will address controversial topics, seek to teach with freedom and inner confidence, and affirm the need to encourage and inform initiative directed at both social and technological innovations and advances' (Knowles, 2019, p.61).

## **2. Sant'Ignazio and discernment leadership**

A definition of leadership should make it possible to understand its origins, its sources, the different methods of its exercise, its consequences and its effects on people, on the environment in which those people operate. The scientific literature is full of definitions that, with different ideas, (Caggiano, D'Amante, 2020, p. 27) associate leadership with the exercise of power, influence, control, authority, command but also San Tommaso (Costa, 2012, p.183) and entrepreneurial skills educated with Marco Aurelio lesson's (Costa, 2019, p. 25).

The first characteristic we want to highlight from St Ignatius' lecture relates to leadership built on a drive of learning: desire. Ignatius of Loyola writes in his book on the spiritual exercises that "it is not much knowledge that satiates and satisfies the soul but the feeling and tasting of things interiorly (Casalini, 2015, p. 39). This is the true point of Ignatian pedagogy. It is intended to indicate the most effective

way to appeal to the person. It is about the personal desire to learn. One does not learn well and one does not learn well except what one thirsts to learn (Casalini, 2019).

In this contribute we delve into the Ignatian pedagogical method with the specific aim of arriving at a broad, comparable definition of leadership that is not specifically tied to a case, while moving from the investigation of work contexts. One can inwardly enjoy what one learns because it is something desired. In order to give an answer to the thirst for knowledge or to make it come about, one must start from the student's concrete context and related knowledge, organising the teaching activity in such a way as to realise a progression from curiosity (Casalini, Pavur, 2016, p.34).

That is, one must start from the demand for knowledge. That demand for knowledge is contained by personal experience in the learning process. The moment of experience makes it possible to see reality and to enter the world, in history, in events, in facts. It is a question of organising a pedagogical method that makes it possible to use all the senses (sight, hearing, manipulation, etc.). Not sufficient to know life or understand it.

Ignatius of Loyola builds a pedagogy on the person who is called upon to react primarily with affection, desire, understanding the consolation comes from having fulfilled, and understanding, the desire. In Ignatian logic, experience is, in the context of a learning process, any activity whose intellectual content with respect to the subject under consideration is accompanied by a sensation (physical, psychological, spiritual, ethical, etc.) of an affective nature felt by the learner.

For the Ignatian method in the leadership pedagogical programming scheme, the learner must be able to find and value his or her own choice and way of re-creating and re-ordering what he or she is learning (experiential autonomy) (O'Malley, 2015). The theoretical part of the lessons cannot but provoke new reflections: not only elements of leadership, but a way of arriving at those elements personally, starting from one's own experience, sifting through what works, eliminating what does not work, confronting what exists, being indifferent to the output.

The Ignatian method overturns classical logic and insists that it is the *cura personalis* that determines educational success.

In the pedagogical approach of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, there is a tension towards continuous learning. One must practise. *Praecepta pauca, exempla multa, exercitatio plurima*, is the maxim well-known Ignatian maxim. The Ignatian method overturns classical logic and insists that it is the *cura personalis* that determines educational success. In the pedagogical approach of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, there is a tension towards continuous learning. One must practise. *Praecepta pauca, exempla multa, exercitatio plurima*, is the maxim well-known Ignatian maxim (O'Malley, 2019). This becomes the essence of leadership of discernment. Multiple exercise, even in the exercise of leadership, allows one to reconsider a certain experience, a certain idea, a certain project and then understand the reaction and counter-reaction. The leadership of discernment moves from the exercise of reflection, which is the process through which the meaning of human experience emerges.

Discernment leadership is a process that has been proven to be much more effective because it affects the person of the leader and consequently the people of the team, through the method of questioning, self-assessment and transformation of the person.

### 3. Martha Nussbaum: emotion's leadership capability

Martha Nussbaum explores the management function of emotions in adult education. According to Nussbaum, emotions are a cognitive form by which adults focus on the facts of life, those they have to deal with beyond their own ability to control their surroundings.

Hence the first insight into the pedagogical method useful for educating for leadership in the workplace. Nussbaum has a philosophical approach that justifies in the education of adults, referring to leadership, the importance of emotions and their management. Emotions, in this theory, become an essential contribution to growing the way of thinking and learning what is really needed in every context. With them one understands the deep abyss that opens up before each of us, vulnerabilities, dependencies, and, above all, how to flourish. (Nussbaum, 2003, p.25). Nussbaum identifies human flourishing (eudemonia, in Greek) as the Aristotelian model best suited to managing the social complexity in which we all live, including from a professional point of view. The virtue of *sophia* (ability to understand deeply) and *phronesis* (practical wisdom in this case) contribute together to eudemonia, human flourishing. *Sophia* helps us to understand life systematically and *phronesis* helps us to choose what is right prudently in the specific situation (Nussbaum, 1996, p.17).

