

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same:
Gleaning Valuable Insights for Modern Educational Leadership from the Life of Harriet Tubman

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Abstract

Late in the 19th century, American communities were in a state of flux. As northern abolitionists fought against slavery, relationships among diverse members of society rapidly changed, forcing historical figures to adopt new leadership strategies. Like communities of the pre- and post-Civil War era, modern educational contexts reveal growing diversity (immigration) and rapid societal change (emergence of a large adult learner population and changes in communication), suggesting that analogous leadership skills may be needed to navigate diverse ethnic and social circles. The purpose of this study was to examine historical traits and behaviors conducive to leadership of diverse populations. Due to tremendous success in assisting runaway slaves, as well as service in a variety of capacities (conductor of the underground railroad, nurse, career trainer, and military captain), Harriet Tubman was deemed an ideal candidate for examination. Her experiences and behaviors were analyzed in detail, resulting in a number of recommendations for leadership training and governance of today's American schools.

Keywords: educational leadership, Harriet Tubman, diversity, situational leadership

Introduction

I sing to hide
the sound of my feet;
dance to conceal
the pistol under my apron

an excerpt from *Harriet Tubman* (Cornish, 2006, p. 127).

This excerpt illustrates one common characterization of Harriet Tubman as a tough, yet cunning, protector of runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad. According to this perspective, Harriet did not allow weakness, and did not hesitate to put a gun to the heads of runaway slaves if they turned back. She would say that, “A live runaway could do great harm by going back, but a dead one could tell no secrets” (Sawyer, 2010, p. 51). While a compelling depiction of tenacity, interviews with Tubman herself suggest that it is untrue (Sawyer, 2010). The myth of Harriet Tubman has transcended the actual figure, making life of the real person difficult to interpret.

In reality, Tubman’s life was far different the “rock star” status it has now obtained. Despite ascriptions of super-human strength, she was disabled throughout her life (Hobson, 2014). She had been severely injured by an angry overseer, leaving her with sleeping spells characteristic of temporal lobe epilepsy (Larson, 2004). While depicted as an uneducated “Joan of Arc” figure (Bradford, 2004), she possessed a great deal of pragmatic knowledge, allowing her to cure illness with home remedies or celestially navigate local terrain (Hobson, 2014).

It is true that Harriet Tubman was able to accomplish many seemingly impossible feats. She was able to save about 70 slaves from bondage, serve as a spy during the Civil War, and successfully lead a group of African-American soldiers in a raid against Southern forces (Larson, 2004; Richardson, 2015). In regards to her leadership of soldiers, General Rufus Saxton reported, “This is the only military command in American history wherein a woman, black or white, led

the raid and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted” (Richardson, 2015, p. 8). While Tubman was able to accomplish many seemingly amazing feats of courage and strength, the resulting growth of a heroic legend has obfuscated amazing human characteristics that contributed to social equity, justice, and freedom (Whitehead, 2014). Rather than impressive outcomes and valor, the leadership skills gained through a humble background appear most remarkable. Tubman’s caring attitude and competency to lead allowed for the accomplishment of astounding feats (Bass, 2009).

Assertions that Tubman was the quintessential servant-leader, typifying “the essence of service before self” (Brown, 2012, p. vii), have a great deal of validity. However, they downplay the true leadership acumen utilized by this historic figure. In addition to service, Tubman revealed multiple leadership qualities and styles which varied based upon both constituents and situational contexts. Not only was she able to conduct raids, she was able to navigate within social spheres of white abolitionists. This versatility is what ensured Harriet’s success as a leader. Through careful analysis of her personal qualities and behaviors, it is possible to discern a more holistic view of effective leadership. This view, in turn, may yield several insights for governance of contemporary educational institutions.

