

# Transformation of Nigeria's Negative Leaders to Positive Leaders

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**Abstract** This paper aims at accomplishing two objectives: explain the nature of leadership in broad terms and look at Nigerian leadership and suggest ways to transform it from its present negative state to positive state. The reader should glean useful information on the nature of leadership and examine whether the suggested solutions to Nigeria's leadership problems are useful. Throughout human existence people have practiced leadership within their groups, big or small. There have always been people who initiate activities, posit goals and gather people and resources used in accomplishing them. Indeed, if you observe children you will see some of them initiate activities, such as want to play football, get a ball and get other children to play with them. Leadership can be trained for; this paper hopes to show how to do so.

**Keywords** Leadership and management

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## 1. Introduction

For as long as I can remember Nigerians have been saying that the problem with their country is bad leaders; they seem to believe that if they have good leaders that their country would be much, much better than it is; indeed, some Nigerians believe that if the country had had good leaders that it would be at the level of the "Asian tigers" (Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea etc.) in economic development.

Many Nigerians believe that they are cursed with bad leaders and that that is what is preventing them from moving forward in economic and political development. Thus, they keep praying and hoping for the day when good leaders would come to rescue them. Hope springs eternally in the human heart, they say.

In the meantime, when given the opportunity to elect good leaders, Nigerians invariably elect what they themselves call crummy leaders; their legislators and executives at Abuja (capital city) and the various state governing circles are said to be clueless leaders.

Clearly, Nigeria has a leadership problem. But instead of hoping for good leaders to drop out of the sky and do the needful thing why doesn't every Nigerian become a good leader? Why doesn't each Nigerian become the good leader he is yearning for?

Chinua Achebe (1984) wrote a pamphlet called "The trouble with Nigeria"; he said that the trouble with Nigeria is bad leadership. Why didn't he try to become the good leader

he was asking for?

Why are Nigerians always waiting for others to come lead them to the Eldorado they are seeking instead of becoming the good leaders that they seem to be asking for?

Clearly, the leaders in Nigeria are self-centered leaders; they are mostly in office for what they can get for their selves; they want to steal as much money as is possible from the people and national treasury. They want to steal enough money so that they can consider themselves Nigerian big men.

They buy the accoutrements and paraphernalia of bigmanism; each Nigerian big man builds a mansion in his village, a mansion in the city (both probably with no running waters or constant electrical supply and certainly no paved streets in from of them), buy big, imported cars, wear flowing robes and those make them seem like very important persons.

Nigerian leaders see their important offices as what makes them important persons; their desire for prestige makes them seek public offices; to be called president or governor or senator etc. makes the Nigerian feel prestigious.

The Nigerian leader does not derive sense of importance from the good works that he actually does for the people but from merely seeming a very publicly important person.

Nigerian leaders are negative leaders; negative leaders are self-centered and corrupt leaders.

Positive leaders, on the other hand, seek public offices because of their desire to serve the people; they see problems and want to solve them; they want public office to use it to serve the people; they are servant leaders' not just important persons. See, Fiedler, 1967.

Positive leaders are humble human beings who serve their people whereas negative leaders are egotistical persons

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chasing after their ego shadows.

Nigerian leaders are generally lacking in humility; they are very narcissistic and actually do not accomplish anything for the people.

True leaders set goals, visions, dreams, objectives and purposes to which they are working towards attainment. They get people, followers (each of whom can act as a leader at any time) to help them in attaining the vision they set for their society or work organization. See Gardner, 1986.

Nigerians construe leadership in global terms; they see leaders as their president or governor. Actually, that is not only how leaders are construed.

Leaders are found in the family, in the work place, in education, in community organizations and in just about every unit of society. You do not have to be the president to be a leader; you can be a leader in your family, your church, your school, and your community social organizations and so on.

Leaders are found in most action arenas, not just in politics. You just have to understand what leaders do and do it in the area that you want to exercise leadership in to be a leader. See, Hemphill, 1949.

Leaders are persons who see problems in their world and want to solve them; they come up with goals and objectives that in their opinions can solve the problems they identified; they are motivated by the purpose of solving the problems they see around them; they are goal and task oriented and usually are good at interpersonal relationships, for goals are achieved through people. See, Blake, 1964.

Leaders mobilize people (human resources) and get the capital resources (money) with which they go about the business of doing what they want done in their society. See Kast, 1974.

Positive leaders do not seek public offices because such offices make them seem very important persons, as is mostly the case with those who call themselves leaders in Nigeria.

A leader is a person who in a unit of society is solving problems for society. See, Miner, 2005. So, in what area of society are you a leader in?

## 2. What Do Leaders Do?

One of America's best writers on Leadership, John W. Gardner (1963/1986), defined leadership by what leaders do. According to him, leaders perform the following ten functions: Envisioning, Affirming Values, Motivating, Managing, Achieving Workable Unity, Explaining, Serving as Symbols, Representing the Group, Renewing and building leadership teams.

These ideas were expatiated on by Eugene B. Habecker (2006), in his book "Rediscovering the soul of Leadership". In fact, it is reading Habecker's book that motivated me to write this article. Let me briefly explain Dr. Gardner's ideas and other writers' ideas on leadership in my own words.

### Envisioning Goals

Leaders see problems and or opportunities in their society

and come up with ideas on how to respond to them. They posit visions, dreams, goals and objectives on how to respond to perceived issues, what is to be done to deal with identified problems and or take advantage of identified opportunities.

You have to have clearly stated goals that you want to achieve and thereafter bring together people and seek money and materials needed to accomplish those goals; goals are attained with human labor and capital. (See, Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2008)

If you have no clearly stated goals that you want to achieve you are not going to bother setting up human work organizations needed in attaining your goals.

Goals give people a sense of purpose and direction; purposive behavior requires tasks to be accomplished; if you have no vision, no dream you are not likely to have the energy to do anything purposeful. See Heifetz, 1994.

Leaders give human groups goals and objectives that give them purpose to work towards. Without visions there is laziness and lack of directed behaviors.

### Affirming Values

People are value oriented creatures; people generally do that which they value, what they feel is important in their lives.

Leaders help to articulate values, what is worth doing in the group and sell them to the people to go do them. As people are engrossed in doing whatever they are doing they often lose sight of why they are there; leaders continually reaffirm why the work organization was put together, what they exist to accomplish; you have to continually reaffirm why you are there and doing what you are doing and sell that idea to the workers, the people.

