

**Nathan as a Courageous Follower:
An Inner Texture Analysis of 2 Samuel:1-14**

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Abstract

The goal of this article was to review the Followership theory and investigate its support in sacred texts through an exegetical study of 2 Samuel 12: 1-14. Through an inner texture analysis of 2 Samuel 12:1-4 Prophet Nathan was accurately identified as a courageous follower in the pericope. He had the courage to confront a powerful king with unpleasant feedback on his actions, and he participated in the transformation of a great leader. However, it must be said that King David was a leader willing to listen to a faithful and exemplary follower. It is likely as we continue to see the moral failure of many great leaders in modern times, learning to be an effective follower may increasingly become as important as becoming an effective leader.

Keywords: Courageous Follower, Leadership

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Effective followership is vital for the success of the leader, as well as attaining the organization's goals, unity, stability, and adapting well to changes in the environment (Treister & Schultz, 1997, para. 2). According to Treister and Schultz (1997, para. 4), the effectiveness of leaders to a large measure depends on the qualities of their followers. As stated by Chaleff (2009, p. 19), followership "is not a term of weakness, but the condition that permits leadership to exist and gives it strength." That view implies the follower process gives rise to leadership and without followers there can be no leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Consistent with Meindl and Shamir (2007, p. 196), "if leadership involves actively influencing others, then followership involves allowing oneself to be influenced." The goal of this article is to review the Followership theory and investigate its support in sacred texts through an exegetical study of 2 Samuel 12: 1-14. The proposed exegetical methodology for the analysis is inner texture (Robbins, 1996b). The article will briefly discuss the Followership Theory, analyze in the inner texture in 2 Samuel 12:1-14, discuss the findings and end with concluding remarks.

The Followership Theory

Scholars, over the years, have agreed that leadership is a process occurring in a dynamic interaction between the leaders and the followers. For instance, followers in a toxic triangle model of destructive leadership (Thoroughgood, Padilla, Hunter & Tate, 2012, p. 897; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007, p. 176), susceptible followers in a "Charisma on Fire" (Klein & House, 1995, p. 183), followers as participants in a leader-member exchange transaction (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), and followers as co-creators of the leadership process (Hollander & Julian, 1969, p. 389). The extant literature supports the view that leadership is a co-constructed process between leaders and followers relating to context and leadership cannot be fully explained without taking into account the role of the followers in the leadership process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89).

This section of the paper will begin with a discussion of a conceptual definition of the followership theory. Next, we will define the boundaries of the theory so as to distinguish what followership is and what it is not. Lastly, the article will review the theoretical constructs of the followership theory and the follower styles or typologies.

A Conceptual Definition

The study of followership comprises an analysis of the essence and influence of followers and following in the leadership process (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014, p. 89). The leadership process refers to the dynamic interaction involving leaders or leading and followers or following (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012, pp. 537-580). According to (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014, p. 90), followership theory is the study of the “nature and impact of followers and followership in the leadership process.” This definition of followership theory identifies followership by using two perspectives: a role-based view that investigates followership as a rank or position and a constructionist view that studies followership as a social process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89).

Role-Based Views. According to Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014, p. 89), a role theory approach when investigating followership, views followership as a role played by individuals situated in a formal or an informal position, such as “manager-subordinate” relationship or a “leader-follower” relationship. It is rational to surmise that if there are no “following” behaviors in the followers, then there are no legitimate leadership qualities in those attempting to lead (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, pp. 95-96). Following is a specific type of behavior that involves recognizing and allowing another’s influence attempt and status (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 627). As stated by DeRue and Ashford (2010, p. 627), leadership is, (a) a relationship comprising reciprocal and mutually reinforcing identities as leaders and followers, (b) it is recognized and strengthened within a broader organizational context, and (c) it is dynamic over time. The role-based approaches consider how followers influence leader attitude, behaviors, and outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89). These approaches reveal how followers are the causal agents (that is follower characteristics and behaviors serve as the independent variable) in a

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leadership process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89). The emphasis in these approaches is on follower personalities, characteristics and style, followership role orientations, follower identities, and how follower identities and responses shape leader attitudes, behaviors and effectiveness (Collinson, 2006, p. 179).