Characteristics of Good Leadership

Tubman had many personal characteristics needed for effective leadership. Although some of these traits may be attributed to biology, many were the result of key experiences which shaped her personality and abilities. In contrast to fictional biographical accounts describing the emergence of a “born” leader, Tubman was carefully trained in her hometown of Dorchester County, Maryland (Larson, 2004). The large number of seasonal workers traveling around the

area ensured that a rich communication network already existed. Harriet was able to tap into this network, as well as an already functional underground organization for runaway slaves, to escape to freedom in 1849 (Larson, 2004). Through experiences with people from a variety of ethnicities, social strata, and locations, Tubman was able to develop several key characteristics that ensured her success as a leader.

From relationships with her family, Harriet developed ethical and idealistic values stemming from deeply-rooted religious convictions. This gave her empathy for all people, even those who had wronged her. When she was hit and nearly killed by her master, she continued to pray for his transformation. As described by Bradford (2004), she “prayed without ceasing” (p. 14). Such compassion allowed Harriet to serve the needs of others, leading to favorable relationships that could later be utilized. Her religious convictions also allowed her to persevere hardships. After successfully dealing with a suspicious boat clerk, Harriet explained that, “I always tole him [God], I’m gwine to hole stiddy on to you, an’ you’ve got to see me trou” (Bradford, 2004, p. 33). As this example illustrates, faith gave Tubman the perseverance to continue despite adversity. It also empowered her to take risks, since she firmly believed that God would deliver her. A final influence of faith concerned the development of Tubman’s idealism. Biblical beliefs helped Tubman form a distinct vision for a better world. Through the leadership of Moses, for example, she could see the importance of guiding people out of bondage. Tubman’s religious convictions formed a clear vision which could be communicated to others.

From relationships with slave-owners, Harriet developed key leadership characteristics essential to her later success. The life of a slave was constantly subject to change. Tubman’s life was no exception. Her own parents were initially owned by different masters, but were later

reunited by marriage of their white slave owners. In 1823, the current slave owner, Edward Brodess moved Harriet, her siblings, and her mother away to Bucktown, Maryland, ripping them from their father and the social world they knew ten miles away. From there, Harriet was hired out to several other slave owners, some of whom beat her severely. In 1836, Tubman was hired out to John T. Stewart to work as a domestic field hand, a dockworker, and lumberjack. Finally, from 1847 to 1849, she was hired out to Dr. Anthony C. Thompson. Tubman then decided to run away after receiving word that she would be sold (Larson, 2014). Through these experiences, Tubman learned that life and social relationships could change on a dime. She was forced to rapidly cultivate new relationships and adapt to environmental changes. Essentially, it was her ability to acclimate which allowed for rapid resolution of unique situational issues.

In addition to skills for adaptation, Tubman also gained an ability to endure hardship through experience with different slave owners. When hired out by Brodess, she was frequently whipped and bore scars the rest of her life (Larson, 2014). During this period, a young Harriet was “rented” out to a mistress, who ordered her to clean and dust the house. Having no experience how to perform the task, she was punished severely. Concerning this incident, Bradford (2004) wrote that, “the whip was brought into requisition, and it was laid on with no light hand. Five times before breakfast this process was repeated” (p. 11). Later, as Harriet worked as a field hand, she was struck with an iron weight thrown by a slave owner and nearly killed (Larson, 2004, p. xvi). From these experiences, Harriet was able to learn about cruel individuals and how to endure them. Her acumen in dealing with harsh figures is exemplified by a trip back to her hometown. Here, she knew that former slave owners may be nearby and could recognize her. Bradford (2004) explained:

Having stopped at the Market and bought a pair of live fowls, she went along the street with her sun-bonnet well over her face, and with the bent and decrepit air of an aged woman. Suddenly on turning a corner, she spied her old master coming towards her. She pulled the string which tied the legs of the chickens; they began to flutter and scream, and as her master passed, she was stooping and busily engaged in attending to the fluttering fowls (p. 19-20).

Within this example, Tubman used misdirection to avoid punishment, no doubt a skill learned through interaction with slave owners. Her ability to endure or avoid potential problems allowed Tubman to succeed in difficult circumstances.

