

Aristotelian Leadership: Creating a Community Ethos founded on Intercultural Virtues

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This article begins with a discussion of Aristotle's personal, social and political virtues. It then explains why this view is important today, citing many contemporary scholars who are worried about the corruption of these virtues in the United States and elsewhere. The emphasis throughout is the opportunity and even responsibility of business leaders to create a high quality of life within their organizations that will promote virtues employees should exemplify in every aspect of their personal and social lives.

It has become clear in 2017 that the future of life on earth, of international politics and of the internal political stability of each nation depends to a great degree on the behavior of the wealthiest people in the world. Bill Gates and his group of billionaires, who are trying to create a fossil-free future as soon as possible, are in a kind of economic war against the Koch brothers and like-minded billionaires who deny climate change and promote laws and policies that are leading to a centralization of wealth among the world's economic elite. This article returns to the paradigm for a citizen-led, self-governing society that originated in the Ancient Greek city-state and has been passed down to Westerners for 2400 years. We can, and ought, to turn to Aristotle's theory as a guide for how to lead businesses, or any organization, today.

Aristotle's Virtues and Vices

Aristotle's view assumes that human beings are social and political by nature. All of our "personal" virtues are originally activated, developed and maintained within the context of some kind of community. The long list of virtues and vices indicates the complexity of human culture. The individuals who are flourishing at the highest levels are people whose original capacities are educated and active because they live in societies that provided the education and opportunity to live a complete life. At best, leaders can use Aristotle's model to create the conditions that promote individual flourishing in the context of a flourishing community. The best leaders possess the art of inspiring citizen-employees to create complex social networks that enable employees to educate themselves and each other.

A company that wants to create a vibrant culture should offer employees the opportunity to create "dialogue groups" of employees who talk together during the lunch hour about some aspect of their lives. A few examples would be social groups interested in: a) diet and exercise; b) care-giving for children; c) caring for aging parents; d) gaining knowledge of local, state and national political issues and various positions on these issues; d) gaining information about climate change and its impact locally, nationally and internationally. Employees could be encouraged to recommend local professionals who would be able

to give 30 minute lectures on some aspect of the lives of everyone in that particular business, local community issues, or any other aspect of human life.

This kind of climate *is* what human culture *is*: learning from and teaching each other about how to fulfill all of our social roles well. Aristotle's theory of the virtues and vices provides a framework based on the human condition that explains the natural foundation for all of the responsibilities adults have, and how they must live to preserve the stability and flourishing of the communities they depend upon for their own well-being.

Temperance

Temperance is self-control in relation to eating, drinking and sex. We have a natural drive to survive, which requires all three. In relation to each virtue, the vices are at the extreme and the virtue is the mean. For example, we all know that we can eat too much or too little, at the right time, in the right way, of the right kinds of foods, for the right reason, etc. It is intuitively obvious that we can go to an extreme. We debate about exactly how far from the mean is too far, and societies have different norms, but some cultures socialize citizens to eat in ways that are healthy while others, especially in the United States, socialize people to eat in ways that are destroying their health and leading to corruption in many aspects of the culture.

In the context of a business, healthy food, even exercise equipment, should be available. Some employees might be interested in forming a dialogue group focused on these issues. These employees might want other employees to know what they are talking about on a given day, or what speaker they have brought in. Since this activity is employee-driven, it should not require time and effort from leaders and should create a culture that will prevent many other personal and interpersonal conflicts. In relation to drinking, companies can provide referrals to professionals and make sure the culture does not promote or tempt those who tend toward alcoholism.

In relation to sex, companies are required to avoid any *quid pro quo* threats when hiring, firing or promoting. More important, the company has to make sure employees recognize what sexual harassment is and that they must avoid it. Rather than a threat of punishment for any such behavior, the company should create an atmosphere where men and women are treated as equals in all aspects of cultural life. Leaders can make sure their conversations with women are just as respectful as those with men, that they seek out knowledge from and promote women on an equal basis with men. Research has documented evidence of many subtle ways that women are marginalized and conditioned to accept their inferiority. If employees are motivated to do so, another employee group could be focused on this aspect of the company climate. An active group could help prevent future problems.

Leaders should encourage employees to get to know each other and develop positive bonds with each other. They should be rewarded for helping others do their jobs well. Employers should nurture cooperation rather than competition between employees. These kinds of relationships should make employees more productive and more likely to stay with the company.