In summary, the traditional assumption is that the leadership style precedes and is the causal agent to organizational outcomes. However, role-based views emphasize follower traits and behavioral styles as antecedents to leader attitudes and behavioral outcomes (Shamir, 2007). The role-based approaches view the follower in a hierarchical context (i.e., as a subordinate), and the leader occupies an elevated position as a manager of the follower (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 90).

Constructionist views. Constructionist approaches do not start with the assumption that there exists a hierarchical relationship (i.e. manager-subordinate or leader-follower), rather they study followership as a product of a dynamic relational process (DeRue, & Ashford, 2010, p. 727). As reported by Fairhurst and Grant (2010, p. 172), when people come together in a social process, engaging in relational interactions, they co-create leadership and followership (e.g., relationships, behaviors, and identities).

For example, DeRue and Ashford's leadership identity construction process identifies leadership and followership as co-constructed in an interactive and reciprocal identity "claiming" and "granting" process (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 627). These constructions may be stable hierarchical role relationships or a shifting leadership process because the dynamic exchange is "constantly being renegotiated across time and situations...the boundaries between leader and follower identities are permeable" (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 635). Shamir also offers a constructionist view called "co-production" that theorizes that leadership is jointly produced by leaders and followers when they form strong leadership relationships that foster the co-production of desired leadership outcomes (Shamir, 2007, p. xi).

In summary, the constructionist approach to the study of followership recognizes the key role of followers and following in the process of leadership and, in some cases, the difficulty to distinguish followership from leadership. The role of a "follower" and the behavior of "following" are crucial in the construction of or failure to construct leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 96).

Theoretical Boundaries

Additionally, it is also important to establish clear boundaries for the study of followership so that scholars and practitioners can distinguish what followership is and what it is not (Bacharach, 1989, p. 496). Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) posit that followership is not the common and usual employee behavior, but it is those characteristics, behaviors, and processes of individuals working and operating in relation to leaders. The implication is that the term "follower" is not the same as "employee" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 96). For a construct to measure up as followership, it must be theorized and operationalized (a) with leaders or the leadership process, and/or (b) in circumstances in which individuals recognize themselves in follower conditions (such as subordinates) or as having follower individualities (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 632).

Followership constructs. The leadership theory has several identifiable and measurable constructs. Uhl-Bien et al. (2014, p. 96) list several constructs and below is a brief review of each construct.

Followership characteristics. These are qualities that affect how one describes and establishes followership. For example, role orientations, motivations, intellectual and analytical abilities.

Followership behaviors. These are behaviors set from the standpoint of a follower role or in the act of following. They include several expressions of open followership behaviors like obeying, deferring, resisting and advising.

Followership outcomes. These outcomes may occur at the individual or the relationship and work-unit levels. Examples include leader reactions

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to followers such contempt; follower advancement or dismissal; if leaders trust and seek advice from followers; and how followership affects the leadership and organizational outcomes.

Follower Characteristics and Styles

The first “follower style” was offered by Zaleznik (1965, p. 120) and it focused on the dynamics of subordinacy. Zaleznik (1965, p. 122) distinguished followers into four types: (1) impulsive, (2) compulsive, (c) masochistic, and (4) withdrawn. However, Kelley (1988, p. 144) postulated that effective followers “are courageous, honest, and credible.” His typology identified four types of followers, namely, alienated, exemplary, conformist, passive (sheep), and a “center” group called pragmatist (Kelley, 1988, p. 145). Kelly advocated transforming all followers into what he called “exemplary followers” (Kelley, 1992). Following Kelley (1992), Chaleff (1995) stated that a courageous follower vigorously supports the leader in the pursuit of the organizational mission and vision, but when inevitable challenges and confronts the leader with unpleasant information or honest feedback (p. 25). Chaleff (2009) identified four different follower styles: implementer, partner, individualist, and resource. Jean Lipman-Blumen (2005, pp. 32-35) in her investigation why followers get charmed by toxic leadership, presented three general categories of followers; “benign followers” who are gullible and desire to keep their jobs, “the leader's entourage,” and the “malevolent followers who are driven by greed and competitiveness. On the other hand, Kellerman (2008) proposed five categories of followers; isolate, bystander, participant, activist, and diehard.

