



Reflections on Self-leadership Inspired by a Journey in Nature – A Workshop

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- Text in Arabic under the title: [Ta'ammulāt fi qiyādat al-thāt mustawhāt min rihlat fi al-tabi'ah](#)

Leadership: A journey towards self-realization

Trajectories of leadership

The places we pass through

Preparation for the journey: The basis of success

Approach: How to ensure readiness

Route selection: The road less travelled

The journey begins

What do I do?

How do I assess the situation?

How do I evolve?

Lessons and Morals

How do we learn to learn?

How do we draw lessons?

How do we leave a mark in our path towards leadership?

A journey towards self-leadership

- Life is a journey full of events, which together make up our story. This is one chapter of my story.
- The journey often counts more than the destination, as it teaches us the value of foresight, reflection and learning.
- Self-realization is achieved not only by reaching one's target, but also by the lessons learned in the journey towards this target.
- Dreams can be achieved by phasing them and continuously striving to make them a reality.

We will now embark on a journey in nature, a journey towards self-realization, during which we will hone our leadership capacities.



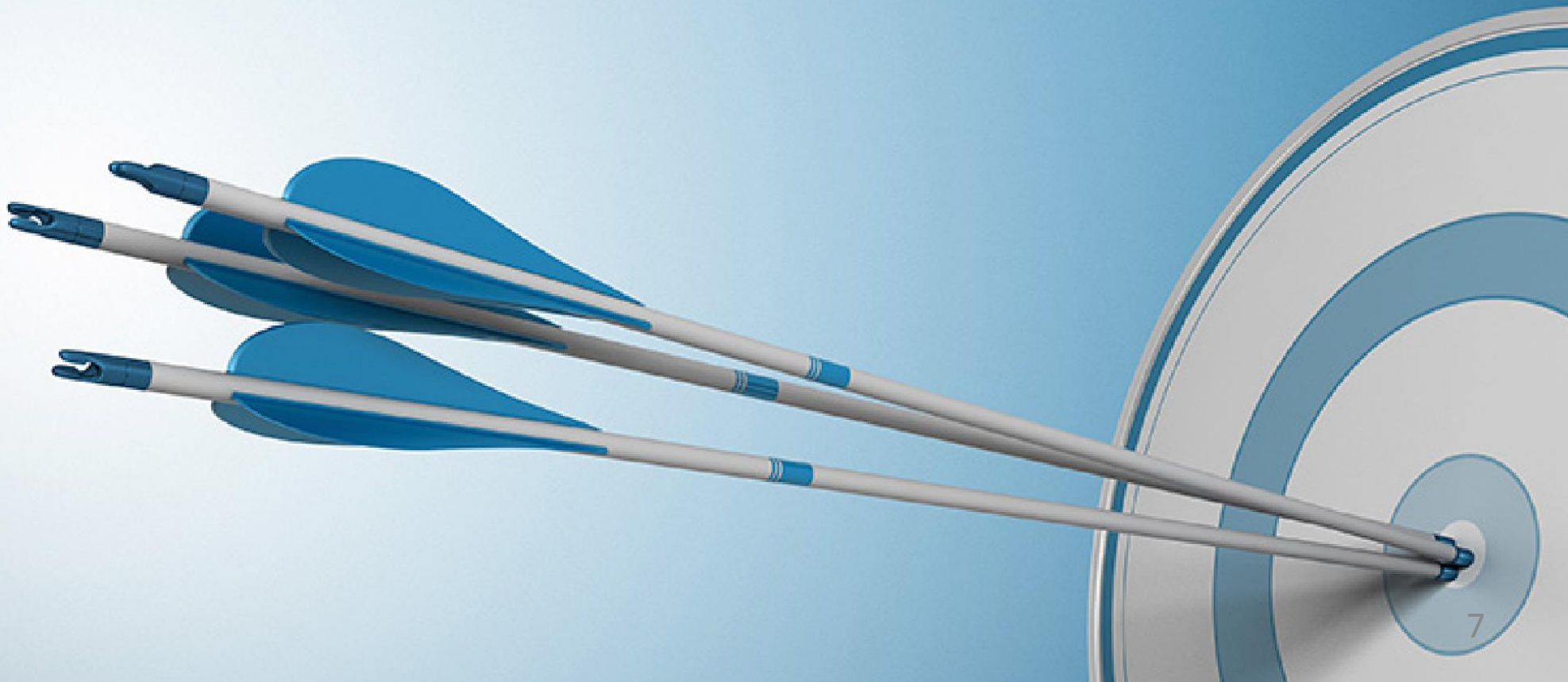
Destination: Mount Kilimanjaro – February 4 – 12, 2017



- Life often offers many destinations to choose from.
- Management and leadership are the means, not the end.
- Some among those who reach leadership/ administrative positions act as if they have reached their goal, and therefore cease to exert efforts or to seek new challenges.



The Importance of Setting Goals



- Every journey needs to have a target.
- The target of the leader's journey is to achieve sustainable success. It is the leader's duty to set goals for their team in order to succeed with, and through, them.
- Achieving sustainable success requires a constant drive for learning and a commitment to permanent improvement.
- Learning and gaining in-depth knowledge require modesty and objectivity, which both ensure a clear vision.
- A journey with no target is like a lesson with no moral. By contrast, a journey with a clear target is like an inexhaustible source of learning.

Goals that guarantee the best chance for success are:

- Clearly defined
- Incentivizing
- Realistic
- Measurable and identifiable

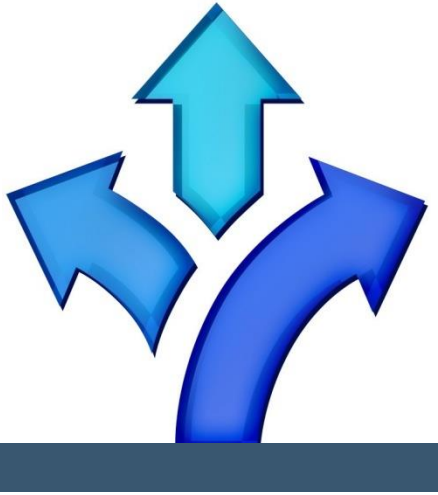
The leader's journey does not end, but rather begins, when they reach their leadership position



“It’s wonderful to have a beginner’s mind”