### Motivating

Human beings are easily discouraged; they need to be continually motivated, given pep talks on why what they are doing is very important. See, Vroom and Jago, 1988.

Leaders find ways to encourage people to do their best in doing whatever they are brought together to do. Rewarding those who do what they are brought together to do with praises, money or positions are useful ways of encouraging people; often times just telling people that they are doing a good job is all that they need to hear to do their jobs well.

One of the worst things that you can do is being critical of work groups; criticism destroys self-confidence and discourages people from doing their best. See, Van Wormer et al, 2007.

Nigerians rather enjoy putting each other down, destroying their people's self-confidence; this tendency to desecrate each other probably contributes to their inability to work hard; many Nigerians are so discouraged that instead of seeking pride in their work they seek ways to steal from their work places.

Leaders find ways to make people have positive self-esteem and confidence in themselves; leaders help to give people the belief that what they are doing is extremely useful for their group's welfare.

People want to feel that what they are doing is the most important things in the world; leaders give them that feedback on a continuing basis.

#### Managing

Leaders often act as managers. Managers are people who, on a day to day basis, use human beings and material to actually accomplish organizational group goals. Trained managers understand a bit of social psychology and people's group behavior in general. See Katz and Kahn, 1978; Spencer, 1841.

It helps if managers took classes on social psychology, organizational behavior, Human resources, finance, accounting, budgeting, basic economics, general management, production management, customer care, basic computers and Internet; in other words, managers need to have something like the equivalent of an MBA given by American Business schools. Whereas it is not necessary to have formal training in business, it is absolutely necessary that leaders have such business information, even if it is self-taught.

Leaders may or may not also be managers but it helps if they understand managerial functions, such as planning, setting goals and recruiting the right personnel to help them achieve their goals, having action plans for achieving the goals, having evaluative mechanics for ascertaining that the goals are achieved, having corrective action plans, doing budgeting and keeping good accounting records on how their organization's moneys are spent, producing and reading monthly financial statements on their organizations; understanding accounts receivables and payables and keeping accounting journals on all moneys that come to the business and how they are spent. See, Tittlemore 2003.

Planning, monitoring, controlling, recruiting and generally leading work groups is absolutely necessary in using people to attain organizational goals. Many Nigerian and African businesses flounder due to poor money management skills.

Money management skills are especially needed in Nigeria where folks literally seek jobs to go steal from their employers!

Supervising employees to make sure that they do what they were hired to do, training them to do their jobs, evaluating them on a regular and timely basis and letting go of those who do not do their jobs efficiently are critical managerial skills.

#### Achieving Workable Unity

People are individuals and, as such, have different values; if you bring people together and want to use them to work together and towards stated common goals you must figure out a way to get them to put aside their different values so as to work together and pursue the attainment of the goals of the work organization. Obtaining work unity is a basic requirement for supervisors, managers and leaders.

If you cannot give a group of people a spirit of unity and team spirit you have no business managing them and you are not a leader of people. Leaders give people a sense of unity

and oneness, not divisiveness. See, Vroom, 1973.

#### Explaining

Work groups need constant reminders of why they were brought together and what they are there to do; often times people lose sight of why they were hired and go do their own things.

Leaders get people to keep focused on doing what they were brought to do. If you are brought together to build buildings, as civil engineering firms are, the leader must get the attention of his engineers, architects and construction workers focused on building the best buildings around and prevent them from always talking politics, as if politics is the only game in town.

A hospital must have doctors and nurses talk medicine and medical technologies and not always jabber on politics that they are not trained in. Many Nigerian medical personnel talk politics instead of the latest medical technologies and what they are doing to provide their patients with the best medical care in the world. Nigerian hospitals are some of the worst in the world; Nigerians who have money go overseas to seek medical treatment (at this moment the Nigerian head of state, Mohanmadu Buhari, is in London seeking medical treatment).

#### Serving as symbols

The leader is the symbol of what the work organization or any social group is there to do. Mention the leader's name and the people immediately know what his group is there to do. Good leaders so live their work goals and objectives that people simply associate them with their work.

Mention Bill Gates and folks think of computer software; mention Steve Jobs and people think of electronic contraptions; mention a Nigerian leader and people think of a thief!

#### Representing the Group

The leader represents what the group stands for in the general community, nation and world. Rex Tillerson, the former Exxon chief executive officer, represented Exxon Oil Company (and now he is supposed to represent United States foreign policy; that is a bit of a stretch, isn't it?).

Good leaders know that they are the image of their organizations in the community and the world as a whole. If a leader is corrupt, as Nigerian leaders are, when folks think of them they think of corruption and, therefore, do not have respect for them.

#### Renewing

Leaders constantly renew the vows that brought them and their workers together in their work organizations. What are people there to accomplish, are they doing so or have they branched off to new avenues that do not contribute to achieving the original work goals?

#### Building Leadership Teams

Leaders build excellent leadership and management teams; these teams are likeminded people who come together to plan and achieve what their organizations are there to achieve.

It is necessary for leaders, those who had the vision that set up their work organizations, to educate and sell that vision to new employees; managers must be trained to identify with their organizational goals and help the organization to accomplish those goals.

Leadership and Management teams are critical for organizational success and survival; without them organizations collapse.

Think about a contemporary Nigerian work organization, say, those working in a given government bureaucracy; the employees may not even know why they are there other than to steal from the government and the public; is it then any wonder that these government organizations are unproductive and would collapse if there is no oil money to keep them afloat.

#### Democracy and Accountability of leaders

Political leaders in democratic dispensations are expected to account to those they lead what they do; they are, in the first place, elected by the people and mandated to do certain things and are held responsible for doing them. Every so many years such leaders go to the polls to reobtain mandate from the people to lead them. See Peters and Waterman, 1982.

During campaigns and elections potential leaders criticize their present leaders, point out what they did wrong and show how they could do things better.

Expecting to be challenged and or voted out of office, leaders in democratic countries feel their feet held to the fire and constantly try to do what they believe that their people desire and would approve in them otherwise they are out of their elected jobs.

This is certainly not the case with Nigerian and African political leaders. Assuming that Nigerian leaders are elected, which is usually done through rigging elections, they really do not feel that they should account to anyone what they do in office. As far as they are concerned, the people do not deserve to be given accounting of what they did.

