



POWER STEPS: LEADERSHIP MIND POWER

By Percy W. Thomas, Sc.D.

Leaders frequently ascend to their leadership position without having met any prerequisites for leading people. More than likely, they are promoted into a first-line supervisory, middle management, or senior executive position as the result of their hard work, or their political savvy, or through their technical competence in a specific discipline. They arrive unaware of the skill set and mindset that are required to be competent in a leadership position.

Some individuals become frustrated by the demands and pressures of leadership, while others return to staff jobs saying to themselves they are not cut out to be leaders. Others tend to model the leadership traits of leaders they admire or have encountered, hoping that replicating the behaviors of leaders they perceive to be successful will make them successful. Rarely does this approach to leadership work.

There is something so basic to successful leadership that it is often missed. It is the mind — and how it works is the key to being a successful leader. In fact, mastery of the mind is required to become a leader.



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Leadership Begins In The Mind.

Henri-Louis Bergson, a French philosopher, stated: *"The eyes see only what the mind is prepared to comprehend."* Thus, leadership is dependent on what is stored in the leader's mind. Many people think of leadership as an action. They see leadership as something they do to get others to follow. For example, they execute strategic and tactical plans, or write extensive to-do lists as prototypical leadership maneuvers. They adopt all sorts of leadership principles, methods, procedures, and practices, and when these don't work, they abandon them and move on to the latest new thing. Very few people attribute their failures or lack of success to their minds. It is extraordinary to encounter an individual who recognizes that leadership success has everything to do with the dynamics occurring in the mind.

What Is The Mind?

The mind is viewed by many as the intellect and consciousness regulator of the brain and is responsible for our thoughts, emotions, perceptions, memories, and creative and cognitive processes. Thus, it is responsible for what we become and do. The mind is generally associated with and understood in the context of being conscious and unconscious. Many scholars refer to the mind as conscious and subconscious. In the book *Power Steps: Releasing the Force Within*, the mind is conceived as having three parts: *Conscious Mind*, *Subconscious Mind* and *Creative Subconscious Mind*. To fully understand the mind and its relationship to leadership, you must understand how each part of the mind functions and the environment in which the mind exists.

It bears repeating that the mind triggers what we think, feel, and do. It is within this context that actions of the mind are inextricably tied to conscious reality.

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Conscious Reality

The Conscious Reality is the real world in which we live and function. It is the source of our daily human encounters with people, events and situations. Everything we encounter in Conscious Reality is transmitted via our brain to the Conscious Mind. From a leadership perspective, what we choose to focus on in Conscious Reality matters. If you choose to study and practice autocratic, abusive, insensitive, and unprincipled actions, you run the risk of transmitting them to your Conscious Mind.

Conscious Mind

The Conscious Mind is the perceiver of life events and situations that leaders encounter daily in Conscious Reality. All life events are processed through our five senses of seeing, touching, hearing, tasting, and smelling. The Conscious Mind uses the leader's sensory perception system to convert all ideas, beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors to messages that are sent to the Subconscious Mind. Once the messages are received in the Subconscious Mind they convert to intuition and emotions that drive and sustain your convictions and behaviors. So, what you believe and become as a leader begins with the perceptions you allow to enter your Conscious Mind. Thus, leaders must always be mindful of what they think and believe about what they see, hear, touch, smell, and taste because of its impact on the Subconscious Mind.

Subconscious Mind

The Subconscious is the recorder of truth, and controls all of a leader's purpose-driven behaviors. To fully understand the workings of the Subconscious Mind and its power, an individual must know how it will relate to three key mental constructs operating in our mind: beliefs, attitudes, and values. The beliefs, attitudes, and values a leader accepts as truth on the subconscious level predisposes them to certain behaviors.

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The thoughts, choices, decisions and behaviors of a leader is dependent on truths held in the Subconscious Mind.

Beliefs are mental constructs that cause a leader to act without the occurrence of an event or stimuli. Holding a strong belief about an event or situation, negatively or positively, will produce behavior associated with the nature of the belief.

Attitudes are a constellation of beliefs that aggregate to predispose a leader to act once an event occurs or a situation presents itself. A leader's behavior will always be consistent with the nature of their attitude.

Values are a leader's deepest held beliefs that are central to who they are as leaders and, if eliminated, would have to be replaced with values of equal importance.

