

Approaching leadership with care



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Approaching leadership with care

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Introduction

This free course, *Approaching leadership with care*, explores our understanding of what it means to lead with care. It is made up of a series of six sections. Sections 1 and 2 explore why care is an essential component of effective leadership. Sections 3 and 4 invite you to reflect on your own perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' leadership. Sections 5 and 6 encourage you to reflect on your own approach to leadership and how to develop your approach now and in the future, focusing on caring for yourself as well as those you lead.

This OpenLearn course is an adapted extract from the Open University course *K318 Leading, managing, caring*.

Content warning: The course opens with a case study of the tragic and preventable death of a young man in care in a residential unit in 2013. You may find this distressing and prefer to skip over the opening quote and paragraph. However, his experience serves as a powerful reminder that a caring approach is crucial in any leadership and management role.

Learning outcomes

After studying this course, you should be able to:

- explain why care is an essential component of effective leadership
- outline the 'Four Ps' of leadership and relate them to real life examples
- understand and reflect on the importance of informal leadership
- identify how to develop your own leadership in a way which cares for you and others.

1 Why should leaders care?

‘The preventable death of Connor Sparrowhawk in July 2013 led to a number of investigations and enquiries into practice at Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust in whose care he died. ... There was a lack of leadership, focus and sufficient time spent in the Trust on carefully reporting and investigating unexpected deaths ...’

(Mazars, 2015, pp. 7–16)



Figure 1: Connor Sparrowhawk, who drowned in a bath at Slade House residential unit.

Slade House is just one of thousands of residential homes across the UK providing personalised care to individuals with additional support needs. Such places have a duty of care to ensure residents and their families can trust them with their health and wellbeing (Peate, 2017).

However, the Mazars report into Connor’s death highlighted significant failures of leadership and management at the Trust, together with ‘missed opportunities for learning’ (Mazars, 2015, p. 17). The authors concluded that failings in leadership at Slade House were multifaceted, and that Connor’s experience may have been very different had the leadership been more effective and caring.

Consciously adopting a *caring* approach to managing and leading can work towards preventing such catastrophes. If, and when, they *do* occur a caring approach can also help to ensure that everyone learns from such events in order to avoid them happening again. This doesn’t just apply to health and social care settings though. Leadership in *any* context is enhanced by taking a caring approach towards the role and those for whom the leader is responsible.

1.1 What do leaders care about?

‘Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.’

(Northouse, 2019, p. 5)

Leaders often challenge the status quo, trying to take us to new, unfamiliar – possibly even uncomfortable – places. When Martin Luther King stood in front of the crowd in Washington to deliver his now famous ‘I have a dream’ speech, he was already a prominent activist in the American civil rights movement, and he has since gone down in history as one of the men who has shaped modern America (Meacham and Rhodann, 2013). One of the reasons King was so successful was because he had a powerful vision and he energised others to join him. But did you know these words were not in his prepared speech that day? Behind the man and the speech were the words shouted out by his friend, the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson: ‘Tell ‘em about the dream, Martin’ (Jackson, 1963, quoted in Ratcliffe, 2017). Stood just metres away from him,

observers have suggested it was *her* words which prompted King's passionate digression from his prepared speech to talk about his 'dream' (Crockett, 2017).



Figure 2: Dr Martin Luther King delivers his speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on 28 August 1963. Mahalia Jackson looks on.

Following a passion can be central to effective leadership, and King inspired many to do their bit to contribute to making his vision a reality, including Mahalia, who shouted out that day. Another leader with a vision and passion for change is disability rights activist Lady Jane Campbell. When she was born in 1957 with spinal muscular atrophy, doctors gave her a year to live. Inspired by learning about the 'social model of disability' as a university student, she became politically active, campaigning for the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and today she is a noted leader in the disability rights movement. Campbell decided the best way to ensure her vision for legislative change would come from working within the system, and she now sits in the House of Lords.




Figure 3: 'I feel that our movement, the disability movement, is an emancipation agenda. I see it like apartheid. It's not just ramps and access, it's deeply rooted in attitudes.' (Lady Jane Campbell, quoted in Birkett, 2009)

Martin Luther King and Lady Jane Campbell both show how leadership is fundamentally about creating a vision and engaging others in working towards that vision (Alban-Metcalf and Alimo-Metcalf, 2009). They also illustrate how helpful it can be to feel passionate, and really *care* about the goal you are working towards.