As they see it, they bribed their ways to political offices and are in office to recoup their money and make some profits on their capital outlay for getting to office.

The Nigerian politician has no respect for his constituents. In fact, he has total contempt for those he presumably leads.

The Nigerian politician knows that Nigerians are mostly cowards; Nigerians are so fearful of harm and death that they would not rise up to challenge their thieving leaders and try to chase them out of offices. Just hire brutal police and military and if the people act out you kill a few of them and the rest of Nigerians stay quiet and out of fear and desire to live at all costs tolerate their criminal leaders.

Leaders do not respect their people if their people are too fearful and are not willing to rise up and challenge the leaders. It is only when people are willing to fight for their liberty and if needs be die doing so that their leaders respect their wishes.

Most of Nigeria's revenue comes from oil money. Therefore, the people really do not maintain their

government through paying taxes (Nigerians avoid paying taxes).

Because the money for governance in Nigeria comes mostly from oil, the leaders do not feel obligated to explain how they spent that money to the people. After all it is not the people's money, it is money that nature gave to them so the leaders do not feel moral qualms from stealing it; they are not stealing from real human beings but from nature.

Simply stated there is no accountability in Nigerian leadership. Nigeria is the empire of thieves and every Nigerian knows it.

#### Responsiveness

Normally, leaders are supposed to be responsive to their people's desires. In democratic countries leaders study their people's aspirations and campaign for office with promise to satisfy those desires.

Nigerian leaders do not even bother telling the people what they would do for them when they are elected to office. They have no blueprint and platforms of what it is they are going to accomplish for the people. They simply want to be elected to go steal money and every person knows that fact so no one expects the politicians to be responsive to the people's needs. The people's needs be damned!

As far as Nigerian leaders are concerned there are no people to be responded to. The Nigerian politician has no sense of responsibility to do certain things for his people and his people do not expect him to do anything for them.

The people even have to bribe the Nigerian politician to spend their governments' money on projects in their districts, such as pave roads in their area, give them pipe borne water or electricity or pick up garbage from their towns or build a school in their town or build a health clinic in their town.

At best Nigerians expect their politicians to go steal from the national treasury and come give them some of the loot.

Politicians steal and become rich and their people make them chiefs! Nigeria is a strange land, indeed. Perhaps, Nigerians are not really human beings; perhaps, they are aliens from a different planet?

Nigerian politicians steal and have money and give themselves weird titles such as his Excellency, Dr. Professor and Chief this or that.

Ordinary Nigerians masquerade around with silly titles, such as Engineer Okere, Architect Njoku, Permanent Secretary Adewale and Finance Minister Alhaji Mecca. Brandishing their occupational titles is just about all that Nigerians live for. They want to seem important in the eyes of their fellow Nigerian denizen but do something for the people is not their goals.

#### Trust

In democratic polities' leaders struggle to earn the trust of the people they lead; they earn trust by doing what the people expect them to do and by being as much above board as is possible.

In the thieving jamboree called Nigeria, the leaders do not work to earn the peoples trust and the people do not trust their leaders. The operating rules of engagement are stealing

and pretending to be honest persons. Who has ever heard of the term integrity and honesty in Nigerian leaders?

The Nigerian politician does not expect his people to respect him. In fact, he does not even listen to what the people say about him.

The people who bother at all can call the Nigerian politician a thief and even write about it and he would not sweat over such negative name-calling. He has grown thick skin and shines off whatever negative names the people call him.

The typical Nigerian politician is a criminal and exhibits the anti-social personality structure of not giving a damn about what people think or say of him. Sometimes one wonders whether only sociopaths and psychopaths go into Nigerian politics.

The Nigerian politician knows that Nigerians are cowards and will not do anything to chase him out of office so he ignores their powerless name calling and keeps stealing as much as he could. The Nigerian leader is immune to negative put downs; in fact, upon reading in the local rags where people call him a thief he laughs!

Why take the name caller seriously when he or she probably is also a thief? Let him who does not live in a glass house throw stones, the Nigerian politician tells his self. Before you complain about the grain of sand in other people's eyes remove the mountain in your eyes, is the idea. Let him who does not take bribes in Nigeria complain about bribe taking politicians.

Corruption exists everywhere in this world but most polities try to limit it to a manageable percent of the population. Perhaps, most countries can handle it if five percent of their people are corrupt but if ninety five percent of them are corrupt the system breaks down, as is the case in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a royal mess; the country is a madhouse, a bedlam; Nigeria is not a country of rule of law although Nigerian politicians are the first to tell you that they have the rule of law and follow certain procedures demanded by democracy; it is all for show but not really done.

Obviously, to bring about changes in Nigeria the leaders must be made accountable for their stewardship, made trustworthy and responsive to the people.

The hope of this paper is that may be somewhere in the future Nigerians would start transforming their leaders from the thieves that they currently are to positive leaders who served the people's social interests.

In the present, anyone who called Nigerian politicians true leaders is living in fantasyland, not in the Nigerian real world.

One is naïve enough to try to change Nigerians and make them become ideal leaders; it is silly illusion to expect criminals to suddenly become saints.

If Nigerians improved just a little bit and begin to seem like a people ruled by law and integrity that is the best we can expect of them.

As they say, perfection is the enemy of the good. So, let us hope for some good in Nigerian leaders; no one is expecting

them to be perfect leaders.

### 3. Corruption and the Nigerian Political Economy

It is rather difficult to ascertain when corruption became endemic in Nigeria or even when it started. One thing is for sure, Nigeria or the area now called Nigeria has always had a corrupt culture.

Africans sold their people to Romans, Arabs and Europeans for, at least, two thousand years. A people that sold their people were obviously a corrupt people.

We shall proceed on the premise that Nigerians have always been a corrupt people; it is difficult to identify a period in their history when they were corruption free. See, Falola's (2008) *A history of Nigeria*.

Nigeria's written history began with the advent of British colonialism; we really do not know much about what transpired in Nigeria before the British came unto the Nigerian scene in the late nineteenth century.

Written history tells us that the British came to Northern Nigeria during the mid-1800s and saw a relatively well ordered feudal state. The Fulani under their leader, 'Uthman Dan Fodio' had conquered the various Hausa states in what is now called Northern Nigeria; Dan Fodio imposed Fulani rule over Hausas beginning in 1804.