The beliefs, attitudes, and values sustained in the Subconscious Mind are responsible for all behaviors, except those that are the result of the autonomic nervous system. The thoughts, choices, decisions, and behaviors of a leader are dependent on truths held in the Subconscious Mind. If a leader's Subconscious Mind is filled with negative beliefs regarding how one should lead, they will automatically operate from those beliefs in Conscious Reality. Should the leader want to change negative experiences and failures in the Conscious Reality, the Creative Subconscious Mind must be engaged.

Creative Subconscious Mind

The Creative Subconscious mind is the generator of new direction. The Creative Subconscious comes into play when you are no longer satisfied with your Conscious Reality. Leaders that are unhappy, worried, and filled with discontent about their leadership abilities, and truly desire a change in their Conscious Reality, can look to the Creative Subconscious for help. The Creative Subconscious acts upon those unfulfilled hopes and dreams. The Creative Subconscious is an opportunity to acquire new information that takes unrealized hopes and dreams to create new visions for a leader to pursue and achieve.

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To be effective, we must focus on the internal dynamics of our minds in order to know who we are as leaders.

What makes the Creative Subconscious important to leaders is that it creates new information and behaviors in the Conscious Reality. Further, it will set in motion dynamics and experiences that result in new ideas, beliefs, and thoughts and send them to the Conscious Mind, ultimately to be sent to the Subconscious Mind. Once the new information and behaviors have been accepted in the Subconscious Mind, a leader will be placed on automatic pilot toward achieving the new hopes, dreams, goals, and objectives they envision. Mastery over your mind is the source of your power as a leader.

The Mind Is The Source Of Your Leadership Power.

When we take on the task of leadership, we must first recognize where our power to lead resides. It is not in what we do that is seen by others. It is what is going on inside our minds that produces our ability to lead. To be effective, we must focus on the internal dynamics of our minds to know who we are as leaders. Further, by understanding how our minds work, we take control over thoughts that are the triggers for our behavior and emotions, which are central to leadership. Our minds are the central resource of our power and self-awareness, and the reservoir of a leader's grit to accomplish insurmountable obstacles. It is easy to lead when the mind is prepared to comprehend what the eyes see and leads the body to take decisive action. To lead, we must learn how our minds work to set examples for others to follow and to enable them to act with confidence.

Remember that your mind is the place where both positive and negative thoughts, which shape your present and future leadership behaviors, are formed. Your success as a leader begins in your mind, and the ability to be a successful leader depends on how you utilize your mind.

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Dr. Thomas' career includes significant experiences in government, academic institutions, and private sector organizations.

About The Author:

Dr. Percy Thomas has taught leadership at Graduate School USA for 18 years. He has also designed and developed courses for the Leadership Curriculum to include Global Leadership, Team Building, Leadership Presence, Ethical Leadership Practices, and Collaborative Learning.

Dr. Thomas received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a Master of Education from Coppin State University, and the Doctor of Science degree from Johns Hopkins University. He also holds certificates in leadership from Harvard University, The League for Innovation and the Federal Executive Institute.

As a researcher, Dr. Thomas has conducted qualitative research on inner city juvenile gangs. Dr. Thomas' career includes significant experiences in government, academic institutions and private sector organizations. In the Federal government his career consisted of serving as a Captain, Commission Corp Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service, and the Senior Executive Service (SES). He has developed and implemented national training programs on leadership, success, motivation, achieving excellence, multicultural workforce practices, management principles, basic supervisory practices, and conducted program evaluations and organizational climate assessments.

His private sector experiences include serving as Provost of Continuing Studies at Montgomery College; Managing Director, Centre of Excellence for Applied Research Training in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Vice President, Graduate School at Sojourner-Douglass College; and Director, HUD National Fair Housing Training Academy. He is also a former professor in the internationally recognized Johns Hopkins University Leadership Development Program, and the Morgan State University Community College Doctoral Leadership Program.

Dr. Thomas is the author of the *Cultural Rapport Model: Fostering Harmony in the Workplace*, published in the book, *Valuing Diversity: New Tools for a New Reality*, and the book, *Power Steps: Ten Principles of Success*. He has co-authored *Playing the Career Game*, and *Power Steps: Releasing the Force Within*.

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