Courage

Courage is the ability to respond appropriately in situations involving vulnerability that triggers aggression. This virtue is also tied to our survival instincts. We fear pain, aging, death and a failure to flourish within our society's economic system, social ostracism and all sorts of social marginalization. We depend upon other people to survive and to thrive, so we need to develop relationships based on trust and good will. Our interdependence can easily make us unable to assess another's character or our own situation. We either don't trust someone we depend on or trust them too much. We often are too fearful about our vulnerability or not fearful enough. Certainly, all of these fears can arise within an organization. Fear tends to lead to false or exaggerated rumors. Encouraging the formation of positive relationships helps prevent a breakdown in employee trust.

At a broader social level, fears of social or political "threats" can be addressed by having outside professionals come in to give empirical knowledge about a religion, or the many different aspects of immigration or some other aspect of social and political life that is "haunting" employees because of

disruptions in their communities. A meaningful dialogue should enable employers to distinguish between legitimate fears and excess fears is needed. Organizational leaders should also know that they cannot control the many ways that social and political problems affect the company's culture. They should encourage employees to find and invite professionals whose knowledge will contribute to addressing an issue that affects everyone. Professionals can provide suggestions for how to address the problems, thereby creating a more positive climate within the organization and a more stable community outside.

Business leaders have to take risks and avoid threats, knowing they don't know. Employees depend upon how successful those decisions are. Because employees recognize how much they depend upon their superiors, they could easily become misinformed about any situation. False rumors could easily spread. Leaders should keep employees informed, let them know what knowledge they base their choices on and what experts they consult, explain what is knowable and what is unpredictable and explain what they have learned from the past that they are applying now. They should admit mistakes in judgment, what they learned and what they plan to do to avoid mistakes in the future. These do not have to be extensive reports, but perhaps a monthly update at lunch for those who are interested. This builds trust, promotes a positive culture and keeps employees loyal to the organization.

Temperance and courage are the foundation for civilized life. They are connected to our survival instincts, so when we overreact in relation to either of them, many other aspects of our lives, our relationships and our extended communities become less stable. I will only briefly discuss the rest of the virtues, assuming readers can recognize how they arise from each other and depend upon each other.

Generosity, or Liberality

Another way of promoting community well-being is to have a policy of contributing a percent of the company's profits to non-profit organizations. One group of employee volunteers could meet monthly or so to discuss with fellow employees to find out which organizations they think are worthy and why. Employees could vote annually or twice annually about where to give. The specific organizations would vary with circumstances. In 2017, for example, organizations focused on hurricane relief or refugee resettlement might have been most popular. Employees could be informed about organizations they might choose to donate their own money to outside of work.

Even-temperedness: Modeling the virtue of not getting too angry, but getting angry enough, is also difficult but important. Employees need to know what they are responsible for and be punished in some way when they fail to meet their responsibilities. They should be able to have reasonable conversations with their bosses about why the problem occurred. The reasons might be based on specific circumstances the employee could not control or might be directly related to incompetence or negligence. Employees should either be a part of the process that leads to a decision or be informed about the decision and the circumstances and factors taken into account in making the decision. The goal is to empower employees to have the maturity and expertise necessary to prevent mistakes.

Wise Ambition: Employees should be hired according to what they are prepared to do but moved or promoted according to the skills they have exhibited or want to cultivate. Those with power should have reputations for not favoring anyone based on personal friendship or other irrelevant factors. Employees should be able to trust that the leaders' goal is a culture based on merit: people have the jobs or job opportunities most closely connected to what they can do, what they like to do, or what they want to be able to learn how to do. Opportunities for advancement should be publically posted; everyone should have equal opportunity for higher levels of flourishing.

Wise Honor: Leaders should make sure all employees are honored for the many ways they serve the organizational culture that goes beyond job requirements and creates friendship bonds between everyone involved, within the company and with everyone with whom the company interacts. This is likely to promote the company's reputation, but the top priority is simply to honor employees.

Sense of Humor: Leaders should be able to laugh at the kinds of absurd frustrations that prevent us from achieving goals, but we cannot do anything to prevent. They are just related to our overall vulnerability. Laughing rather than getting frustrated enables everyone to keep their lives, personal and collective, in perspective.