The Fulani leader modelled his empire after the Ottoman Empire; he called his self the Sultan of Sokoto. He appointed his lieutenants Emirs(that is local chiefs) of major Hausa states, such as the Emir of Kano, Emir of Kaduna, Emir of Zaria and so on. This was a relatively feudal way of governing the people so the first British colonial governor, Frederick Lugard decided to retain it and rule the people indirectly through their traditional rulers.

The governor appointed what he called residents (in provinces) and district commissioners (in districts or counties); the residents and district officers worked with the emirs at Native Authority Administration to rule the people. The system worked out quite well. See Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 1965.

In southeastern Nigeria, the land of Igbos, Lugard noticed that Igbos did not have traditional chiefs. Igbos ruled themselves by gathering in their village squares to make decisions on what to do in their villages; they were a stateless people, for their system of governance did not go beyond village rule. See Isichi, 1976.

Lugard appointed warrant chiefs for each Igbo town and had them coordinate with his district commissioners or district officers to rule the people. In other words, Lugard replicated the indirect rule system that existed in the north to the South East. See, Afigbo, 1972.

In the West Lugard used the Obas (kings) to rule the Yorubas, Edos and Uhrobos and Ishikiris.

An interesting phenomenon happened in the East. As soon as Lugard gave the people who had boasted that they had no chiefs and were independent, warrant chiefs, these new Igbo

chiefs became inordinately proud of themselves and indeed began calling themselves monarchs (monarchs without kingdoms). See, Perham, 1956.

Igbo town chiefs became the most corrupt set of human beings on planet earth. To administer native rulings they demanded bribes; there was a set price for every activity that the people demanded from the chiefs and their police (court messengers). Alaigbo became corruption haven during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Apparently, a similar level of high corruption took place in other parts of Nigeria. See, Uchendu, 1965.

Therefore, we can say that there has been corruption in Nigeria right from the first decades of the twentieth century. That corruption is now cultural for nothing is ever done in Nigeria without someone bribing someone.

The British administration prosecuted a few cases of corruption including the 1944 case against Nnamdi Azikiwe (the first president of independent Nigeria); Zik was accused of engaging in dubious collusion between a Lagos bank and his business enterprises.

In Western Nigeria, Adelabu Adegoke was investigated for alleged corruption; the same was the case in Northern Nigeria. See, Middleton, 1959.

Nigeria got its independence from Britain in 1960. The first government, led by Abubaker Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966), was overthrown in 1966 because the military coupe's leaders, such as Chukwuma Nzeogwu, alleged that it was too corrupt.

Aguiyi Ironsi took over from Major Nzeogwu and was said to have led an Igbo government and in July of that same year he was overthrown by Northern military officers; Yakubu Gowon (1966-1975) took over.

The government in the East, led by Odumegwu Ojukwu (1966-1970), refused to recognize the government of Gowon and as result there was a three years civil war.

During the war Nigerians, in alignment with African practices of seeing their fellow Africans as not human beings, slaughtered Igbos and used starvation as a policy to get Igbos to quit the war. Several million Igbos were said to have been starved to death.

The government of Gowon was accused of corruption and was overthrown by Murtala Mohammed (1975-76). Mohammed appeared corruption free but nevertheless was quickly overthrown and his lieutenant, Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) took over.

Obasanjo handed the government to a civilian elected government led by Shehu Shagari (1980-1984). Shagari was said to be corrupt and was overthrown by Mohammadu Buhari in 1985.

Buhari was supposed to be dictatorial and was overthrown by Ibrahim Babangida. Babangida (1985-1993) was said to have practically stolen most of the oil revenue windfalls that came to Nigeria in the 1980s. By the time he was forced to give government to Shonekan the man was said to be a billionaire.

The feckless caretaker government of Shonekan was quickly overthrown by Sani Abacha (1993-1998). Abacha

was said to have stashed billions of dollars all over the world. Abacha was a brutal doctor who killed whoever opposed him. He died under suspicious circumstances and Abdul Salami (1998-1999) took over.

Salami managed to write a US type constitution and handed the government to Obasanjo in 1999. Obasanjo (1999-2007) was freed from prison to be given the reins of power and today is reported to be one of the richest men in the world.

Apparently, Obasanjo maneuvered to prolong his rule but was prevailed upon to hand power to Musa Yaradua.

Musa Yaradua (2007-2010) was sickly and died in office and his feckless vice president, Goodluck Jonathan took over. Jonathan was called a clueless president; under him corruption was institutionalized as a way of life. The man said that corruption is not crime.

The present government of Buhari, yes, that same Buhari of 1985 military coup took over from Jonathan in 2015. He claims to be fighting corruption but everyone knows that the status quo remains the same; you still have to bribe police men and government officials if you want something done.

Corruption is now a way of life in Nigeria.

Does corruption affect Nigeria's economic development? We do not have good records keeping or useful data in Nigeria but we can safely say that the billions of dollars redirected to private pockets would have built the infrastructure necessary to transform Nigeria from an agricultural state to a modern industrial state. See, Falola, 1985.

#### Africans Have a Sickness of the Soul

One of the mistakes people make on looking at Africans is to see them as mentally deficient human beings. For example, James Watson, the co-discoverer (with Francis Crick) of the DNA, looking at the mess that Africa is in, speculated that, perhaps, Africans are unable to govern themselves well because they are mentally deficient!

Those who do IQ tests routinely tell us that African Americans score by fifteen points less than white Americans (Orientals score by fifteen points more than white Americans).

Whereas no one has really done a thorough study of the intelligence of Africans in Africa, anecdotal evidence suggests that the average African scores at a level deemed mentally retarded in America (70 on the WAIS, WISC and or Stanford Binet Intelligence Scales).

I think that these folks are wrong in their assessment of Africans as mentally challenged. I have related to Africans in person and taught them in my college classes. I can tell you that there is nothing wrong with Africans intelligence; they are as smart as other human beings.

If that is so then the question is: how come Africans seem to be unable to govern themselves correctly? All African countries under the Sahara desert are poorly governed (even North African countries, the Arab countries, are not particularly well governed; none of those is as industrialized as Asian countries have become in a short period of time).

