The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness

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Abstract

A review of *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness*, by Lolly Daskal.

Keywords

leadership, professional development, personal growth

The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness.
Lolly Daskal. (New York, NY: Portfolio, 2017). 240 pp.

Everyone is a leader, whether serving in a professional, volunteer, or personal setting. As leaders, we must continue to grow to reach our full potential. Often, there are gaps that inhibit our ability to develop our leadership (Daskal, 2017).

Communication professionals often serve in both formal and informal leadership roles. Whether it is with our teams, working with supervisors, collaborators, or the audiences we are communicating with, there is a leadership role for us as professionals. Understanding the gaps in personal leadership styles will allow the agricultural communicator to develop personally and professionally while completing our best work.

Lolly Daskal is a global leadership and executive coach. In her book, *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness* (Penguin Random House LLC, 2017) she identifies seven leadership archetypes, and the shadow that each archetype must overcome.

> Within each of us are two competing sides, a polarity of character, but only one leads to greatness. Regardless of how successful we become, if we want to continue to have a positive impact on the world and make a difference, we must constantly rethink the instincts that drive us (Daskal, 2017, p. 8).

She identified the archetypes after years of work in the leadership field with thousands of clients. Each of us is comprised of all seven archetypes, with some being stronger than others based on our personal leadership styles. The leadership archetypes and their shadows identified by Daskal (2017) are:

1. The Rebel and the Imposter.
2. The Explorer and the Exploiter.
3. The Truth Teller and the Deceiver.
4. The Hero and the Bystander.
5. The Inventor and the Destroyer.
6. The Navigator and the Fixer.
7. The Knight and the Mercenary.

A rebel leader is always asking; how can I push the envelope? Rebels avoid revolts and uprisings and are quiet warriors. The imposter lets self-doubt create a feeling of fraud and the need for perfection. The explorer seeks to discover, and move away from old dysfunctional ways. However, their shadow creates an exploiter who uses manipulation; for the exploiter control is power. Truth tellers ask; where shall I speak up? Their shadow is a deceiver who leads with suspicion and withholds information or tells half-truths (Daskal, 2017).

Hero leaders see areas where courage is needed and act. A gap in this archetype creates the bystander, who leads with fear when they see something and do nothing. The inventor looks for ways to make things better, but their shadow is the destroyer, who leads with corruption. This means cutting corners and compromising on quality to do things faster. Navigators ask how we can get where we need to go and steer people toward workable solutions. The danger for a navigator is becoming the fixer, who leads with arrogance. Knights serve others as loyal protectors, but their gap is a mercenary that only serves him or her self (Daskal, 2017).

Each person develops their own leadership style that is comprised of several archetypes, and it can change over time. The shadows can create a gap within each archetype. A leadership gap hinders personal growth and creates problems in personal and professional lives (Daskal, 2017).

Readers can utilize Daskal's book as an evaluation tool for personal leadership styles and a manual for personal growth. Examples of famous leaders in the archetypes include Rosa Parks (rebel), Christopher Reeve (hero), Sheryl Sandberg (navigator), and Walt Disney (inventor). Case studies within each archetype demonstrate the destruction caused by the shadow and offer solutions used by leaders in real situations to overcome their gap (Daskal, 2017).

Daskal (2017) provides advice for leaders in each archetype to bridge the gap between their shadows, and to stand in their greatness. Examples for each archetype include:

1. Rebel: "Leverage your competencies and capabilities to feel more confident."
2. Explorer: "Leverage your intuition and trust your instincts to guide the way."
3. Truth Teller: "Leverage candor and lead with veracity."
4. Hero: "Leverage courage by resisting your fears."
5. Inventor: "Leverage your integrity, your high standards, and lead with excellence."
6. Navigator: "Leverage your problem-solving skills without imposing yourself on others."
7. Knight: "Leverage your loyalty to create deep and long-lasting relationships," (Daskal, 2017, p. 212).

The epilogue of the book contains proven approaches from Daskal's years as an executive leadership coach to help readers stand in their greatness. These approaches are broken into three categories, *For Yourself*, *For Your People*, and *For Your Community*. Each category contains twelve strategies to help the leader stand in their greatness, from being transparent to insisting on accountability (Daskal, 2017).

I recognized myself, including my leadership shadows, during several sections of the book. The premise of the book is for leaders to engage in self-reflection and grow personally by recognizing the gaps that hold us back. I completed a leadership assessment with Daskal. This is not included in the book. I am predominantly a rebel and navigator leader, with these two archetypes even in my results. My third major archetype is the inventor. I quickly realized that the imposter and fixer were hindering my ability to move forward while reading the book, and my assessment and further work with Daskal allowed me to overcome my gaps. Communication professionals can improve our messages, and as professionals by recognizing our own leadership archetypes and the shadows that hinder their effectiveness.

Leadership development is not something that can be casually studied as time permits. Rather, it is a daily choice we make in our personal and professional lives. "As a leader, even each small choice you make has great impact and determines outcomes for you, your people, your organization, your community, and for the world as a whole," (Daskal, 2017, p. 200). I use *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness* as a reference manual, reviewing shadows and strategies regularly to continue my personal growth.