Self-knowledge: Leaders need to be reflective and aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and that of their companies, so they can find the co-workers or outside authorities who will help them. They need to send out newsletters that make clear to employees they are exercising this capacity in all aspects of their lives.

Friendship Bonds: This is the real substance of human culture. We have to actively be exercising the virtues above, but we obviously cannot be exercising them without relating to other people. A flourishing society, at any level, is founded on a complex set of interconnected social networks. In all of our relationships, from that of parent-child to the relationship between our nation and others, the goal is to rule for the well-being of the ruled. A civilization is preserved and sustained when everyone exercises the power they have for the well-being of those over whom they have it, those who need what the authority figure has the power and/or knowledge to provide.

Political Virtues: Relating to Fellow-Citizens We Do Not Know Personally

Justice: Good will toward those we do not know personally: Aristotle also lists five virtues we need to exercise as citizens in a political community. We depend on people we do not know, fellow-citizens who vote for the political leaders that govern all of us. Our legal system includes the laws, the application of the laws and the enforcement of the decisions about how the laws apply. The laws concern issues related to the distribution of social goods and the punishment of law-breakers. Each profession has its own set of regulations and processes to determine when they have been violated and how to enforce punishments.

Within a company, employers need to inform employee about what the company policies are and why these policies exist. Employees also need to know that their suggestions for additions or changes are always welcome. Another lunch group could exist to listen to recommendations about company policy and take them to the proper authorities. Employers should emphasize that their goal is to empower employees to govern themselves. A successful company would send out employees with a high level of both professional and leadership skills who are able to create new companies and run them well. These companies should become business partners that cooperate with each other to create a high level of business culture.

The Art of Legislation: The goal of statecraft, says Aristotle, is to be able to create and sustain a flourishing society, which will be one with the largest possible middle class. Within a company, a company might have to pay some employees more, even substantially more in some fields of expertise, in order to get the most qualified employees. Within those constraints, the company should communicate to all employees that they value everyone equally. Those at the very top should set the model by paying themselves less, even substantially less, than their peers in similar positions in other companies.

Distribution of Social Goods: Today, throughout the world, the gap between the rich and the poor is huge and growing. Huge inequalities exist in all aspects of culture: housing, education, transportation, recreation, health care, safety and etc. Employees who are forced to live in lower quality neighborhoods and whose children attend substandard schools are not going to be as productive. Their children will not have as many opportunities as the children of other employees. Every informed person recognizes this fact. Leaders who can provide their employees with quality of life benefits other than salaries, such as health care or retirements benefits, should do so. They would be more likely to maintain a stable, loyal workforce and the communities near the company would develop a higher quality of all the goods and services that everyone needs.

Rectification of Wrongs: Leaders should make sure employees know the rules and policies and communicate with employees when there appears to be a violation. Employees should be able to explain their behavior and make suggestions for what punishment is appropriate and how the problem can be avoided in the future. Punishments need to fit the violation, be given in a reasonable time frame and be communicated to the people involved, but always with the hope that employees become self-governing. A need to exert authority is a sign of failure, in an employee or in the company culture as a whole. The culture needs to be taken into account by asking: How can the culture be changed to prevent this disruption in the future?

Equity: Applying the Rules in Specific Cases: Leaders could set up a group of employees to discuss recent violations of company policy, the punishments given and why. Employees could then develop leadership skills and educate each other. Instead of being perceived as undermining the company culture, some level of conflict could be acknowledged as part of human life. Institutionalizing a way of resolving conflicts that educates everyone involved is a good model for all aspects of our lives, not just within a company. Employees would hopefully take these skills into their societies.

The Intellectual Virtues

Aristotle lists a number of intellectual virtues. He also makes clear that they are always connected to moral virtues or vices, but they can be connected in many different ways. Wicked people can be very smart while morally strong people can have limited natural intelligence. Every society is controlled by leaders who are smart (or who inherited privilege have smart advisors). The struggle for control among those leaders determines the direction a society takes as it faces new circumstances and moves forward. The three main goals human beings seek are connected to our three main drives. Those who are driven by pleasure seek excess pleasure and wealth. Those who are driven by the desire to prove themselves courageous in situations involving risk, seek honor and glory. Today, some of those are military heroes, some are economic “heroes” who found ways to get rich, and others are computer geniuses who are battling it out in our global cyberwar. Those who seek wisdom are driven by the desire to use their intellectual skills to create local, national and international cultures that promote human flourishing.