Nussbaum explores in the pedagogical field the notion of authenticity in education and adult education skills and knowledge. Specifically, moving from the Greek concept of *diphronesis*, Nussbaum elaborates a theory concerning the flexible connection between aspects of life that are in themselves complex and contradictory (Broccoli, 2020, p.127). Consequently, some adult learning practitioners, also in relation to human resource management issues, have reworked the so-called capabilities approach to arrive at the integral human/social development approach (Cambi, 2012, p.45). According to Nussbaum, there is a full overlap of emotions with what we consider ethical-moral, social and individual systems. (Nussbaum, 2013, p.17)

Nussbaum states that 'there is a knowing that occurs through suffering because suffering appropriately recognises what human life is like in certain cases. And in general: understanding a love or a tragedy with the intellect is not sufficient to have true knowledge of them' (Cambi, 2013, p.27). In other words, according to Nussbaum, it is possible to define social emotions as those emotions that presuppose the recognition of the emotions of others and that promote actions in the public view that lead to the protection of human dignity and the capabilities of all, including diversity and minorities. (Nussbaum, 2012, p.36).

Emotion is linked to thought and value. It arises from an external stimulus that affects the personal and subjective dimension. It is different from feeling and affection because it generally involves an action of social and personal significance. The action resulting from emotion can, therefore, be psychological, physical, relational and social, and concern not only the subjective sphere, but also the public and political sphere. In our case, for the purposes of this thesis, emotion can have repercussions in the work context.

The debate on work and capabilities is part of the elaboration of the well-being of people is much more than a question of funds because it consists in the possibility of

realise the life projects that individuals have reason to choose and pursue thanks to their capabilities. (Nussbaum, 2004, p.14)

Procedures and practices oriented to support those organisational values become a guide of feeling and acting in the work context, can mobilise many innovative efforts and actively contribute to the growth of the organisation itself. It must offer an authentic, honest and at the same time complex and heterogeneous view of reality, in order to purpose of providing keys to interpretation and cognitive tools to interpret existence. In work contexts, capabilities are “ways of acting, doing and being that typically constitute human life and distinguish it from other real forms of life. distinguish it from other real or possible forms of life and still looking for *eidos* (Gennari, 2012).

The Nussbaum contribute is oriented to Relational Leadership must always be based on knowledge that is grounded, in order to both scientificity and beauty; It must bring joy; the ineffable joy which only beauty and depth of the word, the refinement of the metaphor and the most passionate and impassioned study can inspire and orient. The lesson come from Nussbaum highlight the leadership as soft skills to elevate the individual, respect him without being his accomplice, legitimise their intellectual independence, without pandering to every futile opinion, encourage their becoming aware, their sense of responsibility in the exercise of their role, stimulates its acuity, ardour and courage as much as its orientation to be be supportive and understanding.

#### 4. Conclusions

It is enough to turn to history to find the best answers. As Cicero says: ‘*Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis*’. The history of Rome shows how the thrust of innovation and culture is accompanied, almost automatically, by phases of growth and expansion. The phase from the 2nd B.C. to the 2nd A.D. is when the innovation and creativity of Roman civilisation manifested itself and when the foundations of its greatness were laid. the foundations of its greatness.

With the philosophical shift in the field of mental health from a holistic, meaning-making model to a medical, reductionist model of mental health, training programmes have adapted by increasing the emphasis on measuring outcomes, sometimes at the expense of focusing on aspects of training that are less easy to evaluate quantitatively (Hung, et al. 2019).

Humanistic learning theorists define learning as the holistic growth of the person, including cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal domains. Nussbaum’s humanistic view and her critique of utilitarianism in education systems is decisive in inventing new generation pedagogical models in which the capability approach is approached in the field of adult education with reference to the verification of learning what enables the flourishing of the person. The emotion studies define *relational leadership* is based on a set of emotional values and/or virtues to strive for through individual and collective exercises of the leader and the leader with the team.

Discernment leadership uses a set of values (*cura personalis*) and, indirectly, an innovative behavioural logic (demand and self-assessment) as central drivers of commitment. innovative behavioural logic ( questioning and self-assessment). The discernment leadership, is to plan and implement a series of measures suited to the context and the objec-

tives to be achieved. The whole person is invested by the learning process and, therefore, the whole person with memory, intellect, will, feelings, imagination. They are a key resource in fostering the affective commitment and innovative contribution of individuals to their organisation. Therefore, a set of training paths should be planned in corporate contexts all oriented towards enhancing managers' capacity for discernment.

According to WEF (2020), the training world include new educational modality where didactic-pedagogical mediation in teaching and learning processes occurs through the emotions and leadership skills, with students and teachers developing educational activities in different places and time (Caggiano, & D'Amante, 2020).

What has been argued so far should be enough to convince even the most reluctant, but if there is still anyone who is still convinced by prejudice, we will reply with the same words that Jacques Lacan, on the occasion of one of his busy seminars, addressed to one of his interlocutors (Henri Maldiney, for the record), (Lacan, 2014, p. 50) who was mocking: eloquently, with the ill-concealed intention of refuting every assertion of the Psychoanalyst: 'Please stop, you have impressed us enough!'

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