Most organisations will have a 'vision statement' and the role of leaders within the organisation is to motivate their team to align themselves with it. Here the vision may not be personal, but it still serves as a core aspect of leadership and organisational success (Vito, 2019). A well-defined and well-communicated organisational vision can enhance

motivation and wellbeing, leading to a sense of fulfilment, a reduction in job-related stress and a strong sense of team effectiveness (Strange and Mumford, 2005).

Activity 1 What's your vision?

 5 minutes

Spend a few minutes thinking about where your passions lie and what you really care about. This could be in your work role or your personal life. Has this ever translated into you leading others towards a vision, either formally or informally? Would you like to develop your leadership around this vision?

Make brief notes here to record your thoughts. You will return to this in more detail later.

Provide your answer...

The essence of leadership, therefore, is often seen as having the ability to create vision, inspiration and momentum in a group of people (Landsberg, 2002). But what sort of person is required for that and how do they set about it?

2 Who becomes a leader?

‘The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born.’

(Warren Bennis, quoted in Burney and Matherly, 2008, p. 51)

As we have seen, many leaders – such as Martin Luther King and Lady Jane Campbell – find themselves embarking on a leadership journey as a response to personal experiences of discrimination or injustice. Others begin their journey through more traditional means of career progression, moving from the front line to management and leadership positions over time. Everyone’s journey is unique and will reflect the sort of person they are and the life experiences they have had.



Figure 4: Greta Thunberg on her school strike for climate.

For others, their leadership journey begins in very different ways. When Greta Thunberg started her climate strike protest in August 2018 in response to the lack of action from political leaders on the global climate crisis, she wasn’t in a position of authority. She had no management responsibilities and no desire for leadership. Yet within a year, she had become the unlikely leader of a global movement. Greta cared passionately about climate change, and that passion led her on a leadership journey which was to take her right across the world and into the consciences of millions of people. She illustrates why caring is such a fundamental element of leadership and a driver for getting things done. Her concern for the planet and her care for her peers and future generations underpins her actions.

In her book, *No one is too small to make a difference*, Thunberg (2019) demonstrates powerful personal awareness. She is clear about her limitations in terms of authoritative position, but equally clear about where her potential power and influence does lie. Having been elevated to her unanticipated position of leadership, she uses her growing public platform to lead by example: crossing the Atlantic in a sailboat, for instance, and following a vegan diet. In this way she takes small steps towards her vision and encourages others to follow.

Activity 2 explores another example of a leadership journey emerging in unexpected ways.

Activity 2 Unlikely leaders?

Watch Video 1, which introduces José Galindez, an asylum-seeker in the UK who set up free classes to teach English in his local community:

As you watch, reflect on how people describe José and his current leadership journey:

- What skills does he bring with him?

- What challenges does he face?
- Who helps him along the way?

Video content is not available in this format.

Video 1 Introducing José



Provide your answer...

Discussion

José is described as 'open', 'passionate' and 'real', a person who people are 'drawn to'. He voluntarily runs English language classes for the local community. He receives no funding and is not allowed to take paid employment or claim benefits while waiting for his asylum claim.

Having left everything behind himself, he is now working towards other people's futures, even though he can't see his own future path, as his asylum application is still on hold.

Undoubtedly, his faith will play a role in his leadership journey, but drawing on passion he sees in others is also key. The importance of his flexible and non-hierarchical approach is mentioned by others who work with him, which has the effect of drawing people into the community so they can find their passion, their role and their responsibility too. The fact that José isn't an official leader perhaps made it easier for him and others to be pulled along by his enthusiasm. Running classes and supporting others isn't actually his official responsibility – it sort of grew around him – and he uses his leadership to delegate roles to those who have the skills, resources or power he himself lacks.

You don't know José's leadership journey prior to this point. You met him when he had no formal job, no means of support, very little personal security and was fleeing persecution. Yet, even in these unlikely circumstances, he found himself with an opportunity to learn and develop as a leader, helped along by others around him who saw his potential, shared his vision and wanted to help him reach his goal. This shows that there is a lot more to leadership than the position an individual holds.

3 What makes a good or bad leader?

Great leaders don't set out to be a leader. They set out to make a difference. It's never about the role, it's always about the goal.