The Ancient Greeks tell story after story of societies that chose one of these three goals. In the *Iliad*, the Achaeans, led by Agamemnon, sought power and glory and fell apart from within. The Trojans, led by Priam, sought pleasure and wealth and were destroyed from within. The only goal that can lead to self-preservation and flourishing over time is the desire for wisdom that involves the exercise and integration of all of the virtues listed above.

All of the Ancient Greek poetic stories describe what Aristotle calls the process and art of deliberation. Characters are talking among each other about what to do. They have to separate out all aspects of the process that Aristotle lists: a) the object of wish: their ultimate goal; b) the attainable options in a given situation; some of them think an option is possible when it is not, others ignore or deny an option which would have been best; c) once they decide what is possible, each explains which one they prefer and why; d) each character has reasons, but some choices and some reasons are better than others. A person’s character affects what they recommend. Most of the time, the person who has the power to make the final decision is wrong. He clearly has good intentions or good reasons, but this is the wrong way to apply a principle or he is unaware of all the facts or there is some other aspect of the situation which makes him blind and unable to deliberate and act well.

The person with the virtue Aristotle calls understanding is good at the reflective part of this process. He does not have the power to make the choice. Even when his choice is correct, he might not have the rhetorical skill to inspire other people to follow the choice. The person with practical wisdom has the desire to do what is best, the knowledge necessary to deliberate well, and then the rhetorical skills necessary to persuade others to follow the decision.

Aristotle says that social and political expertise requires the study of decisions, not the study of actions. We cannot simply study human behavior. We have to know what people are thinking about the goal and why they make these choices before we even know what we are observing. People are what is in their minds, their characters and ways of life.

Most business ethics books and articles are based on types of reasoning that replaced Greek philosophy at the time of the Western Enlightenment. Wisdom in the Greeks is defined as the union of intuition and reasoning, with intuition the highest power. Intuition (*nous*) often incorrectly translated “intellect,” is connected to our deepest emotions, our survival instincts. It needs to be educated and integrated with all of our moral and intellectual capacities. When educated, a wise person can react to a particular situation wisely, based on a lifetime of cultivating all the virtues. The ultimate goal is the union of emotions, intellect, action and reflection.

Aristotle's list of intellectual virtues makes clear that these purely intellectual capacities replaced the ancient view of character development and wisdom as the foundation of culture during the Enlightenment era. Scientific knowledge is the activity of observing natural phenomena and formulating the underlying patterns into a causal-network. This way of thinking was applied to human behavior during the Enlightenment with the goal of learning how to structure an entirely different cultural environment that would condition people to behave virtuously. Today, this tradition is associated with a "utilitarian" or consequentialist approach to ethics. The Greeks disagreed because they show that people will act in ways that undermine their conditioning because of some idea about good or evil, justice or injustice. People's characters determine how they calculate the consequences of a choice and which consequences matter more to them.

Another intellectual virtue is our capacity for deductive reasoning, used in mathematics and physics. Today's "deontological" and Kantian models for human ethics originated in Kant's understanding of the ontological basis of Newtonian science. The Greeks disagree because they show that people's characters determine which moral principles they think apply to a given choice and how those principles apply. Corrupt or weak characters invoke the wrong principle or misapply their principle.

The intellectual capacity for calculation of the most efficient means to one's goals can also be good or evil, depending upon the character of the person doing the calculating, as many Greek stories demonstrate. The discipline of economics depends heavily on this capacity to calculate. The notion of a "rational" calculation is usually understood as a good assessment of one's own economic self-interest. The Greeks would say that this way of understanding "rational" is the opposite of wisdom. It promotes and even glorifies greed as a way to create a flourishing society when the Greeks would say it only leads to the rich getting richer, social instability and even war.

The intellectual skills related to knowing how to produce useful and marketable products can also be used for good or evil. Today, a huge percent of the economies of developed nations consists of creating, selling and profiting from products that appeal to the two most dangerous vices: excess pleasure leading to excess consumption and excess fear.