Another leadership characteristic that emerged through interaction with slave owners was an ability to serve in several different social and work roles. Tubman served in a myriad of capacities, from house maid to farm hand. Work as a housemaid and nanny gave her an understanding of feminine roles. In contrast, labor as a field hand, dockworker, and lumberjack gave her an understanding of masculine roles. Harriet was purported to cut half a cord of wood a day, haul logs, drive oxen, and plow (Larson, 2004, p. 56). While demonstrating considerable “physical strength and prowess” (Larson, 2004, p. 57), she gained the respect of her male counterparts, as well as valuable social skills. Inevitably, her ability to navigate within diverse social circles provided a crucial advantage in later conduction of the Underground Railroad and espionage activities during the Civil War.

A final characteristic which emerged during Tubman’s slave experience was an appreciation for the capitalist system. While uncommon for many slaves, Harriet was given the opportunity hire herself out. Paying a yearly fee to her master for this privilege, she worked diligently for Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, saving enough money to buy a pair of oxen. With this oxen, she “maximized her earning potential” through plowing fields and hauling lumber (Larson, 2004, p. 64). Harriet’s knowledge of the capitalist system, as well as the freedom that money could afford, was a valuable lesson utilized to accomplish later goals. This is evident during the

Civil War, when she served as a nurse for African American soldiers. She was able to work without wages, earning the money she needed sewing, cooking and washing (Larson, 2004, p. 208). Without experience working in the capitalist system, Tubman would have been ill-equipped to fund her efforts to free African Americans.

In addition to experience with capitalism, interaction with clandestine abolitionist networks of Maryland helped Tubman become a better leader. Through connections, she met several anti-slavery leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, and William Still (Sawyer, 2010, p. 69). In April of 1858, she also met John Brown, the leader of an abolitionist raid in Harper's Ferry (Larson, 2015, p. 14). She even befriended Secretary of State William H. Seward, from whom she was able to buy a home and several acres of land in 1859 (Larson, 2015, p. 14). Powerful allies provided funding, information, and bureaucratic control which protected efforts to free runaway slaves. These allies also provided administrative support for reforms. When Tubman reported disturbing abuses within hospitals for African American soldiers, which resulted in fatality rates two and a half times greater than those of their white counterparts, Seward appointed Joseph K. Barnes to deal with the situation. As a result, Barnes was instrumental in recruiting doctors and implementing guidelines for the care of black soldiers (Larson, 2004, p. 229). In essence, the underground network allowed Harriet to meet influential individuals. Through interaction with these power brokers, she learned how to manipulate connections for a desired result.

Maryland's underground network also helped Harriet understand different modes of communication. She met a wide range of individuals from different locations and social strata, allowing her to hone skills as a communicator. Not only did she cultivate skills to communicate with political figures like William H. Seward, she was able to speak with field hands,

lumberjacks, and boat captains. This experience gave Tubman the ability alter her communication based upon audience. When speaking to white abolitionists, she was eloquent, using simple parables and religious references to evoke conviction against slavery (Bradford, 2004; Larson, 2004). If speaking to members of lower white social strata, she used a humble demeanor and convincing conversation. This allowed her to escape precarious situations, such as detainment by ferry officials (Bradford, 2004, p. 32-33). Finally, Harriet used surreptitious modes of communication to relate to slaves. Because white slave owners were often suspicious of slave communication, Tubman utilized song to communicate her intent. When meeting a group of runaway slaves, she would sing of Moses and deliverance from bondage (Bradford, 2004, p. 21). Through music, Harriet was able to communicate with desired parties. At the same time, she was able to hide communication from those harmful to a group's objective. In effect, she was a "selective communicator," which ensured that issues were conveyed to the right people, and only the right people.

Finally, Maryland's preexisting network provided a framework for expansion. Harriet utilized and enlarged this framework as she operated the Underground Railroad. Subsequently, the railroad was transformed into a spy network which could penetrate deep within Southern regions (Clinton, 2005, p. 163). Not only could Harriet utilize Maryland's clandestine network, she could expand and adapt its administrative framework to suit situational needs.