Steve Jobs

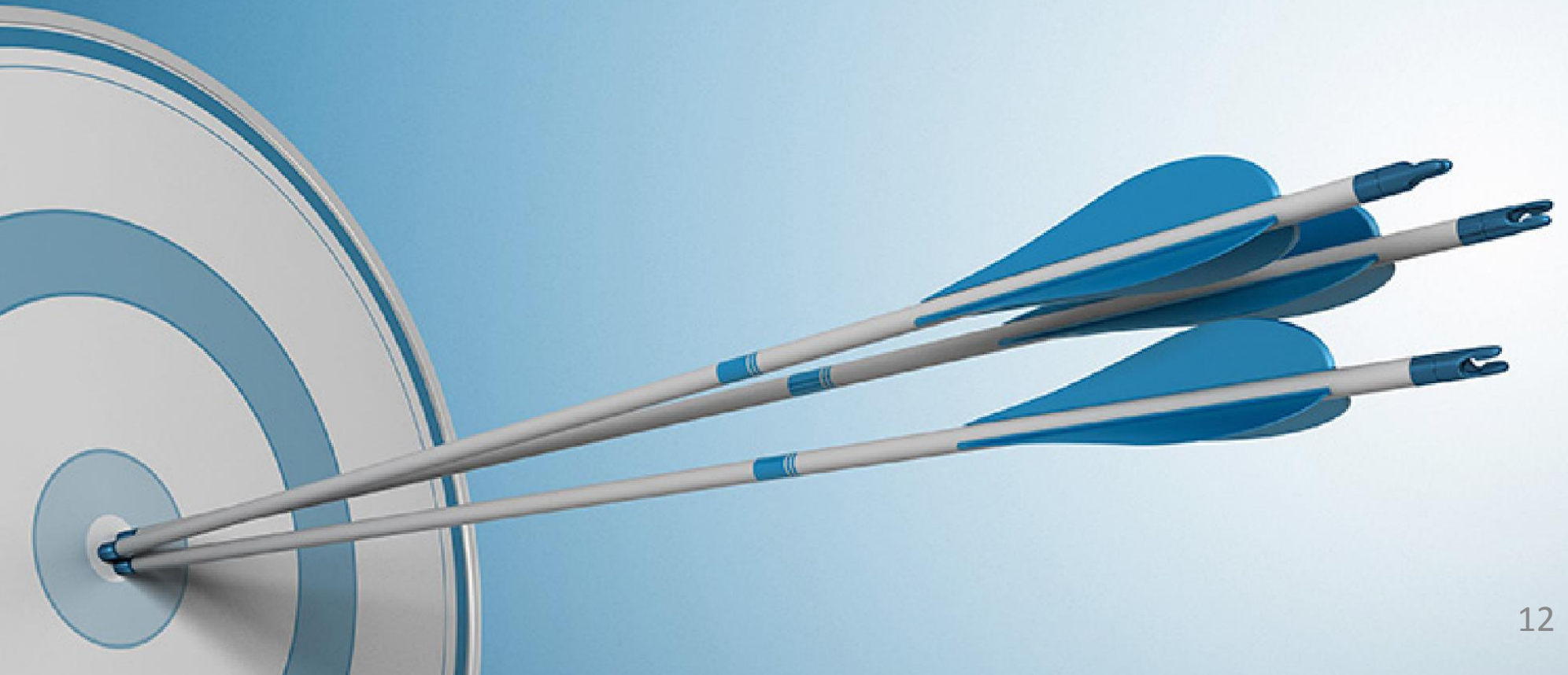
Leaders' goals and destinations



- The destination of a director – leader of an institution is achieving optimal performance.
- The goal of a director – leader of an institution is laying down a sustainable legacy with their team and resorting to smart and systematic synchronization between the capacities of their institution, the competencies of their team, and the opportunities available in their line of work.

Activity

What is your goal as a director - leader?





The challenge begins here: at the foot of the mountain



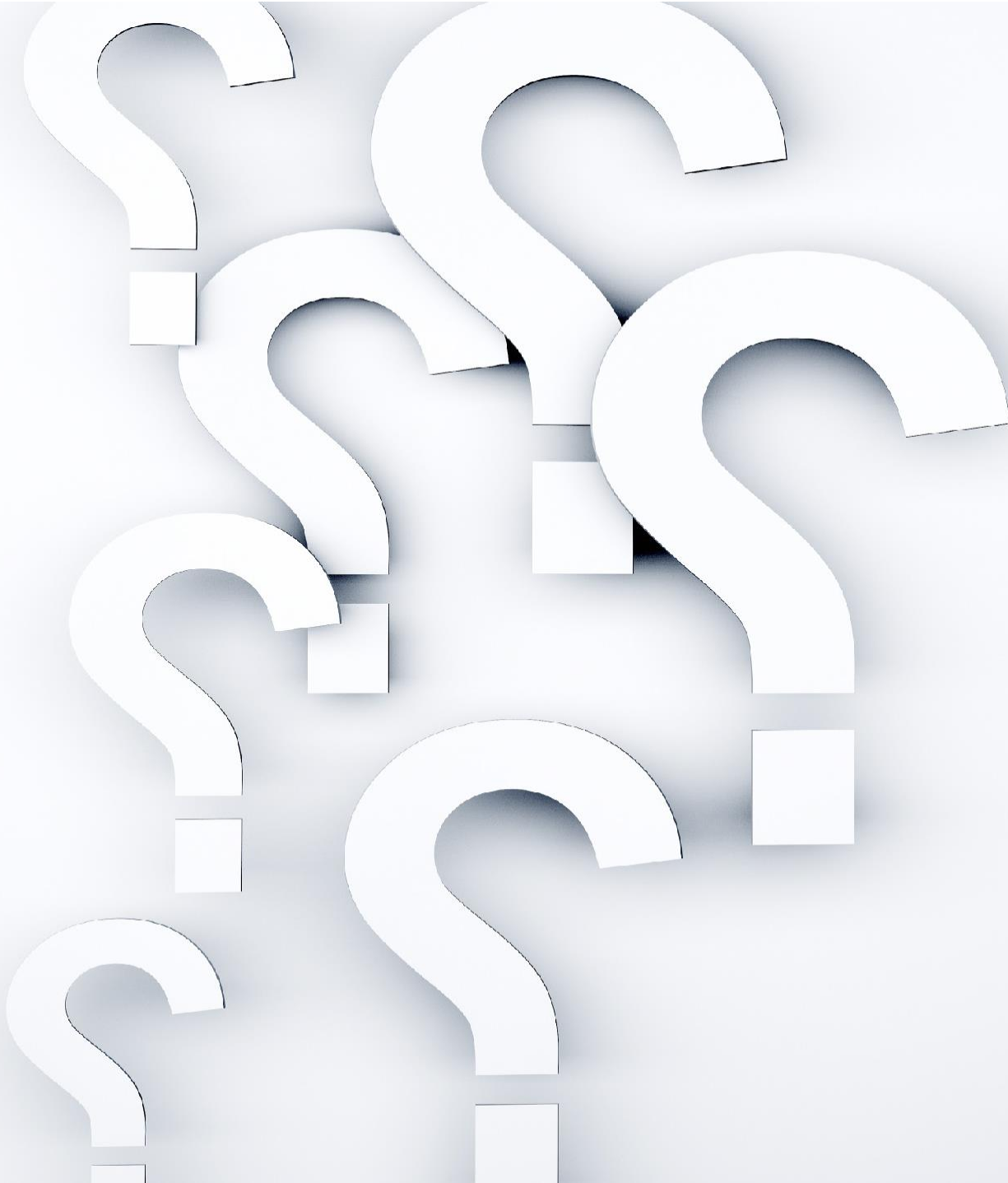
Official statistics show that the 50,000 climbers who succeed in summiting Kilimanjaro every year are distributed as follows:

- 45% all trails
- 27% 5-day trip
- 44% 6-day trip
- 64% 7-day trip
- 85% 8-day trip

77% of climbers suffer from Acute Mountain Sickness

Official sources report an average of 10 deaths annually, while other sources believe that the true number is closer to 50-60 deaths.

Source: <http://greatist.com/fitness/i-climbed-kilimanjaro-and-all-i-got-was-life-changing-experience>



Question:

How can this be explained?

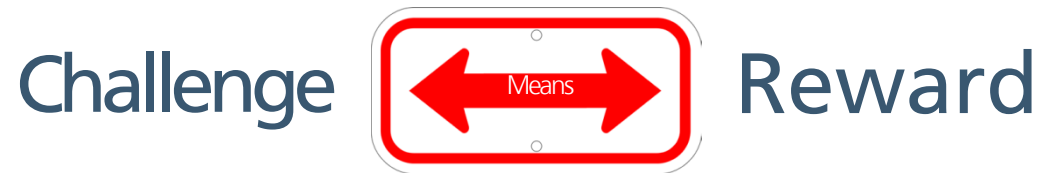
- The journey certainly does not end by reaching one's goal.
- Leadership means constantly supporting and encouraging oneself and others not to quit.
- Failure lies not in the inability to reach one's goal, but in not deploying the effort required to reach this goal.
- The perspective we adopt in our journeys as leaders have a direct correlation with the added value of any experience we go through, and therefore determine their true meaning.
- If we consider that abandoning the journey midway is failure, then this means we have failed. However, if we look at it as an opportunity to learn, reflect and draw lessons, then we would have succeeded, because failure can be transformed as a step towards success.

- Abandoning the journey midway teaches us numerous lessons and illustrates the importance of considering the following issues:
- Returning midway teaches us the following:
 - Have we chosen our goal based on our current capacities?
 - Are we fit enough (physically, mentally and psychologically) to embark on the journey?
 - Do we have all required logistical enablers to embark on the journey?
 - Do we have previous experiences or guides to help us finish the journey?
 - Is our belief that we can reach our goal firm enough to overcome all obstacles?
- Any goal we set must be commensurate with our current capacities.
- Many leaders want to achieve goals that demand more than their current capacities, and that is why some of them fail.



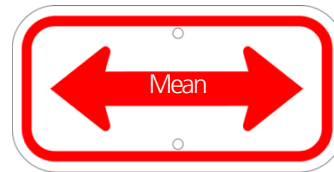
“If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right.”

Henry Ford



- A successful leader is one who steps out of their comfort zone.
- A leader is one who challenges themselves first, in preparation for the challenges that they will face later on.
- Seeking reward is not wrong, provided that reward does not become one's only goal, otherwise the leader would lose the biggest value that the journey has to offer.

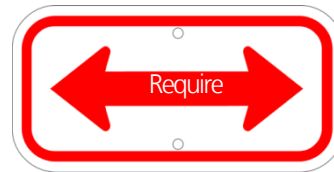
Discovering our
potential



Difficulties

- A leader cannot achieve self-discovery unless they pass through difficulties.
- One of the best surprises rewards for a leader is to discover a potential they never knew they had.
- Difficulties help us expand our leadership capacities - Steel only bends when exposed to fire.

Having a
goal/cause



Energy and Focus

- By having a goal, a leader automatically feels the need to invest a great deal of mental, psychological and physical energy.
- Leaders must focus heavily on their goals, as they face urgent influences and variables in their work, which may push them away from their trajectory or drain their energy.

**Know they destination
and its characteristics**





- Kilimanjaro is highest free-standing mountain on Earth.
- It is the tallest mountain in Africa, with a height reaching 5,895 meters above sea level. It is also the fourth highest point on earth after Mount Everest in the Himalayas (8,848 m), Aconcagua in Argentina (6,960 m) and Mount Danali in Alaska (6,194 m).
- It is a dormant volcano located at three degrees south of the Equator.



- Those who climb Mount Kilimanjaro experience a diverse ecosystem: from rainforests to fertile plains, to arid deserts, to polar climates. It is as if you were walking from the equator to the North Pole in six days.
- The experience is unusual, as the mountain's peaks and steep slopes, the severe lack of oxygen and the fluctuations in atmospheric pressure all push you to test the limits of your endurance and perseverance.

Effective leaders

- Know that their leadership journey introduces them to new human environments and to people with different qualities, backgrounds, tendencies, capacities and abilities.
- Get to know their destination and its characteristics (nature, location, possibilities, individuals, etc.).
- Determine the positive and enjoyable aspects of the journey and use them to encourage themselves and others.
- Identify challenges and underlying risks and prepare for them.
- Do not act solely based on what they have heard and do not underestimate what their own perspective has to offer.
- Are ready to immediately cope with changes in the situation.





Question

Do you know the challenges of your current responsibility?

Could you have underestimated their importance?



In every journey we embark on as part of our path towards leadership, we must consider the three following stages to ensure that our experience is complete:

- Preparation,
- The journey itself, and
- The lessons learned.

Basics



Weather



- Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is extremely difficult because it must be done in ideal weather situations, as temperatures drop by 10 degrees with every 1,000 meters climbed.

Wise leaders choose the perfect timing (1/2)

- Leadership does not mean saying/doing whatever you want whenever you want. Timing is a crucial factor in leadership behavior.
- Saying or doing things in the perfect timing contribute to achieving goals accurately, while saying or doing the same things in an inadequate timing may lead to issues that the leader could do without.
- Institutions, just like Mount Kilimanjaro, have their own weather patterns, and every leader must know their institution's culture and the capacities of their employees.