Today the market requires more and more employees with higher and higher levels of intellectual training and the skills necessary to create and produce products efficiently. However, those activities are usually connected to the wrong goals. Most of the world's "intellectual capital," its most brilliant and educated elite class, are paid by corporations whose goal is profits, not human flourishing. With the expressions, "let the market decide," corporations try to sell the belief that greed is good and the foundation for culture. The Greeks show that the opposite is the case. Most importantly, this way of structuring a society has prevented us from panning ahead so that future generations can flourish. We already know that the markets failed to lead us to avoid a huge disruption in the biosphere. Now Bill Gates and his billionaire friends have to ignore market conditions and create products that will lead to a carbon-free future. Many scientists, who have warned us about this for over a half century, think that it is now too late.

Given these overall conditions, business leaders have to figure out how to balance the need for profits with the need to create a sustainable culture. All aspects of a business, from the architecture of the buildings to the cleaning products used to scrub the floors to the products being made and sold need to be reexamined in light of the reality of climate change. Further, given the way so many intellectually trained applicants have been conditioned to ignore these issues, conscientious business leaders have to work at hiring smart employees who are also want to cultivate a flourishing culture, in the company, the nation and the world. The future of humanity hangs upon how the intellectual elite uses its marketable skills.

Global Civilization Today

Especially since the election of Donald Trump in 2016, every nation in the world should be keenly aware that human civilization could fall into some level of decline and destabilization. The instability of one nation is inseparable from that of many others in our interconnected world. In the next section, I will briefly mention just three scholars among probably hundreds who are alerting us to the possibility of serious cultural decline and providing advice about what to do to prevent it.

Dr. Robert D. Putnam: The Decline of Social Capital

In an interview with Project Muse, Dr. Robert D. Putnam, (1995) Dillon Professor of International Affairs and director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, discusses his book, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, and what he means by “social capital.” Putnam defines “social capital” as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (p. 66). Aristotle says the same thing but in different language. He claims that in order to have true political association citizens must have trust and good will toward each other. If they do not, the laws only function as ways for bad people to be prevented from harming each other, which to Aristotle is not at all what political association is. In a world driven by greed, the laws do function this way. Business leaders should look to Aristotle's idea of political association as the best model for creating a culture within their organizations and in their organizations' relationship to its local, national and international community.

Instead of referring to the Greeks, however, Dr. Putnam (1995) refers to Alexis de Tocqueville, who was well versed in the Greeks (p. 65). After visiting the USA in the 1830s, de Tocqueville (1969) described his reflections in his book, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville's method is more like Aristotle's than like much current social science research. He interviews people to find out why they do what they do. His conclusions are general and intuitive and show how the various aspects of life are integrated to form an overall cultural climate. Among other observations, Tocqueville was struck by how many clubs Americans belonged to. He concluded that, “Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America . . . for understanding how democracy is developed and preserved” (pp. 513–17).

Putnam goes on,

Recently, American social scientists of a neo-Tocquevillean bent have unearthed a wide range of empirical evidence that the quality of public life and the performance of social institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement (p. 66).

Putnam goes on, “The norms and networks of civic engagement also powerfully affect the performance of representative government” (p. 66). In Aristotelian terms, the forming of many different types of friendship bonds is necessary to develop and preserve true political association, which is necessary for human flourishing.

Given his research about the United States in the 1830s, Putnam is understandably worried about American culture today.

By almost every measure, Americans' direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education—the best individual-level predictor of political participation—have risen sharply throughout this period (p. 66).

Putnam italicizes the conclusions of his research, “*the average number of associational memberships has fallen by about a fourth over the last century*.” (p. 75). The organizations that people do belong to, such as churches, tend to create group identities that further alienate people rather than bind them together. Putnam cites a number of causes, such as women moving into the workforce, people moving more to get and keep jobs, the breakdown of the traditional family, and the “technological transformation of leisure” (p. 75).

Putnam then asks,

What about the development of social capital in the workplace? Is it growing in counterpoint to the decline of civic engagement, reflecting some social analogue of the first law of thermodynamics—social capital is neither created or destroyed, merely redistributed (p. 76)?

Without trying to answer, Putnam concludes that however it is done, in order to preserve cultures that develop citizens' capacities for higher levels of culture, everyone who values this goal needs to do what they can to “reverse these adverse trends in social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust” (p. 76). This is why business leaders today need to create and maintain social capital within their companies and encourage employees to create the same kinds of relationships in their various types of community engagement.