Inner Texture in 2 Samuel 12:1-14 (American Standard Version)

According to Vernon K. Robbins (1996, p. 1), socio-rhetorical interpretations investigate social class, social systems, personal and community status, people on the margins, and those in positions of power in the exercise of detailed exegesis of texts. Thus, socio-rhetorical criticism integrates the ways people use language with the ways they live in the world (Robbins, 1996, p. 1). Subsequently, in order to effectively interpret a text, an interpreter using sociology-rhetorical criticism

approaches the text as though it were a thickly textured tapestry (Robbins, 1996). Robbins (1996, p. 3) presents five different angles to explore multiple textures within texts: (a) inner texture; (b) inter-texture; (c) social and cultural texture; (d) ideological texture; and (e) sacred texture.

In this paper, the inner texture analysis will be used to study and investigate the Followership Theory in 2 Samuel 12:1-14, particularly the phenomenon of a "courageous follower." The inner texture focuses on the recurrence of particular words, the analysis of beginnings and endings in the text, the variation of speech and storytelling, particular ways in which the words present thoughts, and the particular "feel" or aesthetic of the text (Robbins, 1996, p. 3). When these different textures within the same text are examined, the interpreter obtains an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, literary devices and modes in the text. This textural examination provides the interpreter meaning and meaning effects embedded within the text. In this section of the paper, the study will examine the narratological units, the repetitive, progressive, opening-middle-closing, narrational, argumentative and sensory-aesthetic textures and patterns (Robbins, 1996b).

Narratological Units

In commencing this socio-rhetorical interpretation of 2 Samuel 12:1-14, the initial reading reveals five narratological units within the text. The first narration begins with Prophet Nathan's skillful and tactful confrontation of King David in verse one and ends with verse four. The second segment begins with King David's angry reaction to the perceived injustice in the story narrated by Prophet Nathan in verse five and ends in verse six. The third segment begins with Nathan's unpleasant but necessary exposure of King David's sin in verse seven and ends with God's judgment in verse twelve. The fourth section contained in the first part of verse thirteen is the shortest. It reveals David's reaction to God's revelation and judgment of his sin. The fifth and last narration are Prophet Nathan's final remarks, and it begins with the second part of verse thirteen and ends with verse fourteen. The five textual units within 2 Samuel 12:1-14 are depicted in Table 1.

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<p style="text-align: center;">Prophet Nathan's Tactful Confrontation: 2 Samuel 12:1-4</p> <p>And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.</p> <p>The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds;</p> <p>but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.</p> <p>And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">King David's Angry Reaction: 2 Samuel 12: 5-6</p> <p>And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die:</p> <p>and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Prophet Nathan's Prophecy: 2 Samuel 12: 7-12</p> <p>And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;</p> <p>and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added unto thee such and such things.</p> <p>Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.</p> <p>Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.</p> <p>Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.</p>

For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.
King David's Repentance: 2 Samuel 12: 13a
13a. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah.
Prophet Nathan's final remarks: 2 Samuel 12: 13b-14
13b. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.
14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

***Table 1. Narratological Units in 2 Samuel 12:1-14
(American Standard Version)***

Repetitive-Progressive Texture and Pattern in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14

The repetitive- progressive texture and pattern in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14 reveals the patterns that emerge through the repetition and progression of keywords and themes. For instance, the following characters (names) stand out in the text: "Jehovah" is mentioned eight times, "David" and "Nathan" each is mentioned five times. The names "wife" and "Israel" each appears four times, whereas "wives", "poor" and "rich" each appear three times. However, "Uriah" appears twice. The important objects repeated throughout the pericope include "sword" (appearing three times) and "lamb" which appears three times. Critical statements that are repeated by either Jehovah, Nathan or David include: "die" (mentioned three times), "thou hast despised" (appears twice), "gave thee" (appears twice). The themes of "injustice" and "negative outcomes" are detectable from the repetition and progression of keywords and topics.

Progressive texture and pattern in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14.

Progressive texture and patterns involve the observation and study of progressions of words or phrases throughout a text. Progressive textures weave through the pericope. In this text they include: (a) progressive patterns of the phrases "the poor man" "the rich man" "lamb", "the

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sword"; (b) progressive patterns of characters (specifically, Prophet Nathan and King David), and (c) progressive modes of speech (i.e. Prophet Nathan's dialogue with King David).