Leadership Style and Situational Context

While experiences and personal characteristics of Harriet Tubman certainly enhanced her effectiveness as a leader, it was her interaction with group members that truly drove performance. She was able to assess group member's needs and abilities, appropriately matching

tasks with situational contexts at hand. Through analysis of Tubman's relationships with group members, the pragmatic application of many modern theories of leadership are exemplified.

Tubman's group interaction revealed the utilization of transactional leadership. As pointed out by Bass (1999), this style of governance describes "the exchange relationship between leader and follower to meet their own self-interests" (p. 10). While Tubman exhibited a general interest in helping enslaved African Americans, she also had distinct self-interests. This perspective is illustrated by a clandestine mission to free her brothers (Bradford, 2004, p. 34). She was firmly focused on her own family, deciding to save younger and more "valuable" relatives first (Bradford, 2004, p. 35). Rather than receiving democratic input and empowering subordinates, often associated with a transformational approach, she autocratically monitored followers' performance and took corrective action, a form of management-by-exception (Bass, 1999). When one brother did not show up at her father's house on time, Tubman started toward the North without him. "Harriet's word was 'forward,' and she 'nebber waited for no one'" (Bradford, 2004, p. 35). The decision to leave one of her brothers represented a singular focus on the ultimate transactional reward, escape to freedom. Group safety, as well as urgency, dictated that a more autocratic style of leadership be utilized. While the hierarchical assignment of rules and regulations cannot be concretely ascertained within textual descriptions of the Underground Railroad, Bradford (2004) did write, "they [the slaves] had a creed of their own, and a code of morals which we dare not criticise till we find our own lives and those of our dear ones similarly imperiled (p. 39).

Transactional (task-based) leadership is further exemplified within other, less urgent, contexts. After Harriet Tubman received an "intimation" that some old people needed her help, she went to the office of an abolitionist supporter to get \$20. According to Bradford (2004), "no

scruples of delicacy stand in the way of her petitions, nay, almost her *demands* for help” (p. 43).

With dogged persistence, she walked into the office and said,

Tubman: “I want some money, sir.”
Clerk: “You do! How much do you want?”
Tubman: “I want twenty dollars, sir!”
Clerk: “Twenty dollars! Who told you to come here for twenty dollars!”
Tubman: “De Lord tole me, sir.”
Clerk: “He did; well I guess the Lord’s mistaken this time.”
Tubman: “No, sir; de Lord’s nebber mistaken! Anyhow I’m gwine to sit here till I get it” (Bradford, 2004, p. 43).

This example is clearly focused on a monetary transaction. The office manager or “follower” does not know the clear purpose of the money. It is needed for Tubman’s own design, which has not been elaborated in detail. In this circumstance, the strategy was successful. She ultimately left the office with sixty dollars (Bradford, 2004, p. 44).

In addition to transactional leadership styles, Tubman utilized a transformational approach. This form of leadership helps a group transcend individual interests to seek the well-being of others, an organization, or society (Bass, 1999, p. 11). Tubman attempted to transform followers in a variety of ways. First, she elaborated a common vision and sense of unity. Cultivation of vision is illustrated through her lectures at abolitionist rallies. Here, she modestly elaborated the need to free slaves. Introducing herself as “Harriet Garrison” to obscure her identity, she used a simple parable about farming to identify how slaves or freedmen have become “rooted” in the United States (Larson, 2004, p. 173). Not only did this speech reveal humility, since she avoided utilizing her name to assert authority, it revealed a clear communicative style which could be understood by the masses. Like Martin Luther King, Harriet used a universal message, free from political or institutional constraints, which allowed diverse

groups to transcend racial boundaries (Huggins, 1987). Tubman's fervent religious faith also served as a universal mode of communication to both African and White Americans.