(Haisha, 2019)

Most of us have anecdotal stories about 'good' or 'bad' leaders we have come across. It might be a headteacher at school, a previous boss, a football manager, or one of the numerous political leaders we see coming in and out of office. But have you ever thought in any depth about precisely what it is that makes some leaders more successful than others? The following activity helps you to do that.

Activity 3 'Good' and 'bad' leaders

Firstly, think of two people:

- One whom you would describe as a good leader. They don't have to hold a formal position of leadership but should be someone you believe leads people in an effective way. It could be someone you have worked with, a personal friend or a high-profile figure from history or the present day.
- The other should be someone you feel *lacks* leadership qualities, even though they are in a position of leadership. Again, this could be someone you know personally, have heard about from a friend, or a high-profile figure.

Make brief notes which explain why you identified these particular people as leaders, and what you feel makes them a 'good' or 'bad' leader.

Provide your answer...

Discussion

The way we judge other people's leadership is as personal as our own approach to leadership. Some leaders adopt a particularly authoritarian style which some might admire, whereas others find it threatening. You may have chosen high-profile leaders who you feel have made a difference, and again your assessment of their style is likely to be very personal. High-profile leaders often divide opinion, and this can be in part a reflection of whether we share their vision. You may have selected much more personal examples of leaders you are familiar with, such as a friend who is an active volunteer and is always inspiring people to join their latest fundraiser, or a boss who always has time to listen to their team.

Did you mention care in your notes for the previous activity at all? Some leaders go to great lengths to demonstrate a caring approach towards others, whilst for others the pressures of leadership lead them to forget the importance of treating others with care. Were your examples in the previous activity 'careful' or 'careless' leaders?

Whilst our own preferences for leadership style and approach may vary, research suggests there are some consistent components which need to be recognised and considered.

4 The 'four Ps' of leadership

Hartley and Allison (2003), in their work exploring health and social care services, identified three different components in leadership: the *person*, the *position* and the *process*. Rogers and Reynolds (2003) subsequently added a fourth P to this list – *purpose*. Rather than focusing only on the characteristics, behaviours and skills of leaders as *people* and the role *individuals* play in shaping events, these '4 Ps' of leadership stress the importance of the wider context as well.



Figure 5: In the image a person is pushing a sofa with another person on it. The person pushing the sofa seems to be the most active one, so perhaps they are in charge? But maybe the person on the sofa is giving directions and the person pushing the sofa is simply following orders?

The attributes of person, position, process and purpose are useful when thinking critically about how leadership operates in practice, and why there is no one simple way to *do* leadership. They also encourage more critical thinking and dispel notions of leadership based on the characteristics of an individual apparently 'born to lead' (Rogers and Reynolds, 2003). Similarly, a singular emphasis on 'position' ignores the influence that those without formal office may exert and overemphasises the authority of high office (which does not in itself guarantee leadership). Rather, to understand how leadership operates in practice, it is more useful to think about the ways in which the characteristics of the 'person' and 'position' intersect with the 'process' (collaborative work with individuals, groups and organisations) and the contribution of the underlying values, vision and goals ('purpose') (Table 2.1). The 'four Ps' provide a comprehensive way of thinking about leadership in action as something which can be done in different ways depending on context.

Leadership aspect	Focus
Person (character)	The character, behaviour, skill and interpersonal style (e.g. charismatic, controlling, supportive, aloof)
Position (role)	The office held (e.g. chief executive, senior manager, activist, service user, carer)

Process (how)	How leaders work with individuals, groups and organisations to find solutions to problems
Purpose (vision)	The contribution of the underlying strategic values, vision and objective

In the next activity you will apply this framework to the leaders you identified previously.

Activity 4

In Activity 3 you identified your own examples of a 'good' and a 'bad' leader. Now, using those examples, complete the following table to see how their leadership relates to the 4 Ps:

	A 'good' leader	A 'bad' leader
Your example...	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Person	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Position	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Process	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Purpose	<i>Provide your answer...</i>	<i>Provide your answer...</i>

Discussion

Here's an example of how one person completed the table:

	A 'good' leader	A 'bad' leader
Your example...	My choir leader	My ex-line manager
Person	She's personable, friendly, bubbly, caring.	She came across as friendly enough at first, but I discovered she didn't really listen to people, and didn't seem to have very good interpersonal skills. She seemed to lack empathy.
Position	She's in a paid position as a regional leader in a national organisation.	She started as my line manager, then became head of department and then took on a senior management role.