Wise leaders choose the perfect timing (2/2)

- The institution's "weather patterns" reflect many factors, including its maturity, financial capacities, internal problems, external challenges, the mood of its workers, etc.
- Wise leaders must know when to start climbing, taking into account the weather conditions of their institution and the effect of their decisions and behaviors on it, and therefore on the experience that they and their institution's audience will go through.
- Leaders must know their team's capacities and must not present them with challenges or goals that may harm or discourage them.

Activity

How can you assess the “weather condition” in your institution?

Beneficiaries

Main Opportunities

Main Challenges

Workers' Mood /
Capabilities

Elevation



- Despite the fact that your fitness level plays a pivotal role in your success in climbing Kilimanjaro, so does your body's ability to adapt to high elevations.
- With increased elevation comes lower atmospheric pressure and lower oxygen levels, which lead to difficulty in breathing.
- One might experience such difficulties starting from 3,000 meters, as one's body searches in vain for sufficient levels of oxygen.
- Every person's body handles elevation differently: some acclimatize comfortably, some experience rapid breathing, while others have headaches or even faint.

Wise leaders adapt to various situations

- Wise leaders must:
 - Prepare themselves to adapt to various situations, as they do not always get to choose the place and time of their work.
 - They might find themselves working within tight margins with not much room for manoeuvre, or even in hostile and uncooperative environments.
 - That is why the theory of stages as a path towards change is important.

- The adaptation process requires a great deal of effort from the part of the leader, which may sometimes exceed what they experience in their daily life.
- Leadership experiences and working in difficult environments is a common occurrence in the life of a leader.
- Difficult environments and challenges normally cause a self-defense response. Under such circumstances, wise rules stand out, as they know how to adapt to these environments and challenges, compared with junior leaders, who may be impulsive, vulnerable to weakness and unable to pursue the journey.

Activity

List the main variables that influence your work as a leader, and specify what is under control and what isn't.

Variable	Under Control	Out of Control



Question

How do you adapt to various challenges in your work?

Gear



- In your journey to Kilimanjaro, packing gear and equipment is a key success factor.
- Many gear lists are available online, but you must also know what to pack.
- Packing is highly important, and one has to remember that the journey lasts several days.
- The weather might change many times throughout the journey (sometimes in a single day), switching from blistering heat to freezing cold.

Leaders know how to prepare (1/2)

- Life itself is a journey; perhaps nothing can fully prepare us to take it on, because life has many fast-changing variables. In many cases, we do not know what awaits us.
- Therefore, the gear that the leader prepares for their journey plays an important role in their success.
- Effective leaders learn from those who have preceded them, drawing lessons from their experience to avoid making the same mistakes - “People think of you as you used to think of other leaders before you.”
- Effective leaders predict what they might face in various stages of the journey and brace themselves accordingly, rather than just preparing for the first leg of the journey, even if the journey seems unclear.

Leaders know how to prepare (2/2)

- Effective leaders also take into consideration the various equipment they will use, as every challenge has different requirements, and every stage of the journey needs special gear.
- Foresight and planning are two of the most important qualities of successful leaders, as they do not put themselves in difficult situations due to lack of preparation - "Failure to prepare is preparing for failure".
- Effective leaders are human, in that they take into account other people's ability to endure and do not force them to handle more than their ability or loads that may hurt them.

"No soul doth God place a burden greater than it can bear." Quran 2 -286

Activity

What is the gear you carry in your leadership journey?

Gear	Available (yes/no)	If the gear is unavailable, what measures will you take?

Training Programme

- There are many preparatory training programs to climb Kilimanjaro: choose the one that fits you best.
- Physical fitness is important for the climb, as the mountain has rugged terrain. It forces you to move muscles in your body which you haven't moved since primary school!
- Systematic training begins months ahead of the journey.



Well-prepared leaders (1/3)

- The leader's journey towards failure begins when they believe that they know all that is required to carry out their tasks and that they need nothing more.
 "Say to he who claims ultimate knowledge: What you know is but a small part of what remains to be learned".
- A well-prepared leader is one who knows that the variables they could face in their journey cannot be fully predicted. Therefore, they do not claim to know everything and realize that they can still evolve.
- Constant evolution builds more mental, professional and practical fitness and helps leaders achieve their goals more effectively.

Well-prepared leaders (2/3)

- A leader must know the training programs they need and must not choose them based on their appeal, duration or ease.
- The purpose of training is to acquire new knowledge or widen existing one.
- A well-prepared leader seeks continuous training.
- A leader also knows when to start training for a certain stage in their leadership journey and does not leave things for the last minute.
- Some leaders take risks by not training, believing they are always ready. However, this increases the chances of failure.

Well-prepared leaders (3/3)

- Management and leadership studies show that among the most common mistakes is not listening to others.
- Many leaders focus on their previous achievements and underestimate the challenges to come. They stop listening to experts or to those who have been through similar experiences.
- By doing so, these leaders double their risks. In some cases, that could be the difference between life and death – the Titanic experience.