America's Founding Fathers: Creating Social Capital by Educating All Future Voters

In his article, "The Virtue of an Educated Voter," Dr. Alan Taylor, a Pulitzer Prize winner teaching at the University of Virginia, writes about the American founders' emphasis on education as critical for developing and sustaining a republican form of government. Taylor writes, "Republican political theory of the day held that empire and monarchies could thrive without an educated populace . . . But republics depended upon a broad electorate of common men, who, to keep their new rights, had to protect them with attentive care. These citizens, theorists insisted, needed to cultivate a special character known as 'virtue': the precious capacity to transcend their diverse self-interests by favoring the common good of the political community." Our founders knew Greek culture well.

Taylor discusses the history behind the political struggle to tax the rich to pay for education for the poor (p. 3). Taylor quotes from William Wirt (an attorney general of the U.S.) when he expressed concern about the power of greed in American society, "There seems to me to be but one object throughout the state: to grow rich" (p. 4). Wirt would have been keenly aware of the Ancient Greeks' warning about greed as the worst political evil. In 1812, Thomas Jefferson chose to spend federal money to establish a state university in Charlottesville rather than a broad system of local, public schools. Jefferson expected the university graduates would then go out and create a much larger system of local public education. He was wrong; graduates used their privilege to move into or stay in an isolated privileged class. This tragic mistake in judgment delayed educational opportunity in Virginia for about 50 years (p. 5).

Taylor discusses the rise of public education, culminating in the percent of young adults who attended college from 4% in 1900 to 50% in 1980. Since then, however, there has been a decline. While expanding, education was "redefined as an economic good, rather than a political one . . . The shift to an economic justification for education has led to its redefinition as a private, individual benefit instead of a public good" (p. 6). Since the recession of 2008, spending on public higher education has been cut by 17% while tuition has risen by about 33% (p. 7).

Taylor concludes, drawing lessons from what happened early on in the American republic,

Just as in Jefferson's day, most legislators and governors believe that voters prefer tax cuts to investments in public education. Too few leaders make the case for higher education as a public good from which everyone benefits. But broader access to a quality education pays off in collective ways: economic growth, scientific innovation, informed voters and leaders, a richer and more diverse culture, and lower crime rates . . . Modern politicians often make a great show of their supposed devotion to those who founded the nation, but then push for the privatization of education as just another consumer product best measured in dollars and paid for by individuals. This reverses the priorities of the founders . . . We need to revive the founders' definition of education as a public good and an essential pillar of free government. We should also recover their concept of virtue, classically defined, as a core public value worth teaching. That, in turn, would enable more voters to detect demagogues seeking power through bluster and bombast and pandering to the self-interest of members of the electorate (p. 8).

The context of the deterioration of public schools will also affect leaders of all organizations. It might require employers to send their employees to school to get additional education in both remedial skills and further education in highly specialized and continually changing skills. This is another reason to encourage lunch time dialogue groups and to invite outside professionals to motivate employees to educate themselves and each other continually.

Education in America Today: The Education of the Best and Brightest in our Most Elite Universities

At the other end of the economic and intellectual spectrum, leaders will have to face the possibility that applicants with the necessary expertise in jobs that require high levels of education might have questionable goals and moral weaknesses or flaws. They are more likely to have been isolated from the less rich and less naturally talented.

William Deresiewicz (2013) in his article, "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education," is only one of the most outspoken critics of the way high school students with the highest test scores who attend the most prestigious high schools and whose parents pay for them to have "enriching" summer experiences

leads to a huge class divide between those who get the college educations they need to get the best jobs and those who are left behind simply because of their parents' inability to pay what it costs to compete for limited openings (p. 1). Deresiewicz discusses the disadvantages of the way these universities are educating their graduates, who will become the next generations ruling class. First this education "makes you incapable of talking to people who aren't like you" (p. 2). Next, these universities "select for and develop one form of intelligence: the analytic" (p. 2). After pointing out that "talking to people is the only real way of knowing them," Deresiewicz says that "Elite institutions are supposed to provide a humanistic education" (p. 2). Deresiewicz taught English at Yale, but he says that even professors in the humanities are trained to think analytically. Deresiewicz is very concerned "how very much of the human it alienates you from" (p. 2). Elite education gives you the chance to be rich but denies you "the opportunity to do work you believe in, work you're suited for, work you love" (p. 5). Finally, Deresiewicz says that these institutions have forgotten "that the true purpose of education is to make minds, not careers," (p. 6) so our most elite institutions of higher education are not even trying to educate the mind.