Let us not waste our times talking about Africans supposed deficient intelligence for they are as intelligent as other races; like in other races, of course, there are very smart Africans (those with IQ over 132) and very few dumb Africans (those with IQ under 70) but the run of the mill African is not different from the average white person or Asian person.

If that is the case the question is: how come Africans do not seem to be able to govern their people right? One has given this question a lot of thinking and came to certain conclusions. In the below paragraphs I will summarize what I have written at great length in other places.

One believes that the African has a sickness of the soul. The African is not mentally sick (oh, there are mentally ill Africans just as there are in other races) but is sick in his soul. Africans have a soul sickness. Here is why I came to this sad conclusion.

History shows us that in the Roman Empire Romans bought African slaves and used them to fight as gladiators, and fight animals and fight to death. Yes, Romans used Africans killing each other as entertainers.

That is to say that Africans were selling their people to white folks for as far back as the Roman Empire; that is, at least, two thousand years ago. See, Taiwo et al, 1999.

The Arabs burst into history with Mohammed founding Islam in 610 AD. We know that Mohammed (570-632) had slaves, including African slaves.

Arabs took Egypt in 643 AD and thereafter swept across the Maghreb (North Africa) and got to Morocco and entered Spain in 711 AD. Some Arabs swept south and made contact with Africans and began buying African slaves.

Africans, in effect, were selling their people to Arabs from as long ago as the seventh century of our common era!

In Africa itself Africans sold their people to their fellow Africans. African big men often had hundreds of slaves. It is reported that when the Oba of Benin died thousands of life slaves were buried alive with him! (A Bini man, Naiwu Osahon wrote about this supposed fact; I had to write to him to withdraw that writing for it was too shameful.)

Africans have been selling their people to themselves, to white and Arab folks and to any comer who wished to buy Africans as slaves.

Those who sell their people have no regard for their people; Africans do not care and love their people.

We, of course, can come up with all kinds of economic and sociological explanations as to why Africans sold their people but the fact is that a people who sold their people, for whatever reason, have a problem.

There is something wrong with a people who roamed around their continent capturing their people, marching them to the coast (as Olaudah Equiano, 1797, narrated in his book) and or marching them across the desert to sell them to Romans and Arabs. A people who find it easy to sell their people are a sick people!

Walter Rodney (1974) in "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" gave us explanations of how slavery was engineered by Europeans for their own good.

No rational and perceptive person doubts that Europeans benefited from the transatlantic slavery. Contemporary European and American wealth is probably mostly due to African slave labor. White men used African labor to do capital accumulation, money that was used to start the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century.

For five hundred years (1400-1900) Europeans used free African labor to build up their world. One is, therefore, not exonerating Europeans or Arabs for their sin in the enslavement of Africans. See, Chancellor Williams, 1992.

However, please do not tell us that slavery existed in all races thus rationalizing Africans slavery. One knows that the Vikings (700-1000 AD), for example, roamed around Europe capturing Europeans, especially women and selling them to Arabs.

The Greeks had slaves who were whites; Romans had slaves who were mostly Germans. Asians had Asian slaves. Indeed, in India Hindus still treat Dravidians as slaves. The point is that slavery existed everywhere in the world but that does not make it justified.

Africans were particularly vicious in capturing their people and selling them into slavery. It should be noted that during the transatlantic slave trade at no time did the white man enter into interior Africa to go capture slaves, he did so only after the invention of the quinine medication in the mid-1800s (quinine prevented him from dying from mosquito bites).

The white man just parked his slave ships at the coast and had Africans go capture their people and bring them to the coast and sell them to him.

In what is now called Nigeria, the Efik at Calaba and the Ijaw at Bonny, for example, arranged for Igbos to have intra-tribal wars and capture war prisoners and sell those to them; indeed, they arranged for a segment of Igbos called Aro to recruit Igbo mercenaries (Abam and Abriba people) and have them roam around Igbo land capturing Igbos and marching them to the coast to be sold.

Aro was particularly heinous in devising macabre ways of obtaining slaves. They pretended to be judges and had Igbos bring their issues to them to be judged and those found guilty were sold into slavery. See, Kenneth Dike, 1956.

What was going on in Igbo land was taking place all over black Africa. In his book, *The Scramble for Africa*, Thomas Pakenham (1994) tells us how Africans captured their people and sold them to Arabs; Arabs who used them to work in their Indian Ocean islands plantations or sold them to other Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran.

A people who did what Africans did and did not stop doing it on their own volition but stopped only when they were bribed to do so by the British (he found a replacement trade for them, in oil palm and palm kernel) are a soul sick people.

A people who for over two thousand years that we have written records of were selling their people into slavery and as far as history is concerned made no other tangible contributions are a people with soul sickness.

Africans soul sickness has continued to the present.

African leaders not identifying with their people but see them as those to be exploited, used and discarded.

No human being is as narcissistic and brutally callous as African leaders. African leaders honestly do not feel any kind of human sympathy for their people; they do not resolve to help their people. All they want to do is use them and when they are no longer useful discard them like rag dolls. To them their people are not human beings to be nurtured but things to be used and discarded like garbage.

You would be making a mistake to believe that African leaders are there to develop their people; no, they are there to use them and steal their wealth for their selves and do not give a damn that their people live in abject penury.

You see the picture of starving Africans, especially their children and those make you want to reach out and help Africans but such pictures apparently do not move callous African leaders to do something to feed their people.

Indeed, if the liberal do gooders in the West were to give African leaders economic aid for their people they would redirect them to their personal pockets and leave their people to die like they are rats.

This pathetic situation at one point led one to wonder if Africans are even human beings. One must say that there was time in one's life when one considered Africans animals, not even sub-human beings, and wanted nothing to do with them. One did not even want to be close to them. One considered Africans too degraded to have them around one.

Later, one began thinking about why Africans do the dreadful things they do to themselves and discovered that they have soul sickness. We should not out of political correctness deny this reality.

Africans have soul sickness. We simply have to figure out a way to heal that soul sickness instead of denying its reality.

It is healed when Africans are taught that it is their duty and function to love and care for their people. At the moment they do not even know what the word care and love means.

In fact, if they see you talking about love they consider you a fool; instead, they want to hear you talk about how best to hate and exploit Africans, especially if it has to do with people from different African ethnic groups.

