

Leadership in the mind

What does leadership look like?

From the beginning of the American elections I have viewed the elections as a battle between male and female leadership based on my field of interest as an Industrial Psychologist. While there is a lot going on and this battle not the only one being fought. This fight has raged on all news networks for all to see, if we want to or not, or understand American politics, or not. I found myself watching it with some form of macabre fascination while also wanting to avoid the whole debacle. Of late it has just been impossible to avoid. We all have opinions albeit from different perspectives, right or wrong depending on where we stand. There has even been made mention, that these issues are no longer seen as democratic debates, but rather as war, where those with opposing views are deemed evil and their opinions cannot be heard.

A statement that left me pause for thought as I felt myself being dragged into the pantomime. So what was going on here? What if it is about leadership in the mind, what does leadership look like to a large majority of people? Leadership in the mind means how we perceive leadership. It differs from individual to individual.

In pre-historic time's leadership was, male, provided safety, and security. Leadership needed a strong man to go out hunting, and with his, strength and hunting skill, to kill the animal, and then return with it. Carrying the meat to the family for survival. Leadership in the mind our primitive brains remember.

However, we no longer live in pre-historic times and have evolved through the ages into rational well educated beings, the top of the food chain. Yet in modern history (Western, European, and African) male leadership dominates. It is what leadership looks like in modern times. Female leadership becoming a reality only in very recent times.

Unfortunately with all that we are capable of as rational educated people the idea of what leadership looks like in the mind is clouding our judgement. In the 21 st century the physical strength a man once used to set himself apart from a woman is no longer necessary in the context of leadership roles. In this era both genders are equally capable of taking up leadership roles. Survival is no longer dependent on whether we are, male or female, as safety can be secured by either.

However this is not what leadership looks like in our memories. The incongruence between what is in the mind and what could, or could not be, causes a lot of anxiety, played out for all the world to see.

How will female leadership look like in America/world, will it be safe? Another male leader says no there will be war, not very safety inspiring words. Maybe these words are uttered to maintain the status quo as better the devil you know than don't know, change is too scary.



In the article <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/14/politics/trump-supporter-women-irpt/index.html>

Women add their voices to the conversation using words such as safe, strong and MAN when referring to reasons why they support this particular male in a leadership role. It is also important to the commentators that we know that they are strong, independent, well educated, rational women. True, however, leadership in the mind, has nothing to do with education, or rationality. It is what it needs to look, how we know it looks like, what we remember.

The question then is can rational educated people vote for a person to become a powerful leader by considering what leadership in the mind looks like, and then make informed decisions whether the choice is really rational or perhaps irrational based on preconceived ideas?

Only time will tell, until then...