Deresiewicz' description of elite education, as opposed to classical humanistic education, sounds eerily like Aristotle's split between intellectual and moral virtues. Aristotle says that greed and an irrational drive for power, combined with natural intelligence and opportunity, will lead a society in the wrong direction, to instability and even collapse. Americans are no longer receiving this kind of humanistic education for a number of reasons. First, the classics are not being taught. Classics departments are being cut, partly, because they do not attract corporate funding for research that leads to marketable products. Second, when the classics are taught, the texts are approached in ways that develop the tools of analytic thinking. Professional conferences, journals and monographs reflect intense intellectual engagement with the texts, but ignore Aristotle's view of the educated of the mind and the need to link intellectual capacities to the moral virtues. The notion of wisdom as the integration of moral and intellectual excellence in the original texts as I have described it is ignored, denied or not even recognized.

Deresiewicz says,

When elite universities boast that they teach their students how to think, they mean that they teach them the analytic and rhetorical skills necessary for success in law or medicine or science or business. But a humanistic education is supposed to mean something more than that . . . There's a reason elite schools speak of training leaders, not thinkers—holders of power, not its critics. An independent mind is independent of all allegiances, and elite schools, which get a large percentage of their budget from alumni giving, are strongly invested in fostering institutional loyalty (p. 7).

Business leaders will confront these problems in every employee they hire. Those who want to follow the Ancient Greek model will have to try and figure out which applicants have both the moral and the intellectual qualities to be able to contribute to the company culture. The people who apply for jobs will tend to be divided by class and will tend not to have had much interaction with each other. Company leaders will have to create a community and culture that employees might not have experienced before joining the company. This should be alarming.

Business leaders should not have to reeducate employees and reform their characters. They have enough to worry about with the extreme competition in the world's markets. Yet if they don't, problems within the company will increase and hinder productivity and profits. Even though it is "not fair," the most mature leaders will face the realities of their time and find ways to motivate employees to engage in community building. Employees should recognize that if they cultivate a healthy culture at work the quality of their own lives outside of the company will improve. They should be encouraged to take those skills and get involved in ways that build up our faltering social capital. The desire for wisdom should lead to flourishing but is an entirely different foundation for deciding how to live than a utilitarian calculation of overall consequences, a Kantian deontological approach, or a cost-benefit calculation.

The Union of Theoretical Wisdom and Practical Wisdom: Applying Aristotle Today

Finally, Deresiewicz discusses at length another virtue in Aristotle: the virtue of contemplation, of reflection upon the ultimate first principles and causes of the universe (p. 8). Aristotle's model of the best

life includes both practical and theoretical wisdom. The highest power of soul, mind (*nous*), has two natural objects of thought: 1) the ultimate principle of reality, the object of theoretical mind and, 2) the ultimate good in a particular situation, the object of practical mind. Together, a person's entire life is the continual incarnation, the embodiment, of a way of life based on our natural desire to understand. Aristotle says that the universe is ordered enough so that eventually a creature emerged with the capacity to understand the many kinds of order underlying all aspects of the universe, the natural biosphere, human history and human behavior. Wise people live in harmony with the universe and with other people. They deliberately integrate their intellectual powers with their moral characters. Aristotle's wise person engages in theoretical reflection as one part of a complete life. The best life involves exercising as many virtues as possible in as many different ways as possible.

Deresiewicz's essay, "Solitude and Leadership," (2010) based on a speech he gave to the plebe class at the United State Military Academy at West Point in October 2009, talks about the need for solitude and reflection in order to be a competent leader. His view follows the paradigm presented throughout Greek literature and philosophy. Leaders have to be able to think things through for themselves, to argue for their ideas even when they are not popular and to have the moral courage to stand up for what they believe (p. 6). Then he addresses the question, "How do you learn to think?" by saying, "*Thinking means concentrating on one thing long enough to develop an idea about it*" (p. 7). It means being "able to listen to yourself, to that quiet voice inside that tells you what you really care about, what you really believe in" (p. 8). Reading the "great books" helps you think better because "They say things that have the permanent power to disrupt our habits of thought. They were revolutionary in their own time, and they are still revolutionary today" (p. 10).