Africans kill other Africans from different ethnic groups as if they are animals. As we talk, Fulani herdsmen are roaming around southern Nigeria killing Southern Nigerians. They simply slaughter them and apparently do not feel guilt or remorse from doing so. These people are amoral criminals and we do not know it!

What we need to do with Africans is not just teach them leadership and management skills, they have learned those from the Western schools they attended, but teach them how to behave like loving and caring human beings.

We have to figure out a way to reach the Africans dark soul and bring the light of love into that heart of darkness (one hates to employ Joseph Conrad's pejorative term).

The African soul is truly dark; Africa is truly the heart of darkness; we do not have to deny the obvious but must find a way to heal the sick African soul.

As we speak, Africans are still selling their people into

slavery in Sudan and Mauritania; there are African slaves held by Arabs in those two countries.

Many people have a sense of pity for Africans because of their miserable living conditions. One tends to believe that wicked and evil people pay a price for their past and present evil.

One tends to believe that Africans are cursed by bad karma from selling their people and stealing from their people; One sees the poverty in Africa as a consequence of Africans past and present evil behaviors (one defines evil as any behavior towards another human being that is not meant to love him or her).

Instead of pitying Africans, one actually wants them to make amends for their past and present evils. One wants Africans to pay reparations to Afro-Arabs and to African Americans in the two Americas, North and South.

One suggests that, at least, 10% of each African country's GDP be seized by an International organization and that money used to help ex- African slaves in Arabia and America.

The enslavers, such as Arabs, White Americans and Europeans, too, must pay reparations to their ex-slaves. This African, Arab and Euro-American reparation must be made for a period of, at least, one hundred years.

The money is not to be given as handouts to the diaspora Africans but used to provide them with education from Kindergarten to university and provide them with health care and other public goods.

One believes that until Africans make amends for their criminal acts of selling their people into slavery that nothing will work out well for them. One understands that this view has no basis in science but that is one's belief; you can call it superstitious but it is what one believes.

You don't just go capture and sell your people and expect to have no negative consequences for your dreadful behaviors.

#### From Self Centered to Social Centered Leadership

Leaders are human beings; as human beings they look like the human beings around them; individuals may be unique but not so unique that they are totally different from other individuals. People generally are like those around them.

Nigerian leaders are like the Nigerians around them. The apple does not fall far from the apple tree. If you want to understand Nigerian leaders you have to look at typical Nigerians, for Nigerians have typical patterns of behavior, personality.

It is probably not a good idea to stereotype people but that notwithstanding each of us has general pictures of a group of people. Yes, it is preferable to see people as individuals but when push comes to shove we see people with certain group lenses. Here is the Nigerian as one sees him, which is probably how most people see him, even how he is seen by his self!

The Nigerian (and for that matter, the African) is totally self-centered.

All human beings, in childhood, begin out their lives



self-centered; socialization enables them to internalize social norms that make them behave pro-socially and help other people.

Religion, *inter alia*, exists to help the people to care for one another. The Christian religion, for example, teaches its followers to love God with all their hearts and love their neighbor as themselves. Christianity teaches love and caring for people and forgiveness for those who harmed one.

Those who grew up in a Christian culture, such as Europeans (Europe has had Christianity for almost two thousand years) tend to override their natural inclination to care only for themselves with a little bit of caring for other people.

Nigerians were only exposed to Christianity in a little over a hundred years ago; Christianity has not had enough time in the African world to alter Africans natural self-centeredness.

The typical Nigerian is in society to care only for his self. What life means to him is to provide for his self and, perhaps, for his wife and children (his extended egos). He may have motivation to help out some people in his village but when push comes to shove he lives only for his self.

Only a little over a hundred years ago, typical Nigerians were roaming around capturing their people and selling them to White men at the Atlantic coast or to Arabs across the Sahara desert.

The Nigerian of yesterday who sold his people into slavery is not that much different from the Nigerian of today. The Nigerian of today, if he could, would actually kidnap his people and sell them into slavery; he does not do so because of international laws passed by the white man that forbid slavery. If you removed those laws, Africans would revert to selling their people into slavery.

Indeed, many of their criminals kidnap their people and hold them hostage until ransom money is paid to them before they are released.

Nigerians live for their individual selves; they seldom think in terms of what is good for society as a whole.

A Nigerian big man would build a mansion in his village (with stolen money, of course) but he would not work to get his people to pay taxes and with that money the road in front of his house is paved and tarred; instead, the road in front of his house is literally littered with garbage and he could hardly drive on it (when it rains Nigerian roads turn into streams).

In their work place the Nigerian works to earn his daily bread but does not work to create jobs for the teeming masses of unemployed people around him.

In the cities of Nigeria over fifty percent of the youth are unemployed and no one cares. Why should a Nigerian care for the welfare of other Nigerians? As long as he has a job, which he probably bribed to get, why should he care that other people do not have jobs?

Until some of the unemployed kidnap him and demand ransom money from him or kill him the Nigerian does not give a damn for his people; and if he is killed other Nigerians do not care, after all he did nothing for them! They say that it served him right that he was killed by criminals!

Do you want a job in Nigeria, especially a government job? If so, you have to bribe for it. If you are stopped by the police you have to bribe him before he lets you go. To pick up a form from a government office you have to bribe for it; to get your passport renewed, even in faraway Washington DC, USA, the dirty and filthy Nigerians working at the Nigerian embassy demand a certain amount of bribe money from you.

Nigeria is a place where no one cares for other people; Nigerians are like folks living in Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651) state of nature; each person is looking after his self-interests and no one looks after other people's self-interests; folks steal money or take bribes and live well until other Nigerians set on them and kill them; Nigeria is a place where all are at war with all and consequently life is nasty, brutish and short (the life span of Nigerians is 42, and 84 in the USA).

Nigerians Pursue Social Attention and Admiration, Narcissism

Interestingly, having ignored caring for their neighbors, rich Nigerians seek attention and admiration from their neighbors. That is true, these people do not give a damn about the fate of other people yet they want to be seen by their people as very important persons, VIPs.

Nigerians are the most childishly egoistic and narcissistic human beings alive. With the jobs they got through bribery they buy fancy cars, build big houses, and buy flowing robes (Agbada/Baba Riga) and in those silly robes masquerade around as very important person.

Alas, the robes they were used to be Arab attire many centuries ago; that is, Nigerians parade around in discarded Arab wears; Ijaws parade around in discarded Portuguese attire and bowler hats.