As in abolitionist speeches, Tubman assumed a modest role in everyday life, significantly impacting followers. As Bradford (2004) wrote, "When surprise was expressed at her courage and daring, or at her unexpected deliverances, she would always reply: 'Don't, I tell you, Missus, 'twan't me, 'twas de Lord!'" (p. 33). Ultimately, Tubman utilized humility to encourage both freedmen and abolitionists to support her cause. This perspective is illustrated by her participation in the "Port Royal Experiment." Port Royal was a community of freedmen which was designed to successfully demonstrate how former slaves could be integrated within a capitalist economy. Although Tubman was given the ability to draw rations like other Union soldiers, she relinquished the privilege to avoid accusations of favoritism (Larson, 2004, p. 205). Her refusal to accept assistance was a clear attempt to remain modest, thereby giving other community members a sense of equality and empowerment. Although highly autocratic in leadership during operation of the Underground Railroad, Tubman utilized a more democratic strategy at Port Royal. She was able to perceive the importance of empowering community members through decreasing her own status.

A final transformational strategy employed by Tubman was the provision of services to meet followers' needs. During a particularly difficult operation on the Underground Railroad, she left her starving "passengers" to secure food. Upon return, she sang:

Hail, oh hail, ye happy spirits,
Death no more shall make you fear,
Grief nor sorrow, pain nor anguish,
Shall no more distress you dere.

Not only did she return with food, she provided needed assurance through the power of song.

Ultimately, music was utilized as a means of facilitating cohesion and unity. In addition to acts

on the Underground Railroad, altruistic aspects of her leadership were exhibited at Port Royal, where Tubman established a “wash house.” Here, she taught newly freed slave women to sew, bake, and wash for Union soldiers (Larson, 2004, p. 205). Not only did she bestow a skill, she empowered the pupils to become self-sufficient within a capitalist economy to which they had little or no exposure.

While the utilization of both transactional and transformational strategies partially contributed to positive group outcomes, it was the systematic utilization of strategies according to contextual needs which decided leadership success. Tubman was able to understand the interplay between situational factors and follower characteristics. Utilizing this knowledge, she systematically chose strategies that varied along a continuum, similar to that outlined by Situational Leadership Theory (Johnson & Blanchard, 1982). As in situational leadership, Tubman utilized more authoritarian guidance (direction) to control group members with little knowledge to perform desired tasks (S1). While operating the Underground Railroad, for example, slaves relied completely on their leader. They did not have knowledge of the terrain or connections needed to flee alone.

As followers became more self-sufficient, they were led in different ways. This is evident at the Port Royal community. Here, slaves had their freedom, but lacked skills necessary to become self-sufficient in a capitalist economy. Tubman’s school to teach sewing, baking, and washing was both highly directive and supportive. As in stage two of situational leadership, followers were “coached” with the hope that they would eventually become self-sufficient (S2).

Followers with knowledge to perform a task, in the “supporting” stage of development (S3), were not directed extensively. If they had problems or reported failure, Tubman would provide encouragement to achieve a desired outcome. Tubman’s fundraising at an abolitionist

office exemplifies this type of leadership. The office attendant had a greater knowledge of finances, as well as a potential to raise funds needed for Tubman's vision. Instead of telling the man how to raise funds, she simply gave him the task and supported his efforts (through waiting in the office) until the money was raised.

Within the final stage, authority was delegated to her followers (S4). While Tubman rarely devolved authority to constituents, she did begin to send individuals out in the Port Royal community to sell pies, ginger-bread, and root beer (Larson, 2004, p. 208). It reveals that followers were on the cusp of becoming more self-sufficient. More transformational strategies were beginning to be employed, thereby empowering freedmen to live and work independently.

Tubman's behaviors also reflect Contingency Theory, which further expounds a relationship between leadership style and situational context. According to this approach, three different variables impact the efficacy of employee performance: leader-member relations, task structure, and positional power. Leader-member relations refer to the atmosphere of trust and loyalty within an organization; task structure (high or low) refers to the degree that a job's requirements are clearly delineated; and position power (strong or weak) refers to the amount of authority a leader has to reward or punish (Northouse, 2013). While Situational Leadership describes progress based upon follower characteristics, Contingency Theory explains development as a gradual decrease of either leadership guidance or task structure. In essence, the degree to which a leader communicates task guidelines or controls task structure impacts group performance (Table 1).

