

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for General Stanley McChrystal | Deconstructing the Myths of Great Leadership (Episode 111)

Leaders get things done. And whether we're leaders ourselves or simply rely on the guidance of leaders to help us achieve the extraordinary, we probably have ideas about what qualities are essential within a great leader. And a lot of these ideas are just plain wrong. They're myths.

[Leaders: Myth and Reality](#) co-author General Stanley McChrystal joins [episode 111](#) to help us understand the danger of these myths, how to dispel them, and why the imagined deeds of even our most inspiring heroes are not sacrosanct beyond the scrutiny of hard reality.

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Mixed Messages

General McChrystal makes no bones about it: for majority of his life, he looked up to General Robert E. Lee. *"I wanted to be as much like Robert E. Lee as I could,"* General McChrystal told me. It's no surprise that this is a controversial stance as the Confederate General's infamy has risen in the past few polarizing years. *"I don't think he was an evil person but I think he made an extraordinarily bad decision,"* said General McChrystal of Lee's Civil War leadership.

General McChrystal had a piece of art depicting General Lee hanging in his quarters for many decades. Finally, at age 63, he threw it right in the trash. Discarding the General Lee piece was a show of leadership -- he didn't want to send any unintentional messages that might confuse the ones he was trying to send.

Take a look at yourself as a leader -- the inside and the outside. Is there something about your outside world that's diminishing your ability to lead?

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Learning to Follow

General McChrystal wrote about two iconic founders: Walt Disney and Coco Chanel. It was never a secret that the two icons weren't easy people to work for. However, for a great many, the good outweighed the bad, and sometimes brutal environments were tolerated in the name of doing world-class creative work.

Some leaders prioritize the work over the workers, while some strike more of worker-friendly balance. What are you looking for as a follower? Are you so committed to another's vision that you're willing to sacrifice part of yourself? Where do you draw the line?

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Bad Leadership Helps

History is filled with lousy leaders who made for great examples on *how not to lead*. I know I can think of a ton of examples in my life where I've had a front row seat to poor leadership-- and that was sometimes lousy situational performance from otherwise solid leaders.

Think about the leaders in your life (past and present.) Make a list of examples or instances where their leadership style was one you hope never to repeat.

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Maybe He's Born with It...

Do you think that if you're born with the right traits, or if you can learn to develop the right behaviors, you're going to be an effective leader? Not so fast, says General McChrystal.

In his new book he outlines a number of myths about leadership. The first is *formulaic*. His studies showed that great leaders had to constantly change their leadership styles and techniques from day to day. "Consistency is the ability to adapt to the situation of the moment," according to General McChrystal.

What leaders have you seen impressively adapt to a variety of situations? How have you done so in your life?

Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).

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About



Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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