Nigerians bedeck their bodies in flowery robes and jewelry and in their infantile minds apparently think that their neighbors are admiring them as misters' big stuff; the very neighbors they do not care to help are expected to admire them.

So, why should the neighbors see them as important persons if they do not help their neighbors? That is the most amazing behavior in Nigerians.

Clearly, what seems rational is for poor Nigerians to ignore their big men for not helping them yet they admire those big men and those big men see themselves as prestigious persons.

Seeking Government Jobs to Become Prestigious Persons

Nigerians literally seek high level government jobs, say, the governorship, senatorship, or President for the opportunity to occupy prestigious positions and thereby get the people to see them as prestigious persons even though they are not working hard to help the people.

This is an amazing situation, to say the least. Big men who deserve contempt in their people's eyes are actually seen as very important persons! They are very important garbage!

At the end of each month, the governor of each Nigerian state goes to Abuja, the capital, and collects whatever monthly money the federal government gives to him for his

state and pockets most of it and the people see him as a very important person instead of chasing him out of office. Nigerians are an interesting breed of human beings; they stand reason on its head.

Nigerians are so afraid of harm and death that they tolerate the dreadful treatment that their leaders dish out to them; their leaders steal their money and they do not protest; they reason that if they protest their thuggish leaders would stick their goons' squad (military and police) unto them and kill them. Not wanting to die they tolerate living like slaves.

Apparently, Nigerians expect the international community to come and fight and die for their liberty but not them fighting and dying for their liberty and social justice.

Clearly, Nigerians have to learn leadership to be able to do for themselves what they need to do to modernize their country instead of waiting for others to come do so for them. See, Vroom and Sternberg, 2002.

#### Pursuit of Importance to Mask Their Existential Unimportance

You do not have to be a psychologist or philosopher to realize that human beings have consciousness and that their consciousness leads them to be aware that they are born, grow up, age and die. When they die their bodies rot and smell worse than feces. If buried their bodies are eaten by worms and bacteria.

Human bodies have no monetary value. If you cremate an adult human body you get a few pounds of ashes that have no monetary value.

Above all, despite their make belief religions human beings really do not know whether there is life after they die; for all they know the grave could be the end of their lives.

If we take the scientific approach towards people's bodies we know that their bodies, like the bodies of animals and trees are composed of about 64 elements, the chief of which are carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, calcium, sodium, and phosphor and so on. Those 64 elements are composed of particles: electrons, protons and neutrons. Neutrons and protons are composed of quarks. Quarks were made from photons; electrons were made from photons; the entire human body was made from photons, light which came out from nowhere and nothingness during the big bang, 13.8 billion years ago. That which came from nothing is nothing so the human body is nothing.

Human beings suspect that they are one giant nothing and that they have no existential worth and value; people suspect that they are big fat nothing and that they are living for nothing; they are food being prepared for worms.

People feel worthless and valueless; they feel that they are not special; the universe destroys them at will; earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes tsunamis, floods, draughts, tornadoes, virus, bacteria, fungi and other natural elements destroy people as if they have no value.

Human beings do not like their existential sense of nothingness and worthlessness; they try to deny it and thereafter pretend to have worth.

Everywhere human beings seek to convince themselves that they have worth and value. Much of human beings activities are designed to give them a sense of false worth.

You go to school and obtain education, seek and obtain a job and make money and obtain good social position and those probably make you feel that you have worth.

Alas, you will still die and the body that you had literally enslaved yourself to working to provide for would be eaten by worms. The point is that human beings feel like they are nothing and seek worth.

Nigerians, Africans, African Americans and human beings in general feel like they are one humongous and ginormous nothing! They do not like their nothingness and mask it with their various pretenses of worth.

The Nigerian who seeks prestigious social position and wealth does so to make him seem important; he is trying to deny what is in his subconscious mind: a feeling that as flesh he is meat waiting to die and rot and smell like garbage.

You take daily bath, wear clean clothes, bedeck your body in fine jewelry but you are nothing but whited sepulcher! This is the human existential truth!

Given nature's impersonality and toughness, Nigerians, like other human beings, feel weak and inferior and react with desire for false superiority; they feel unimportant and compensate with false worth. All these are understandable. See, the Individual psychology of Alfred Adler (1987) on elaboration on peoples feeling of inferiority and compensations with false worth and superiority.

All human beings feel worthless and seek phony worth. But Nigerians seeking of worth is on a different level.

Human beings are arrogant, proud, vain and narcissistic; they do so to mask their underlying sense of unimportance but Nigerians take those desires of worth to a whole different level.

One can honestly say that one has not seen a humble Nigerian one's entire life. Nigerians are so proud that you wonder from what planet they come from, whether they are so ego defended that they do not know that the bodies they want you to admire are literally something that would die and rot.

Nigerians are egoistic, proud, and self-centered; they are really a breed of human beings without insight into their miserable human nature.

Clearly, Nigerians need to be helped to understand human psychology a bit so that they learn that the individual is not his sham big ego that he thinks is godlike.

One often thinks that most Nigerians need long term psychotherapy to help shrink down their swollen egos; they are all big men who do not work to produce wealth but instead steal it or sell their people to get the money with which they seem to their primitive eyes that they are important persons.

Much of one's writings are geared towards helping people to understand their egos and shrink them down to normal level.

For now, let one just observe that most Nigerians are totally egotistical and narcissistic and, as such, live only for

their individual selves and not for other people.

We have to re-socialize Nigerians and get them to go from self-centered existence to social centered existence. Until this task is addressed and accomplished Nigerian leaders would continue reflecting their people's egoism and would not care for the people.

Honestly, until we shrink and transform Nigerian egos from self-centeredness to social centered egos, egos of love one does not expect good governance in Nigeria. Nigerians can develop acceptable leadership habits. See, Spillane et al 2004.

#### Leadership is not for Childishly Egoistic Persons

Normatively speaking, a leader ought to be a mature human being but not an immature human being. Clearly, there are mature people and there are immature people.

The mature person has a good handle on his emotions, especially on his fear and anger. There are people who are prone to quick fear and anger; such persons are not good material for leadership positions (of course, some leaders are immature; Adolf Hitler, 1925, was an immature leader).