		Which on the positive side, took her away from direct day-to-day management of people!
Process	She's very approachable and uses humour in her teaching.	She followed rules and procedures with no humanity or sense of compassion. It's like she saw rules and the organisation, not the people who make up that organisation.
Purpose	She loves singing and music. You can see it in how passionate she is.	I'm not sure. It's difficult to tell. She talked the organisational line, but never showed any true passion for anything. Maybe her passion was to climb the management ladder.

Having explored different examples of leadership, and how the person, their position, process and purpose all influence their approach, you are now going to consider your own capacity as a leader.

5 We are all leaders!

The fact that you have chosen a course on leadership suggests you may have some interest in finding out more about developing your own skills in leading others. You may already be working in a position where you are a formal leader in some capacity. Alternatively, you may not necessarily see yourself as 'leadership material'.



Figure 6: Leading learning

It is important to recognise, however, that wherever you are now, however experienced or inexperienced, we are *all* leaders in some way. We are also *all* always learning, even the most experienced of leaders is still learning how to be a better and more caring leader. It's just that some are in formal management positions, whereas others are using their skills and knowledge to navigate daily living.

Activity 5 Your position as a leader

Take a moment to think about where and how you exercise leadership in your daily life. It might be helpful to think about how you think others would describe you. Then:

- write a short description which aims to cover your person, position, process and purpose as a leader
- reflect also on how you demonstrate care as a leader
- identify an area of strength and an area you would like to develop as a leader

For example:

'My position at work is 'team leader' – so I have leader in my title! As a person I always try to be inclusive and supportive, so one of my strengths is my process of involving everyone. But this also means I sometimes worry about making a decision without ensuring everyone is on board first. In a less formal role I also help to run a gardening club for youngsters on my street where I tend to be much more directive than I am at work. If I'm not, we just don't get things done! I guess this shows I *can* make decisions that I believe are for the greater good without seeking agreement from everyone beforehand. The problem is I care about how others perceive me, and I want people at work to feel I care *about them* as well. It's easier being more directive with youngsters but still being a caring adult – because you demonstrate that care by keeping them safe and helping them learn. So, I guess my whole purpose is underpinned by an ethic of care, which is a strength, but also something I might need to work on to develop my confidence at work.'

'My current 'position' is grandmother, and I look after my grandchildren while their parents are at work. So, I'm in a position of informal leadership there and it's all about care! I used to work in a city-centre nursery before retiring but never in a position of leadership. Looking back, I realise I probably was 'leading' in small ways. We were following a structure laid down from nursery management and I was following the process laid out, but I had a real passion for letting each child's

uniqueness shine through. I really *cared* about letting each small person find and be themselves. I guess that was my 'purpose'! Looking after my grandkids gives me much more freedom to do what I want when I want, and I love letting them take the lead and tell me what they want to do, so the process is driven by them. But I realise as well that they'll need to start to get ready for school routines soon, so thinking about it I probably could work a bit more of a routine into our week. Perhaps that should be a new purpose for me over the next few months – as a caring grandma I can help them ease into that next life transition.'

Provide your answer...

The fact that you have chosen to study this course suggests that you have an interest in how we can develop more caring approaches to leadership. Approaching leadership with care includes reflecting on how we care for *ourselves* as well as how we care for others, you will look at this next.

5.1 What do you care about?

'I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance.'

(Pablo Casals (2000), quoted in Lachman, 2012, p. 112).

Having spent some time thinking about how you see yourself as a leader – either formally or informally – you are now going to delve deeper into what you care about as a person and how you could develop that in current or future roles.



Figure 7 Finding passion in varied settings

You might be passionate about the natural environment, helping out in your local community, or keeping your colleagues safe at work. A reflective understanding of self can enhance your effectiveness as a manager or leader of other people and this activity helps you to do that.

Activity 6 Developing your personal awareness

Part A

Part A contains four sets of questions which are designed to help you reflect on your current self-perception, your ideas about leadership, and your personal and professional goals.