For at least nine months David thought he had successfully hidden his sins from the general public. The child conceived in the adulterous relationship was already born when Nathan confronted David about his sins. Why did God wait all this long to send Prophet Nathan to David? Is it possible that the full impact of his sin, open confession, and subsequent punishment was better manifested at that time rather than before? The text seems to indicate that to be the case. David's sin was no secret. The people in the palace remembered the visit of Bathsheba into the palace. When they counted the months, the child could not be Uriah's because he never had any interaction with his wife during that time.

It is also important to note David did not send for Nathan. Nathan came to David under God's direction. Nathan (v.1-4) approached David with a complaint. Nathan as a faithful subject, friend and confidant of King David. He had probably come to David before with cases that needed his direct intervention. That explains David's lack of suspicion at Nathan's approach. David rightly felt angry at the gross injustice reflected in the story (V. 5-6).

However, Nathan, with a certain amount of courage, faces the King and says the culprit in the story was King David; "You are the man." (V. 7). The seriousness of David's offense is made more graphic by the story. In the story, the owner of the lamb (the poor man) was not killed by the culprit (the rich man). But, David had taken the "lamb" and killed "the poor man" (v. 9). Nathan reminds David of all the things God had done for him (v. 7-8). In verse nine David is charged with and found guilty of contempt of divine authority and abuse of office (i.e. the sword). The punishment among other things involved the "sword"; it would never depart from David's house. The second consequence of David's sin was that the Lord would raise up evil against him out of his own house (v. 11). Third, what David had done secretly would be done publicly. His wives would be sexually violated in broad daylight before all to witness (v. 11). Lastly, David's sin, which was not a secret, had given occasion to God's enemies to blaspheme. His child with Bathsheba would die soon after birth

(V. 14). The God of Israel has a name and image to protect. Nathan's courageous confrontation of King David and his skillful exposure of sin brought David to repentance; "I have sinned against the Lord," he cried (v. 13). It is worth noting, though God forgave them both for their sins, they had to live with the consequences of their actions.

Opening-Middle-Closing Texture in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14

As noted earlier in the narratological units found in 2 Samuel 12:1-14, there appears to be five units embedded in the pericope, namely, Prophet Nathan's tactful confrontation (v. 1-4), King David's angry reaction (v. 5-6), Prophet Nathan's prophecy (v. 7-12), King David's repentance (v. 13a), and Prophet Nathan's final remarks (v. 13b-14).

The crisis unfolds at the time when King David is enjoying unprecedented success as a leader. In the parable narrated by Prophet Nathan, he is the "rich man" (v. 1-4). Ludwig and Longenecker (1993, p. 265) theorized that often ethical violations by leaders was a by-product of their success or the "Bathsheba Syndrome." In other words, many leaders are inadequately prepared to cope effectively with their success.

According to Ludwig and Longenecker (1993, p. 265) the convergence of four factors make it difficult for any leader to remain unchallenged in their leadership: (a) success allures leaders to become complacent and to lose focus, (b) success provides privileged access to information, people or objects, (c) success may offer unrestrained control of organizational resources, and (d) success may inflate a leader's illusion of their ability to manipulate any outcome.

David sends servants to invite a married woman into his private chambers knowing fully well the possible consequences (2 Samuel 11: 4). He also orders in writing the husband's murder with a "sword" (2 Samuel 11: 14-15) and still expects to handle any possible outcomes. It is important to note, none of his servants at that stage in his life qualify to be called courageous followers. Courageous followers are willing to stand with their leaders, but when necessary, they will stand up and risk rejection by initiating a conflict to question the actions of the leader and group if those

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actions or policies violate the core values and purpose of the organization (Chaleff, 2009, p. 7). Howell and Shamir (2005, p. 110) postulate that charismatic leaders cannot engage in self-reflection, self-monitoring and honest feedback without courageous followers.

Narrational Texture and Patterns in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14

Narrational texture analyzes the voice or voices within which the words of the text speak (Robbins, 1994). The narrational texture and pattern in the text examine the “scenes” within the narrative, the active “voices,” the sequence of the narrative, and its plot.

The “scenes” in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14. There appears to be only one scene in this pericope. In verse one Prophet Nathan is sent by God to David most probably in his palace; “And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.” (v.1).