Activity

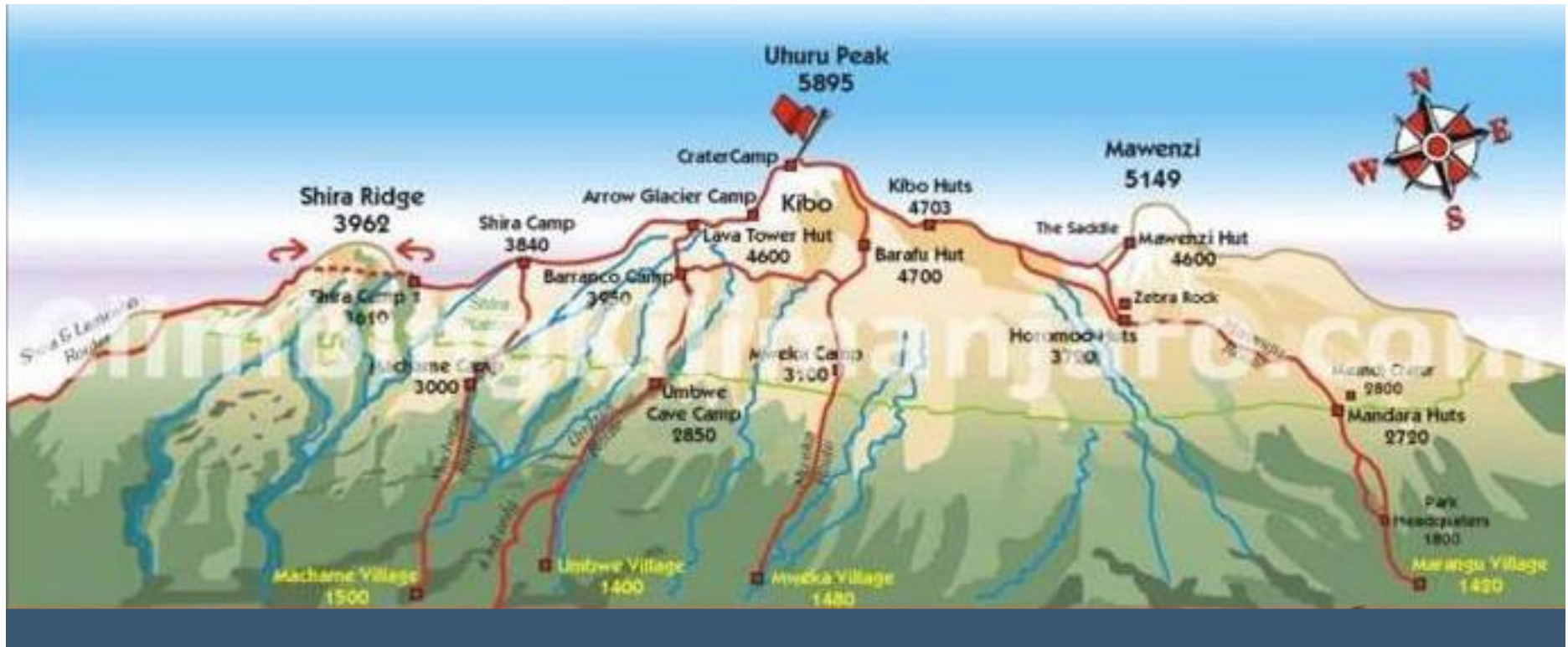
1. When was the last time you read an article in your field?	
2. When was the last time you took part in a training program?	
3. What and when was the last conference you attended?	
4. When was the last time you gave a lecture to your team/employees to teach them new skills?	
5. What is the last book you read and when was that?	
6. What aspect of your work teaches you the most?	
7. What is the most important lesson you have learned in the last three months?	
8. What book do you believe every leader must read?	
9. Who do you think is the person that influences you the most today?	
10. What book do you plan to read next week?	

Our Chosen Route

- There are seven possible routes to climb and descend from Kilimanjaro.
- The climb might take anywhere between five and nine days, depending on how long your body needs to adjust to the elevation.
- We chose the Machame route, which is considered to be one of the longest, steepest and most difficult and rugged routes, but it also is the most scenic.
- Although it is tiring and requires a great deal of effort, it also gives the body enough time to adjust to the elevation.



Routes to Climb Kilimanjaro



From a leader's perspective (1/3)

- Experienced leaders know that they are always faced with more than one option.
- Effective leaders focus on their ability to find solutions by looking at all possible alternatives, analyzing them, and choosing the best among them.
- The best option is not necessarily the one we want – it could be an optional balance between our goals, financial resources, available time, available capacities, current environment, and other factors.

“God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Reinhold Niebuhr, The Serenity Prayer

From a leader's perspective (2/3)

- The leader must know the advantages and challenges posed by the option(s) they choose and are completely gear up to face the consequences.
- There are no simple or complicated options per se – every option carries both beauty and ruggedness.
- Increased or decreased “ruggedness”, or landscape in general, comes with the leaders' ability to choose the best option.

From a leader's perspective (3/3)

- Leaders must determine when they should accept their reality (things don't always go as planned) and when they can make their own reality (if we plan well, we will get our desired outcomes).
- There are always inevitable differences between what we plan for and what we experience during the journey.
- It is in such cases where the leader's ability counts in adapting to, and positively dealing with, the variables they face.

Success Indicators

One of the foundations of leadership is for the leader to set success indicators for themselves and for their team in order to measure progress vis-à-vis their target. Among these indicators are:

- How smooth the journey is going compared to the plan;
- Actual time compared to planned time;
- Mistakes made due to insufficient preparation;
- Mistakes made due to the leader not listening to others;
- The health condition (physical and psychological) of the leader and their team.



The Journey



The Journey – Known Factors

- Starting and ending points;
- Distance to be covered;
- Duration of the journey;
- Elevation;
- Needed gear;
- Atmospheric pressure;
- Temperature differences between night and day;
- Temperature differences during the day.



The importance of known factors for leaders

Determining the start and end points is important for good leaders, as it sets their trajectory towards their target:

“Is he who walks prone on his face, more rightly guided, or he who walks upright on a straight path?”

Quran 67:22

“And if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.”

George Harrison

Distance of the Journey

Distance is important in the leader's journey, as it determines what the leader must prepare for. Long journeys require resources and preparations that differ from those needed for short ones. The leader realizes the direct correlation between preparedness and success.

“Those who work with no foresight are like those who walk with no path: their speed only pushes them farther and farther.”

Imam Jaafar al-Sadiq

Duration of the Journey

The duration of the journey depends on the leader's endurance to reach their target. That is the first line of defence for both the company and the team.



Elevation

Elevation reflects the leader's ability to adapt. Effective leaders are highly capable of adapting to various circumstances at their institution, as they face variables that they cannot always control, such as directors, employees and other parties and circumstances both inside and outside the organization.



Surrounding Environment

The surrounding environment is for the institution what weather conditions are for a climber. Understanding this environment determines the leader's options, as it helps them know who they are dealing with, what their goals are and how they correspond to the goals of the institution and the challenges that might arise along the way. A desert environment could mean scarce resources for the leader, whereas a rich environment could mean that the leader needs to preserve their drive for success.



Temperature

Night temperatures mean that the leader must be careful of what is hidden in obscure places, as they cannot determine the positive and negative attributes of such places. Such occasions could occur with colleagues, team members or any other parties with whom the leader deals within the organization.



Modesty of Leaders (1/2)

- Knowing the route leaders will take, their companions, the capabilities of their team and the level of intellectual, psychological, physical and material readiness all lead to modesty and to the belief that no matter how prepared the leader and their team are, mistakes are bound to happen, and many variables that were not taken into account appear and affect the journey.

“We are as great as we are modest.”

Tagore

Modesty of Leaders (2/2)

- Many leaders become limited by their successes and stop learning. Some even stop listening to others, which negatively affects their reputation and relationship with their team and with others.
- Leaders must not confuse modesty with boldness and resolution.

“A modest man has a good deal to be modest about.”

Winston Churchill

Activity

What data must be available at the start of the organization's journey?

Data	Description
• Documents	Complete, correct, original
• Statistics	Comprehensive, accurate, relevant
• Facts	Known, proven, documented
• Concerned parties	Includes everyone, takes common interest into account
• Allies	Trustworthy, committed
• Negatively affected parties	Known, assessed
• Information carriers	Trustworthy and their information corresponds to reality
• Team competence	Specific, known needs, have all required competencies
• Available time	Sufficient, calculated, clear to everyone
• Available alternatives	Specific, described, priorities known

A person is silhouetted against a bright, golden sunset sky while climbing a vertical rock face. The climber is positioned on the left side of the frame, reaching up with their right arm. The rock face is textured and layered. The background shows a vast landscape with mountains under a sky filled with soft, glowing clouds. The overall mood is one of challenge and achievement.