Try to complete all the questions in one go, as that will help to focus your reflection and self-enquiry.

Answer as honestly as you can. It helps to start by just writing (or typing) as thoughts come to you. You'll get the most honest response that way and may learn something new about yourself as a result.

1. Assessing who you are and where you are now

How does your personality affect the choices you make? What fears do you have that might hold you back?

Provide your answer...

To what extent do you feel your values are reflected in your everyday choices and actions? How do these values enhance your relationships with others?

Provide your answer...

What personal qualities do you have that could be usefully harnessed and developed to enhance your potential to lead and manage others, either formally or informally?

Provide your answer...

2. Assessing your personal approach

What do you consider to be your priorities in life, both personal and career wise?

Provide your answer...

How well are these priorities reflected in the choices you make?

Provide your answer...

How do you set yourself new targets to keep your interest alive and provide new challenges?

Provide your answer...

How do you nurture your relationships with the people around you?

Provide your answer...

3. Assessing your work–life balance

How does your current work impact on your family and friends and other aspects of your non-working life? (This might be paid work, study, volunteering, or informal family/caring roles.)

Provide your answer...

How satisfied are you with your lifestyle and time spent outside that work, for example, relaxation, socialising, hobbies, travel?

Provide your answer...

Do you spend enough quality time with your friends and family? (If your work involves caring for family members, focus on the quality time you have with them, not just the time spent on the caring role.)

Provide your answer...

Are you happy with the balance between your work role(s) and other aspects of your life?

Provide your answer...

4. Making changes

What interests and motivates you to put your best efforts into something?

Provide your answer...

What has limited you from making changes in the past? Have you overcome those constraints or barriers now? If so, how?

Provide your answer...

What do you most want to achieve in your personal and work life? What are your career goals?

Provide your answer...

Do your goals and ambitions fit with your ethics and values? Do your career goals conflict with your personal goals or ambitions?

Provide your answer...

Part B

The next part of this activity gives you an opportunity to challenge any personal barriers to effectiveness – such as self-defeating beliefs – by creating a self-affirming statement based on your newly acquired personal awareness.

Next steps...

Now, reflect on what you have written and highlight any self-defeating beliefs you have uncovered.

Self-defeating belief(s):

Provide your answer...

Then make a statement of positive intent of how you might use your personal strengths to counter these.

Positive statement of intent for change, i.e. what you are going to do differently:

Provide your answer...

Part C

Finally, reflect back on the brief notes you made in [Activity 1](#).

Can you see any potential links between what you wrote then and your answers in this activity?

Provide your answer...

Developing your personal awareness in this way means examining aspects of yourself such as your level of self-confidence, emotional intelligence, resilience and self-esteem. With the renewed insight you've gained, it can help you develop a broader, proactive approach to changes in your professional and personal life. Remember to always aim to maintain an appropriate balance, as being an effective and caring leader starts with caring for yourself.

6 Continuing your leadership journey

‘Your journey is completely yours. It is unique. Others may try to steal part of it, tell it in their words or shape it to suit them. Reality is no one can live it or own it but you. Take charge of your journey, it’s yours and yours alone!’

excerpt, ‘Love, Sex, Lies and Reality’, – Kemi Sogunle. Copyright ©2014. All Rights Reserved

You’ve spent some time reflecting on your own relationship to leadership. You may feel you are already quite an experienced leader, or you may feel you haven’t even started out as a leader yet. Whatever your current position, however, leadership should be seen not as an end state but as a journey (Schaeffer, 2002).



Figure 8: Take control of your journey

Historically there has been a tendency to idolise seemingly natural ‘all-round’ leaders. However, this can result in leaders who lack humanity because they fail to acknowledge their limitations and their vulnerabilities (Casserley and Megginson, 2009). It also suggests they lack the self-awareness that might come from admitting to *not* being completely confident in what they are doing. Instead, they go along with the myth of being the perfect and complete leader. In reality, no leader is fully complete!

‘Incomplete leaders differ from incompetent leaders in that they understand what they’re good at and what they’re not and have good judgment about how they can work with others to build on their strengths and offset their limitations.’

(Ancona et al., 2007, p. 95).

Ancona and her colleagues (2007) suggest that the idea of an all-round complete leader is a myth, and it is important instead to acknowledge that any leader will have their strengths *and* weaknesses. They suggest that the ‘incomplete leader’, having recognised their own strengths and weaknesses, knows when to let go, and will find other people to ‘fill the gaps’.