Table 1: *Summary of Leadership Styles*

	Control (use of either leadership or task constraints)			Freedom
Trans. Leadership	Transactional			Transformational
Situational Leadership	Directing (Telling)	Coaching	Supporting	Delegating
Contingency Theory	High - Structure / Strong Power	High – Structure / Weak Power	Low – Structure / Strong Power	Low – Structure / Weak Power

As revealed in Table 1, the Transactional/Transformational Leadership Continuum, Situational Leadership, and Contingency Theory each describe a progression moving from greater control to increased freedom of constituents. Collectively, they support utilization of more autocratic rules and direct guidance in situational contexts where subordinates are unskilled. A need for strict leadership was exemplified by Harriet Tubman’s service in the Underground Railroad. Runaway slaves had almost no knowledge of terrain, escape routes, or safe houses. Consequently, they required detailed task guidelines and direct leadership, explaining Tubman’s autocratic and highly structured transactional style. Leadership of inexperienced slaves in urgent situations required rigid control and swift action.

Leadership theories in Table 1 also suggest that, as subordinates become more skilled and trustworthy, direct intervention may be eclipsed by supportive strategies. In circumstances where individuals must act independently for the good of society, cultivation of relationships becomes more important. Members of a village or neighborhood are empowered to act alone, but must retain social connections that facilitate overall group cohesion, collaboration, and monitoring of performance. The communal dynamic was revealed at Port Royal. African Americans were free from social constraints, as well as pressures controlling their lives. To accommodate growing

freedoms, Tubman weakened her autocratic leadership by maintaining an egalitarian status (giving up rations) and utilizing some delegation (subordinates selling at soldier camps). Taken holistically, the leadership Tubman provided to both runaway and freed slaves reveals a distinct progression from higher control (in either task structure or leadership power) to lower control.

While Harriet Tubman revealed tremendous acumen when dealing with group members, her leadership was not without failure. In October of 1873, Harriet was flimflammed by two men. The swindlers, named Stevenson and Johnson, told Harriet that they had procured gold contraband from South Carolina valued at \$5,000. This contraband was stored in a trunk nearby. They further explained that \$2,000 in greenbacks was more useful to them, since the gold could never be spent within their native home of South Carolina (Tucker, 1975). Ignoring warnings from the local sheriff, who advised that the men could be robbers, Tubman found a willing investor, Anthony Shimer (“The Gold Swindle,” 1873). According to Tucker (1975), “Harriet became elated at the prospect of securing money for her Home for the Aged and Indigent Negroes” and chose to believe Johnson’s assurances that he knew Tubman’s nephew in Virginia (para. 8). Inevitably, she was blinded by her vision, which caused her to ignore key warning signs. Shimer, likewise, was blinded by the potential to earn a “fast buck,” and ignored warnings from bank officials. After Harriet traveled to the location of the gold trunk, she was attacked and collapsed as chloroform was administered. Waking bound and gagged, the \$2,000 was gone. In essence, both Tubman and Shimer were blinded by their desires. Both individuals failed to accept the advice of more qualified personnel (the sheriff and bank officials). In this case, more autocratic decision-making failed to bring objectives to fruition.

Lessons for the Educational Leader

Harriet Tubman revealed an exceptional ability to lead her fellow African Americans to freedom. This ability was more than an innate faculty. It was a skill carefully honed through complex relationships with family, slave owners, and members of underground social networks. Her leadership skills represent more than mere artifacts to be appreciated. They form a roadmap for effective leadership which may guide educational systems in contemporary society.

Tubman lived in a turbulent world where social roles and ethics were hotly contested. Similarly, we now live in a “paradoxical, unstable, and ethically polarized era” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 3). Like the society of Tubman’s time, there are rapid changes in diversity and demographics of educational contexts. An influx of learners from multiple countries, a large number of adult learners, and growing technological advancements have rapidly transformed educational needs. Due to parallels with rapid changes of the Civil War era, many of Tubman’s leadership practices are appropriate in today’s society. Review of her leadership style reveals the following key recommendations for educational leaders in diverse contexts.