The person prone to childish anger is generally vain and proud. He feels inadequate and inferior and posits a compensatory big, important self that he wants to become. He presents that false big self to other people to relate to and accept. If they treat him as an important person he feels good and gets along with them but if they do not his vanity feels pricked; he flies into intemperate anger and verbally abuses people or even fights them physically.

Consider Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler (*Mein Kampf*, 1925/1998) had ideas on how to make his German people great; he was motivated to do what made his people seem a superior people; he worked hard to get his self into a leadership position and from where he worked to make Germany economically well off.

Hitler was inordinately proud, vain and narcissistic (and deluded and paranoid). If his will was obeyed he felt fine but if you disobeyed him he felt angry at you and if he was sufficiently enraged he would require you killed. Your life did not matter to him. What mattered to him was that his will to power is obeyed. See, Trevor Roper, 1953.

Hitler killed many Germans who did not obey him and sent many to concentration camps where they were worked to death. He was responsible for the death of over 50 million persons; he did all these in a misguided effort to seem the fuhrerprinze, the indomitable leader of the world that every person obeyed.

Regardless of whatever he accomplished at the battle front, Hitler was a negative leader. He was so egoistic that he wanted to conquer all of Russia and kill off all Russians; he considered Russians inferior people; his foreign policy, lebensraum was to kill off all Slavic people and give their lands to German farmers.

Russians aware that he wanted to kill all of them fought like demons possessed them and eventually fought their way into Hitler's Berlin bunker; Hitler did not want to be captured by the Russians and committed suicide; he felt betrayed by

his Germans and gave orders to his chief architect and armament minister, Albert Speers to destroy all of Germany for the people are no longer worthy to live. He could not understand how his supposedly superior people allowed themselves to be defeated by supposedly inferior Slavic Russians. See Albert Speer, 1997; William Shirer, 2011; Lewin, 1939.

Hitler was so grandiose that he wanted to conquer the entire world; he saw people as inferior to him and to his German people. He was a megalomaniac (he had delusion disorder, grandiose type).

At any point in time, there are many leaders like Hitler. The question is whether those types of leaders can redirect their huge egos to a more positive goal? One believes that they can.

If one is extremely egoistic and want to be obeyed by all people and feel angry if not obeyed (one wants to be god like to hide ones underlying sense of worthlessness), one can analyze ones ego and come to see that one has an obsessive-compulsive desire to be god like so as to mask ones underlying human sense of nothingness.

You cannot change your human condition and make yourself important; you are always unimportant and there is nothing that you can do about that reality. As long as you live in body that will die you have no worth, or you have a socially constructed, make belief worth.

You can re-conceptualize your self-concept and accept your existential worthlessness and nothingness. If you see you as nothing then you would not feel angry if other people do not obey you.

One can go from being a negative leader to a positive leader. See Kirkpatrick, 1991.

#### From Negative to Positive Leader

A positive leader is calm, cool headed and caring for all people. He accepts the human condition and sees people as they truly are. People are creatures that know that they are nothing who want to seem like they are something important. See Carlyle, 1841.

From this knowing, the positive leader has compassion for all people. He sees that we are all in the same boat and does not look down on any one but does whatever he can to help people live as well as they could during the 120 years that we can live in bodies.

The positive leader does not escape into wooly metaphysics or religion that promises Eldorado that cannot be realized on earth. See Montana et al, 2008.

A positive leader is practical and pragmatic (Fisher, 1984); he deals with the here and now real world issues and does not flee into fantasy where he tries to solve problems at the imaginary and magical level.

Leaders fix things in this world; they build roads, bridges, remove garbage and sewage, provide kids with education, provide adults with work; they are here and now people not people escaping into wooly metaphysical world. See, Goble (1972) on leadership.

This does not mean that the positive leader is not religious;

it means that he knows that religion is, by and large, a means of escaping from our intolerable reality but does not solve our here and now issues.

What solve our earthly issues are science, technology and business, not escape into an imaginary heaven. See Covey (1994) for useful insights on leadership that takes into account higher powers.

A positive leader loves, respects and cares for people as they are, now, in bodies even though he knows that their bodies are nothing. He does to wait for them to become god like before he likes and cares for them; for one thing, if people are godlike they would do what they need to do to survive and would not need help from leaders to survive on earth. See Schulz et al, 2010.

There is no leadership in a non-material heaven where people do not live in bodies; in heaven people supposedly have what they need.

There is need for leadership on earth, for on earth we have scarcity of economic resources, not abundance, and must do what we have to do to survive in the tough environment we find ourselves in. See, Hadley, 1958; House, 1971; House, 1996.

In what Activity are you a Leader in?

Leadership is of this world; each of us is capable of performing leadership role in an area of the activities of this world.

Each individual has to sit down and observe his self and see what he is doing to contribute to the good of this world and ask his self if he is a leader in that area. See, J. Clinton, 1988.

Only the individual can answer the question: in what area am I a leader in; other people cannot answer it for him. See, Kotter, 1988.

One is not asking people to eliminate their egos and return to egoless existence, which is out of this world; instead, one is asking people to shrink down their egos so as to optimize living peacefully in this world.

Each person has different leadership roles; some are leaders in educating children, others in administering universities, in the police force, military, government bureaucracies, in the world of politics, in science and technology. See Pascale et al. 1981.

Every sector of society has leaders and followers in it. Instead of wasting one's time talking about other people's positive or negative leadership roles, one ought to ascertain ones leadership area and be the best leader one can be in that area and leave other people to play their own leadership roles in society.

## 4. Conclusions

Instead of Nigerians giving themselves the excuses that their country is not well led and that that is responsible for their backwardness, each Nigerian ought to learn leadership skills and exercise leadership in his work and community.

See, Smith, 1986.

One hopes that this paper has enabled the reader to know what leaders do and helps him embark on becoming a leader in his group or even at the nation level. See, White, 1985.

Instead of the individual Nigerians idly sitting around and, like a school boy, complaining about how his country's leaders are not good leaders, they should become the leader they want to have in their country.

People have acted as leaders for as long as human beings existed. However, people took leadership for granted and did not write much about it. It was only in the twentieth century, especially from the 1970s forward that people began to write extensively on leadership. What this paper did is put on paper what people already know about leaders; it did so for training purposes, for it is necessary to have information on leadership in writing for students to read and learn from.

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