**Challenges
develop capacities and refine experiences**

The Journey – Day 1

Like in every beginning, we were full of enthusiasm. After four hours of hiking, however, we realized that the journey will be harder than we expected.



The purpose of a leader's first journey is making them more realistic, and showing them the difference between reality and expectations, after being full of energy and enthusiasm. It encourages them to prepare for the unexpected.





Question

What is the difference between reality and expectation? How can one prepare for that?

The Journey – Day 2

- On the second day, we felt more determined. Although the distance was shorter, the path was more rugged and required more time.
- On this day, we reached a “balance”: we began walking at a slower pace, drinking more water and enjoying the climb.
- We also began feeling how big the challenge we are facing, and began understanding why 50% of climbers fail to reach the peak.



The second day of the climb taught us three main things:

1. Leaders must not prejudge their journey from its first stage.
2. Leaders find their “balance” point with regards to the target, the journey and the surrounding environment.
3. Leaders know themselves well and analyze the reason behind the failure, hesitation or surrender of others, which teaches them how to persevere and to succeed.





Questions

Evaluating past events:

When was the last time you looked back at the past events in your life?

What was your assessment?

Self-evaluation:

When was the last time you evaluated yourself?

What were your thoughts?

The Journey – Day 3

- The third day was extremely difficult and tested our physical capabilities.
- We began adapting our breathing to the prevailing oxygen levels, as we climbed the Lava Tower, which is a volcanic formation 4,640 m above sea level, before descending back to our camp located at 3,900 m above sea level.
- We experienced what it feels like to be in a low-oxygen environment and we adapted well to it.



Purpose of Day 3

- Experienced leaders seek to adapt their capabilities to the environment they are faced with, leaving nothing to chances.
- Failure to prepare and underestimating the surrounding environment may lead to catastrophic results in the work and its outcomes. There are many examples illustrating how underestimating the surrounding environment by the leader (or the person tasked with leading) leads to losing the war, as in the Battle of Uhud or Napoleon's invasion of Russia.
- In an organization, as in nature, the environment (culture) differs from one department and another or one region and another. Leaders must be ready for such changes.





Question

Can you share with us an example about a problem caused by a lack of preparation?

The Journey – Day 4

- We began our fourth day by climbing a very steep mountain, using our bare hands.
- Despite many ups and downs, we ended up climbing only 55 meters, as we moved from one side of the mountain to the other.
- This stage was the most crowded (and dangerous) of the whole journey, as it included many narrow pathways. (Like the Kissing stone)
- After crossing this point, we became much more confident about summiting.



Purpose of Day 4 (1/2)

- A leader's work includes taking many large steps that might not bring them closer to their target. At the end of the day, they might find themselves not much farther than where they started from.
- This does not discourage effective leaders, but rather it increases their resolution. At such points, leaders must make sure they are still on the right track.
- A leader's journey is not about lack of fear as much as it is about strong belief and trust in God, in oneself and in others, because the challenges that leaders face only grow with time.

Purpose of Day 4 (2/2)

- Despite this trust, it is necessary for leaders to know that obstacles will be faced in their journey, as well as mistakes, but that must not discourage them.
- Mistakes are often caused by excessive self-confidence, which exposes the leader and their team to unexpected risks.
- It is necessary to reiterate the importance of listening to others and being open to their opinions.
- Failure teaches more valuable lessons than success. Failure is a step on the path of success.

“I am ignorant of absolute truth, but I am humble before my ignorance and therein lies my honour and my reward.”

Gibran Khalil Gibran

The Journey – Day 5

- On the fifth day, we tackled more rugged trails and faced harsh weather.
- Although it has only been five days since we set off on our journey, we felt completely disconnected from the world.
- We gained more confidence in our capabilities despite being physically exhausted.
- Among the most important things that bad weather taught us is that we must beat the clouds in order to avoid rain and the danger of slipping, landslides and sickness.



Purpose of Day 5 (1/2)

- The leader's path only gets harder with time "Strong resolves come in proportion to men of determination".
- The leader's mental status might be equal or higher than their physical strength.
- Therefore, the leader may need to spend time alone and to distance themselves from the rest of the world in order to clear their mind and regain focus on their goals.
- Focus on one's goals is essential for success. Many factors might distract the leader, which could make them lose focus.



Purpose of Day 5 (2/2)

- The leader must also know when and where to situate themselves to avoid unnecessary circumstances and challenges. Wise leaders know how to use time and space in their favour, and they know very well how to avoid uncontrollable variables by manoeuvring around them before they occur.
- The difficulty of the challenges faced by the leader and their team has the potential to increase their psychological and mental strength.
- It is here where the leader's self-control and focus come into play, in addition to their ability to motivate others and address challenges quickly enough to mitigate the impact that these difficulties might have on the team's ability to persevere under harsh conditions.

The Journey – Day 6

- Just before midnight, after only three hours of sleep, we began our push towards the summit amid extremely low temperatures.
- No words can describe what we felt when we reached the summit.
- The friendships we made with other climbers, even those we did not previously know, are a testament of the cooperation, encouragement and mutual assistance between strangers who met on the way towards the summit of Kilimanjaro.
- After reaching the summit, we remembered those who were not able to continue the journey and who had to be taken back to base camp.



Purpose of Day 6 (1/2)

- In the last stage of the battle, the leader overcomes their physical needs and material requirements. Sleep, rest and food all lose their value when the leader draws nearer to their target.
- Persevering leaders are those who know their priorities in terms of time, movement and the importance of continuing the journey towards their target.
- Amid feelings of success, people become closer to each other. The team assumes responsibility of the achievement by helping, supporting and encouraging others. That is what makes the difference between successful and failed institutions, and that is what every effective leader knows.



Purpose of Day 6 (2/2)

- The leader assumes a great deal of responsibility while edging closer to the target.
- Studies suggest that many leaders fail to give enough credit to the teams that helped them achieve their goal.
- The leader must always reflect back and ask themselves: How could I have accomplished this without my team, who prepared the necessary logistics for the journey, studied the route, time, distance, ruggedness and elevation and informed me about these factors.
- This must encourage the leader to always think that support must be mutual: the leader must support their team just as the team supports their leader. Everyone must support each other - “Unity is Strength.”

Question

In your opinion, what is the difference between failed and successful institutions?