Finally, solitude for Deresiewicz involves the quality I have been emphasizing throughout this article: friendship. Further, also following Aristotle, the highest kind of friendship is

the deep friendship of intimate conversation. Long, uninterrupted talk with one other person . . . Introspection means talking to yourself, and one of the best ways of talking to yourself is by talking to another person. One other person you can trust, one other person to whom you can unfold your soul. One other person you feel safe enough with to allow you to acknowledge things—to acknowledge things to yourself—that you otherwise can't. Doubts you aren't supposed to have, and questions you aren't supposed to ask. Feelings or opinions that would get you laughed at by the group or reprimanded by the authorities (p. 11).

Aristotle says explicitly that one's true self is one's mind (*nous*) and that the highest kind of friendship is a friendship based on a communion between two minds. These friendships last a long time and develop from many hours of meaningful dialogue about the many choices we make and the culture we are creating.

Aristotle defines justice as 'rule for the sake of the ruled,' or using the authority one has for the benefit of those who need it. This definition and Aristotle's other definitions of the virtues and vices enable us to recognize patterns in people's lives, regardless of their cultural heritage or specific backgrounds. Recognizing these patterns enables us to reflect upon our own lives and the lives of others. It requires educated and wise adults who have basic knowledge about the human condition, and who are able to communicate that understanding to themselves and others in ways that trigger meaningful dialogue and strong friendships. Intellectuals should be able to lead in our most important task in life: to live in a way that leaves behind a legacy of a well-organized society and properly educated children. Those children in turn will be able to inherit their cultural legacy, maintain a high level of flourishing, and pass that on to their children.

Aristotle's contemplative life is one of reflection upon lives well lived so that we can learn from them and on the most common mistakes people make, so we can avoid them. Aristotle's work is one of a tradition of "great books" that were written to inspire their contemporaries and future generations. This article explains how I have been inspired by reading Aristotle, and how I think his ideas can be and ought to be applied today in businesses and all organizations.

CONCLUSION

My final remark may seem exaggerated, but since the election of Donald Trump, I am afraid I think it is the reality we face. The ability of managers to lead their organizations wisely and to educate employees to go into their societies and reinvigorate social capital may well determine the fate of societies that promote human flourishing. Those living in “developed” as well as “developing” societies need to recognize the threat of a devolution into a more primitive state of society. This has happened in the past, so it is certainly possible today. The reality of climate change and all the disruptions it will lead to will make it difficult to avoid authoritarianism.

Just to remind readers of what is really at stake, here is a short, off-the-top-of-my-head list of all the fruits of civilization, starting with all the activities that could be lost or severely handicapped and the type of relationship that could be lost if we cannot reform our cultures, within every type of organization: a) the opportunity to say what one thinks publically; b) the opportunity to meet with whomever one wants in whatever venue one chooses; c) the opportunity to create public spaces and institutions organized around some common goal; d) the opportunity for free inquiry into the causes underlying the natural world and the universe; e) the opportunity to express oneself through any artistic medium, without censoring or outside control; f) the opportunity for an education that develops one’s natural capacities; g) the opportunity to develop expertise and to apply for a job and to be accepted or rejected based on one’s qualifications in relation to other applicants, without bias; h) the opportunity to be promoted and honored based on one’s merit and achievements; i) the opportunity to have any understanding of the meaning of life, whether from a religious tradition, a philosophical tradition, or of one’s own, without discrimination or social marginalization; j) the opportunity to have one’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and safety met if one follows the rules for citizenship and follows a respected career path; k) the opportunity to have a lawyer if accused of a crime and to get decent representation in court from that lawyer and a fair punishment if found guilty, according to what others accused of the same crime would get; l) the opportunity to be informed about public life, so one can think clearly and deliberate publicly with fellow citizens about issues and decisions that affect everyone; m) the opportunity to run for elected office and have access to the resources necessary to qualify; n) the opportunity to be appointed to office if one is the best applicant . . . the list goes on and on.

It is amazing to reflect upon the many, many opportunities those living in Western societies have become complacent about. We have an entitlement mentality without being conscious of it. We have had too high a standard of living for too long. We have squandered our time, our money, our natural resources, our social respect from members of other countries and the social capital and friendship bonds among our fellow citizens, people we depend upon to preserve all of these expectations. I hope business ethics classes and journals will inspire managers to recognize their important role in the development and preservation of global civilization today. Their success or failure will impact the lives of everyone today and in the future.

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