To help identify where any individual leader might need support, Ancona et al. (2007) identify four ‘capabilities’, in which everyone has different levels of ability:

1. Sense-making – constantly trying to understand the wider context
2. Relating – being able to build trusting relationships
3. Visioning – being able to create a vision and see how to get there together
4. Inventing – creatively adjusting and adapting as circumstances change

The four capabilities are interdependent, but no one leader will excel in them all.

This is not just about the individual feeling comfortable that they are working to their strengths; there are wider implications. If someone presses ahead in a role without the necessary skills and capabilities, there is a danger that they become an *incompetent* leader, which can have very real and detrimental consequences. Recognising your own

limitations as a leader, and letting other people lead where appropriate are, therefore, key skills for any caring leader.

Activity 7 Recognising your own incompleteness

Part A

- Where do you think your strengths lie as a leader?
- In what ways are you an incomplete leader?

Using the four capabilities suggested by Ancona et al. (2007) consider where your own strengths lie and any areas in which you might need development or support. Add these to the table below.

Sense-making (understanding the context)	<input type="text" value="Provide your answer..."/>
Relating (building trusting relationships)	<input type="text" value="Provide your answer..."/>
Visioning (creating a compelling picture)	<input type="text" value="Provide your answer..."/>
Inventing (developing new ways of thinking and acting)	<input type="text" value="Provide your answer..."/>

Part B

Reflecting on what you entered in the table, complete the following sentence:
My incompleteness does not make me incompetent because ...

Discussion

The idea of the incomplete leader draws attention to the fact that someone 'in charge' – formally or informally – invariably exists in relation to other people. An individual leader may have a high level of self-confidence; however, their vision will be realised much more effectively if there is also cooperation to foster a collective force with others. So, even when a clear, persuasive leader has emerged, the effect will be much more powerful if they can develop shared commitment and a vision that everyone feels a part of. A group of people working towards a particular goal can make achievements that an individual alone simply could not.

Once you can identify your own strengths and weaknesses, you can see how to avoid ending up feeling 'incompetent' by focusing on the positives, rather than the negatives. This is why you were asked to complete the sentence, and here are some possible examples:

- My incompleteness does not make me incompetent because ... I might not be fully trained on the technical side yet, but I'm organised, approachable, and can think on my feet, so residents and staff always come to me when there's a problem!
- My incompleteness does not make me incompetent because ... although my physical health stops me from playing football with the kids, my skill in the kitchen means I keep the whole family eating healthily on a tight budget.
- My incompleteness does not make me incompetent because ... although I'm not medically trained, my role on the desk in the fracture clinic team is vital in ensuring a smooth-running service for everyone.

Whatever your role, you have the power to bring the uniqueness of you to it. People most commonly give up their power by thinking they do not have any in the first place. It would have been easy for someone in José's position, for example, to do that. Yet, even though timing and circumstances were far from perfect for him, he had a passion that was undeniably infectious for those around him, and that helped him succeed with his vision in his own way.

Conclusion

‘Care is our ability to provide the political, social, material, and emotional conditions that allow for the vast majority of people and living creatures on this planet to thrive – along with the planet itself.’

(The Care Collective, 2020, p. 893)

Different leaders get results in different ways, yet increasingly it is being recognised that the most effective leaders manage to combine a clear vision with a genuine capacity to care, because caring leadership recognises our mutual interdependence and vulnerability. In their *Care manifesto* (2020), the authors note how tragic it was that it took a pandemic to remind us just how crucial care is to the proper functioning of society. They suggest we *all* have a leadership role to play because of our interdependence with each other and the planet. Leaders such as Martin Luther King and Greta Thunberg reflect this. As do numerous examples which spring up in response to events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the cost-of-living crisis: from volunteers collecting and delivering parcels with food and essentials, to libraries and churches opening their doors as ‘warm banks’ and internet cafes.

Developing your understanding of a caring approach to leadership is beneficial regardless of whether or not you currently hold leadership ambitions. Because being a leader is not simply about being put in a formal position of power over others. It can emerge organically simply through caring passionately enough about something which you feel can improve the life experiences of others. And everyone has some capacity to do that.

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