Failed institutions

Successful institutions

Leader's role

Leader's role

The Journey – Day 7

- Just when we thought the journey was over, we began our descent, which was no easy task, because the knees and legs are subjected to enormous pressure on the way down.
- One of the hardest and unexpected challenges on the way down – which is also present during the ascent – is watching one's steps. Although the trail is generally clear, many sections of it are very dangerous, and one false move could see you tumbling down the deep valleys surrounding you from every side.
- The rocks you step on are not always steady or rigid, which makes it necessary to watch every step so that you do not lose your balance and fall.



Of course, this all becomes more complicated during the descent, added to it the fatigue, which decreases one's ability to maintain their balance and focus, in addition to the heavy gear they are carrying. The risk of slipping or falling is, therefore, high.

Purpose of Day 7 (1/2)

- The wise leader must not only plan for the journey towards the target, but also for the way back.
- In many institutions, work stops when the project is finished or the goal is reached. That is mostly due to the fact that many leaders fail to prepare for the return journey, which could be very difficult, as the team will be physically exhausted and might not have the strength to keep going.

“I was the runner who fell just before the end line and was the first before falling.”

Fernando Pessoa

- The leader’s wisdom appears when they prove their willingness to engage with their team and equip them for the next stage of the journey.

Purpose of Day 7 (2/2)

- Capable leaders realize that the way back from a successful journey is also difficult (many soldiers die after the battle on their way back due to traps and mines left by the enemy).
- One can only avoid traps by taking calculated steps, away from recklessness and excessive self-confidence. Every next move could mean the difference between failure and success.
- Due to the fact that mistakes of successful people are more significant, being careful must not be seen as a sign of weakness, but rather as a conscious effort to preserve what has been accomplished.
- Among the lessons that can be drawn from this is that the major challenges can often be found in the smallest of details. Leaders often fall in small traps they did not foresee, because they were focused on strategic planning and their vision for the future, without giving much attention to implementation. For example, Goliath probably did not notice a very small detail, which is the sling held by David who eventually killed him.

“The road is long, were it not for the arrival.”

Rumi

- If we analyze this quote from a leadership perspective, it means that the leader’s main journey begins after reaching their target.
- Many challenges faced by effective leaders come after they successfully accomplish their mission, because more is expected from them. Adversaries also feel threatened by successful leaders and, therefore, try to undermine them.



Fundamentals and morals



Fundamental Principle: Learning how to learn

- If we want to learn how to learn, we must first have self-awareness.
- Self-awareness means being aware of our own existence and of everything around us.
- We must also be aware that we are interacting with everything around us and being influenced by it, and vice versa.
- By being self-aware, we become ready to learn and to take in all that is happening around us like learners eager to gain knowledge.
- Mental readiness and open-mindedness are key for learning how to learn.

Learning how to Learn

- Try things you have never tried before.
- Try to step out of your comfort zone.

“It is horrible to see hopes buried in the depths of one’s soul.”

Ghada al-Samman

- Verify the credibility of your sources so that you learn correctly.
- You learn more from those who have failed than from those who have succeeded.
- Not everything you read is true... In fact, lots of it is wrong and seeks to spread misinformation for financial gain.
- Surround yourself with people who have learned from life and from their experiences and who are willing to share these lessons.

“Surround yourself with the knowledgeable and wise.”

Imam Ali

Four Golden Rules to Reach the Summit

1: Strong drive towards success and firm belief that the desired results will be accomplished, making the impossible reachable.

“I have summited mentally;
all that is left is to move my body up there.”

RHC

2: CP CP, which means “sip water” in the local language. At low elevations, water keeps the body hydrated. At high altitude, water also provides the body with extra oxygen needed to compensate for the lack thereof...

3: Pole Pole, which in the local language means walking slowly and steadily. That is highly important, as reaching the summit can only be achieved step by step (in the literal sense). Rushing things will not necessarily get you there – when you are tired, learn to rest rather than give up.



4: Without competent guides, it is nearly impossible to reach the summit, as they are the ones who guide, help, encourage and support us with all means at their disposal towards success.

“Learn to appreciate the piercing smell of the sweat of your guides, as their sweat is what helps you reach the summit”.

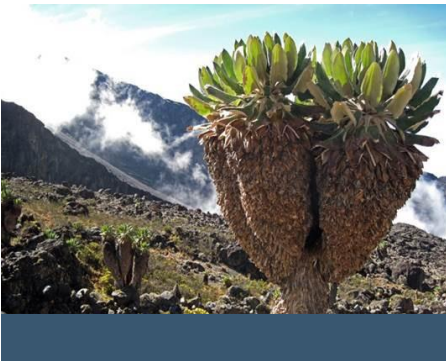
RHC

Overview of the Four Golden Rules to Reach the Summit



A climber cannot reach the summit unless they know their own physical and mental capabilities and endurance, as well as those of their team, and unless they are aware of the surrounding environment and the wisdom and foresight of the guides.

Lessons drawn from the flora found on Kilimanjaro



- The flora of Kilimanjaro can teach us a lot through their different colors, sizes and textures. Each of these characteristics has a special function and purpose.
- The mountain's ecosystem teaches us the importance of adaptation for survival. The plants that grow there did not defy the mountain: they adapted to it.



- That is how every leader should be: they must become familiar with their environment and adapt to it in order to guarantee their survival.

Lessons drawn from the rocks of Kilimanjaro



- Rocks form through numerous natural phenomena, particularly pressure and temperature.
- Rock types vary between igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic (igneous or sedimentary rocks that have been subjected to certain factors, causing their metamorphosis).
- Kilimanjaro has many rock types, but igneous rocks are abundant due to the mountain's volcanic nature.



- The rocks of Kilimanjaro give valuable lessons in adaptation, in the formation of human personality and in reflecting the experiences we go through in our lives, the pressures we are subjected to and the acquired knowledge that has refined our character.
- In rocks, like in leaders' personalities, sharp edges, protrusions, scars of various shapes and signs of erosion are all an expression of experiences.

Lessons from the Rocks



- Among the lessons we learn by observing rocks is appreciating diversity, as some are bare and others beautiful. Pressure and temperature create dry, coarse rocks as well as gemstones, colourful precious stones and crystals.
- This teaches us that the same circumstances can lead to different experiences. Looking at this reality from a leadership perspective, we can say that experiences can turn an individual into a truly great leader, just as climate creates beautiful stones. However, these same experiences can turn another individual into a weak person, just as climate can also create bare rocks.

Lessons from the Rocks



- The difference, in both outcomes, lies in the individual's behavior. Positive leaders who take life to the fullest in order to learn and build knowledge and strength see "climate" as an opportunity to become a beautiful stone (a great leader), while weak leaders consider it as a bad experience that does not teach them anything, thus becoming a "bare rock".