1. Know your constituents and build effective relationships

Tubman’s exposure to people from various walks of life, as well as her participation in multiple work roles, allowed her to comprehensively understand social, gender-based, and ethnic diversity. She utilized this knowledge to cultivate relationships that furthered group objectives. Harriet, for example, established key relationships with white abolitionists and politicians to raise money. She also used powerful connections to find safe houses for runaway slaves.

In addition to cultivating relationships, knowledge of social circles was utilized to influence people. She was able to cajole boatmen into believing that her African American counterparts

were travelling to legally approved destinations. When speaking at abolitionist conferences, she was able to use simple, yet potent, parables to exemplify the importance of her cause.

Essentially, Tubman revealed a need for social experiences and training with diverse members of society. Since modern educational leaders must build relationships to accomplish group goals, they must be exposed to a variety of social contexts. Field studies of minority groups in local areas (e.g., Native American settlements) and contact with various organizations are needed to cultivate valuable social skills. Following such training, educators may utilize knowledge of diversity to drive group performance.

2. Build one vision, but many missions

Tubman was able to create a vision for freedom which was rapidly translated into action. Despite the hardships of slavery and war, this vision succeeded. Of paramount importance was the way in which she developed one vision which could weather vicissitudes of life. Modern educational leaders must, likewise, create a viable vision which can “weather the storm.” Both strategic and long-term planning are required. Educational leaders must be trained to think ahead and make long-term designs that guide future development of educational institutions.

As pointed out by Collins and Porras (1996), crafting a vision statement must “have core values and a core purpose that remain fixed while ... strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world” (p. 65). This dynamic perspective describes Tubman’s implementation of a vision. Whereas her desire to free slaves was firmly fixed, her method to free slaves constantly evolved as the environment changed. Essentially, she had many missions based upon the unique circumstances which arose around her. During the slave era, she utilized underground communication networks to free slaves. During the Civil War, she developed espionage

networks and led armed raids to facilitate freedom. Her actions reveal the importance of creativity, not only to craft future goals, but to create innovative solutions to real-world problems. Thus, effective educational leaders must continually rework core values through crafting mission statements and implementing new educational policy (Manktelow, n.d.).

3. Be a selective and dynamic communicator

Tubman communicated and directed her subordinates based upon situational context and follower competence. Slaves, who had little experience with the outside world, were autocratically directed within the underground railroad, whereas freedmen in communities such as Port Royal were primarily coached and supported. Tubman revealed clear selectivity in her communication with subordinates. Essentially, it revealed the importance of adapting interpersonal strategies to individual needs and situational contexts. The degree to which a leader communicates task guidelines or controls task structure impacts group performance. Followers who lack knowledge, ability, or interest in a task must be controlled through either direct regulation or explicit procedures. As subordinates become more skilled and trustworthy, direct guidance may be eclipsed by strategies that encourage and support.

4. Don't shy away from potential conflict or "sticky situations"

Tubman did not avoid conflict or potentially dangerous situations. She, for example, did not hesitate to enter the territory of her former master to rescue a runaway slave. Instead, she carefully prepared for the contingency by preparing a distraction (a pair of chickens). Good educational leaders must also be willing to step into and embrace conflict. Otherwise, challenging reforms would be impossible to implement. Like Tubman, the educational leader

must prepare before entering controversy. When facing the public, for example, a university president must be “armed” with statistics and facts to convey the importance of new policy implementation. Before mandating the use of new technology, he or she must develop a concrete plan to guide training and development. Essentially, leaders must be adept at dealing with conflict through preparation for various contingencies.

5. *Know how to work a crowd and raise funds*

Harriet Tubman would sometimes persuade abolitionists to donate by conducting “sit-ins.” At other times, she would use a persuasive speech to evoke emotion and financial contribution. Leaders must understand where monetary resources lie, and must then utilize charismatic speeches to elicit donations from benefactors. The importance of eloquent presentations and positive interaction in the fundraising process is well-documented; research suggests that charismatic leadership can result in larger donations and a greater number of applications for enrollment (Bastedo, Samuels, & Kleinman, 2014).