The “voices” and sequence of the narrative. There are only three voices in the narration. The narrator's voice comes in and out throughout the text in verses 1, 5, 7, and twice in 13. Nathan's voice comes in verses 1-4, 7-12, and 13-14. Lastly, David's voice comes in verses 5-6 and verses 13. Prophet Nathan plays the key role in the entire scene. He exposes David's sin and pronounces God's judgment on that sin. While David is a major character in the scene, he only speaks twice, and the last statement is a brief acknowledgment of sin and genuine repentance.

The “plot” of the narrative. The “plot” of the narrative focuses on Nathan's courageous confrontation of David and David's repentance and restoration. This incident was possibly David's most serious crisis in his entire life. David later explained the level of pain and loss he went through during that time in Psalms 32, 38 and 51. However, Nathan is the unsung hero in the episode. It required unusual courage to confront a powerful King and bring “him to book” when other men had lost their lives for saying less than that to lesser kings. Treister, and Schultz (1997, para 8) state, “Truly, good leadership enhances followers, just as good followership enhances leaders.”

Argumentative Texture and Pattern in 2 Samuel 12:1-14

The narrator begins by showing Nathan's visit to David. In the first discourse, Nathan tells David a story that reflected gross injustice in Israel. As mentioned earlier, Nathan as a trusted friend and confidant may have brought to David's attention cases that needed his direct intervention. This strategy was a suitable format to use when introducing a very personal and sensitive matter to a powerful King. DiRienzo (1994, p. 26) postulates that exemplary followership is as indispensable as leadership to the overall success of a health care organization, business, university, or professional group. Organizations and organizational leaders need articulate, analytical and "independent-thinking" followers.

When David heard the story, he responded with great anger and declared the culprit was guilty of death, not knowing he was the culprit. The story makes the gravity of his sin and the heinous nature of his actions even more vivid. In the story, the culprit is wicked, but does not slay the "poor man". However, David's action was far worse. He not only took the only lamb the poor man had, but he also killed him with the "sword".

Nathan in the next section (v. 7-12) recounts God's favor upon David and his judgment in David's life. In 2 Samuel 12:9 David is charged and found guilty of despising the law of Moses:

Wherefore hast thou despised the word of Jehovah, to do that which is evil in his sight? thou hast smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

David in v 13 breaks down, accepts responsibility for his sin and genuinely repents. It is possible he never married another wife after that incident, at least there is no record to that effect. Prophet Nathan, in the pericope, is depicted as a successful prosecuting attorney. He conducts his research, gathers all relevant facts, reviews all reports, and presents a convincing case in a court of law against the accused defendant. Howell and Shamir (2005, p. 110) posit followers must appreciate that they play a vital role in mitigating the pitfalls and abuses that come with charismatic leadership.

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Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern in 2 Samuel 12: 1-14

The sensory-aesthetic texture pattern develops from the array of senses that the periscope embodies or evokes, plus the manner in which it does so (Robbins, 1996). According to Burkus (2010, p. 8), they can be classified into three symbolic “body zones” namely, the zone of emotion-fused thought, the zone of self-expressive speech and the zone of purposeful action.

In this discourse, both characters present emotion-fused thoughts. Nathan recounts a story that evokes strong emotion from David and readers of the text. David replies with self-expressive speech and a purposeful action:

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. (2 Samuel 12: 5-6)

In verses 7-12 and verses 13-14 Nathan engages in self-expressive speech as he pronounces God’s judgment on David. David responds with a self-expressive speech in verse 13 as he genuinely repents of his deeds. Charleff (2009, p. 15) states that any organization is a triad consisting of leaders and followers joined in a common purpose. The prerequisite for effective leadership is effective followership which is orbits around the mission and vision of the organization (Chaleff, 2009, p. 1). Effective followership requires followers who are accountable and willing to “stand up to and for leaders” (Chaleff, 2009).

Discussion

Through an inner texture analysis of 2 Samuel 12:1-4 Prophet Nathan can accurately be described as a courageous follower. He had the courage to participate in the transformation of a great leader. However, it must be said that King David was a leader willing to listen to a faithful and exemplary follower. It takes both to bring about transformation.

Conclusion

Thousands of years ago, Prophet Nathan, demonstrated the importance of being a courageous follower. His actions probably saved a nation and not just the legacy of one man. His example provides a wealth of wisdom, skill, and insight in effective followership. It is likely as we continue to see the moral failure of many great leaders in modern times, learning to be an effective follower may increasingly become as important as becoming an effective leader.

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