6. *Don't reinvent the wheel*

Harriet Tubman did not continually reinvent strategies or connections to achieve new objectives. When operating the Underground Railroad, for example, she used preexisting communication networks to facilitate her cause. She also adapted this same network to espionage activities during the Civil War. Rather than continually trying to create new solutions, she adapted past resources (e.g., administrative networks) to new problems. A leader must learn to use what works. They must also modify useful resources to address new issues that arise.

7. *Learn to let go*

Tubman often realized when it was important to relinquish control or change a leadership dynamic. When freedmen were placed in more egalitarian communities, she adopted a humble persona. At Port Royal, she helped others become more independent and shed her traditionally autocratic style. Educational leaders must, likewise, develop plans which slowly relinquish control over strategies as subordinates gain more competence.

8. *Learn where resources are, and how to get them*

Whether money, safe houses, or food, Tubman knew where resources were located and how to get them. She also knew powerful stakeholders who could provide capital or supplies. Educational leaders must know where resources are located and how to obtain them. This knowledge base may be fostered through training which includes extensive research of fiduciary and scholastic matters.

9. *Make quick innovative decisions and act*

Concerning issues of decisive action, Winston Churchill once said, “I never worry about action, but only about inaction” (Gibson & Weber, 2015, p. 79). Tubman certainly followed this credo. Rather than hesitating at a river crossing, she plunged into the water, thereby evading capture and leading followers to freedom (Bradford, 2004). Like Tubman, educational leaders must make quick decisions when urgent problems arise. Waiting to see if an issue will “resolve itself” can amplify a problem.

10. Keep the faith

Harriet Tubman had a devotion to God which allowed her to withstand great hardship. Faith in a vision of freedom drove her activity, as well as that of her followers. Educational leaders must hold a firm belief that their actions will bring about substantial and effective changes. This conviction will be infectious.

11. If you can't do it yourself, delegate

Tubman, with a limited knowledge of monetary systems in the white man's world, often delegated fundraising to abolitionist colleagues. Good educational leaders must learn about their weaknesses and address them. Leaders may deal with deficiencies through devolving authority. They may also seek input before making important decisions.

12. Know when to be inspirational, and when to be authoritative

When there was an empathetic audience, Tubman tried to inspire (e.g., speaking at abolitionist meetings). In controversial circumstances, she used violent action or autocratic authority to promote behavioral change (Rescue of a runaway slave in Troy, NY) (Bradford, 2004). Tubman was able to assess which person could be motivated intrinsically, and which needed extrinsic motivation. Educational leaders must also identify which individuals can be inspired. Subordinates who are apathetic and unwilling to participate in group behaviors may need more autocratic or direct leadership.

13. Learn who the experts are and give them full consideration

One of Tubman's fundamental flaws was her inability to adapt according to others' opinions. Before she was swindled out of \$2000, bank and criminal justice professionals identified the con. In this circumstance, Tubman should have listened to those who had considerably more experience in the task to be performed. She was blinded by her vision of establishing a home for the elderly. If she had acknowledged the dubiousness of the gold swindlers, a more effective decision may have been made. Like Tubman, educational leaders need to identify followers' strengths and carefully consider their opinions in important decisions, particularly those impacting achievement of a group vision.

In sum, through extensive life experience in a variety of physical and social contexts, Harriet Tubman became an exceptional leader. From analysis of her training and leadership behaviors, several implications for contemporary educational leaders emerge. First, the leadership process is dynamic. While visions may be static, missions constantly change according to fluctuating environmental variables. Second, to cultivate effective interpersonal skills, leaders must obtain experience and training within diverse social circles of modern society. Third, it is essential that leaders understand how to utilize existing administrative systems, resources, and social connections. Finally, the ability to change communication and guidance is needed. Leaders must learn how to direct followers according to personal characteristics and situational contexts. Through specialized training according to the aforementioned tenets, leaders will be well-equipped to guide educational institutions in today's diverse and dynamic world.

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