- Just as stones are formed by pressure and temperature, the leader's personality is formed by the challenges, difficulties, experiences and journeys they go through.
- It is very important to note how every leader and how every member of our team are similar to stones: differently formed, shaped and refined by the experiences, difficulties and challenges they go through.
- Wise leaders take this into consideration when reflecting on themselves and their team members.

Creativity with Rocks

Pontus Jansson

[Video](#)



Lessons



Trust

- Experience in work environments as well as in dealing with nature requires the leader to inspire trust.
- Leaders often take their team to challenging places, and if their subordinates do not feel that the leader is trustworthy, they will be reluctant to follow.

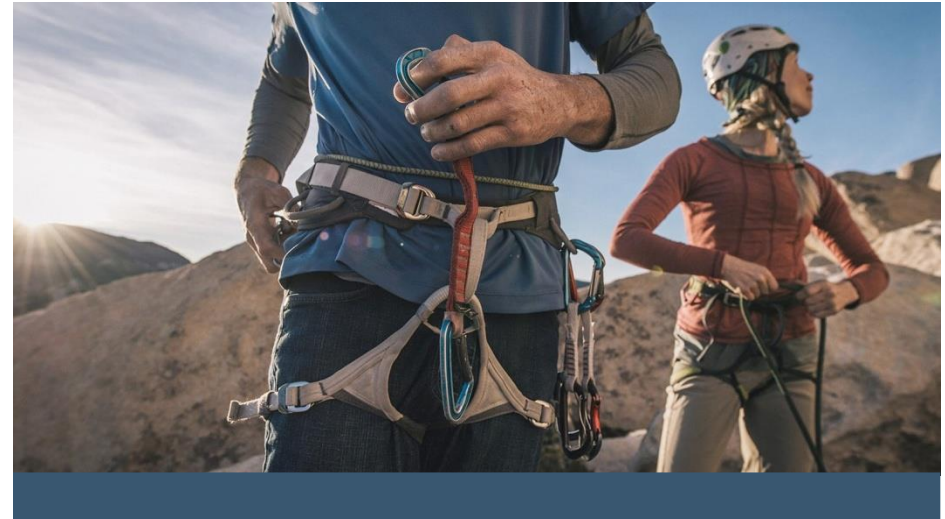


“Trust is the highest form of human motivation.
It brings out the very best in people.”

Stephen R. Covey

Gear

- Wise leaders always make sure that the gear they and their team are using is sufficient and safe.
- In nature, just like in a work environment, success does not only rely on the competencies of the leader and their team, but also on investing in required gear and instruments, which can be used to reach the intended target.
- Compromising one's gear means compromising one's target (and sometime life).



Other people's gear might not suit you

- The tale of the eagle and the leopard shows the importance of matching the gear to your characteristics.
- A smart leader knows the limits of their strength and that of their team, as well as how effective their gear is, both in nature and at work.
- Although many leaders adopt best practices and approaches of other successful leaders, wise leaders choose the gear that fits their and their team's needs, abilities, budget and goals.



The importance of physical fitness

- When a leader decides to embark on a journey, they must have the required physical fitness and must make sure that their team does as well.
- Stamina is a main element of success. Without it, no target can be reached.
- Physical fitness also prepares you for what you do not know about your journey.
- Fitness enables you to subject your body to more pressure or to heavier workloads than expected, such as carrying a wounded companion due to an injury they may have suffered or carrying their gear due to their fatigue.



The importance of mental fitness

- Mental will complements physical fitness in every leader's journey.
- Mental fitness represents the will to set off on long and arduous journeys that might engender many negative thoughts and discourage people from continuing.
- Fatigue leads to weak resolve, and that is something that every leader has to deal with, whether they experience it themselves or sense it in their team.
- A wise leader must train their mental will regularly, just as they train their body to become more fit by fasting, praying, reflecting, focusing on their strengths and surrounding themselves with positive people.



The importance of intellectual fitness

- The path to the summit is long and feels even longer due to its ruggedness.
- Exceptional leaders have intellectual fitness (culture), which makes their journey worthwhile and enriching to them and to their companions.
- The journey provides many opportunities for learning about new cultures and discussing new topics with people. And despite being hard, the journey also has the potential to be fun, constructive and entertaining.



The importance of psychological fitness

- Psychological fitness is the leader's ability to face the possibility of having negative vibes in their team, such as those who complain a lot, babble, engage in gossip or do not know their limits.
- All these types of people might accompany the leader along the way, and they often cast a shadow over the journey and affect the resolve and mission of the leader and their team.
- Therefore, it is important for the leader to get to know their team members before setting off, and they must, as part of the risk mitigation process, set the rules and select the adequate team to accompany them to the summit. As the Arabic saying goes, "choose your companions first, then the route".



The importance of having a supportive team

- Leadership is not about individuals, but about teams. Leaders who do not acknowledge the importance of this principle have not yet reached the level of true leadership.
- Just as the leader must be trustworthy for their team, the latter must also fully support its leader, by ensuring flawless implementation, respecting deadlines, respecting standards, actively participating, committing to goals and offering unconditional assistance.
- The leader must be confident that their team will provide the needed support for them to reach their goal together. They must also train and educate their team about the trajectory and goal.



Choose the best route

- The journey might hide many temptations for the leader, such as following new routes, using different approaches or adopting untested work methods.
- That is natural, as every leader takes some risks.
- However, the temptation of trying new experiences must not be at the expense of adopting the best route or method to achieve the goal. The leader must choose the best route even if that means going around the mountain or the problem they face. Having a “plan B” is not enough: there are 24 other letters in the alphabet!



The solution to Shahryar’s dilemma was found after a thousand and one nights...

Carry what you need, not what you want!



- The leader’s journey is long and arduous; climbing summits means staying in the open air, sleeping in tents, resting on uneven surfaces and walking long and exhausting distances.
- What you carry with you can be decisive factor in you reaching, or failing to reach, your target. You must also not forget about your team. A wise leader chooses to carry what they need, not what they like best. In the journey towards the summit, your bag feels heavier. Even the lightest items seem extremely heavy. By then, it would have been too late.

Always stay alert

- Leaders are not superhumans. They may become distracted at times. In some cases, this can be acceptable, such as during breaks or times of reflection and thinking.
- However, in the midst of the battle, leaders must not allow themselves to be distracted, as they are surrounded by risks, especially when the battle is drawing to an end, because it gets more difficult, competitive and aggressive.
- Careful leaders always stay alert and do not suffer from avoidable risks at any stage of the journey.

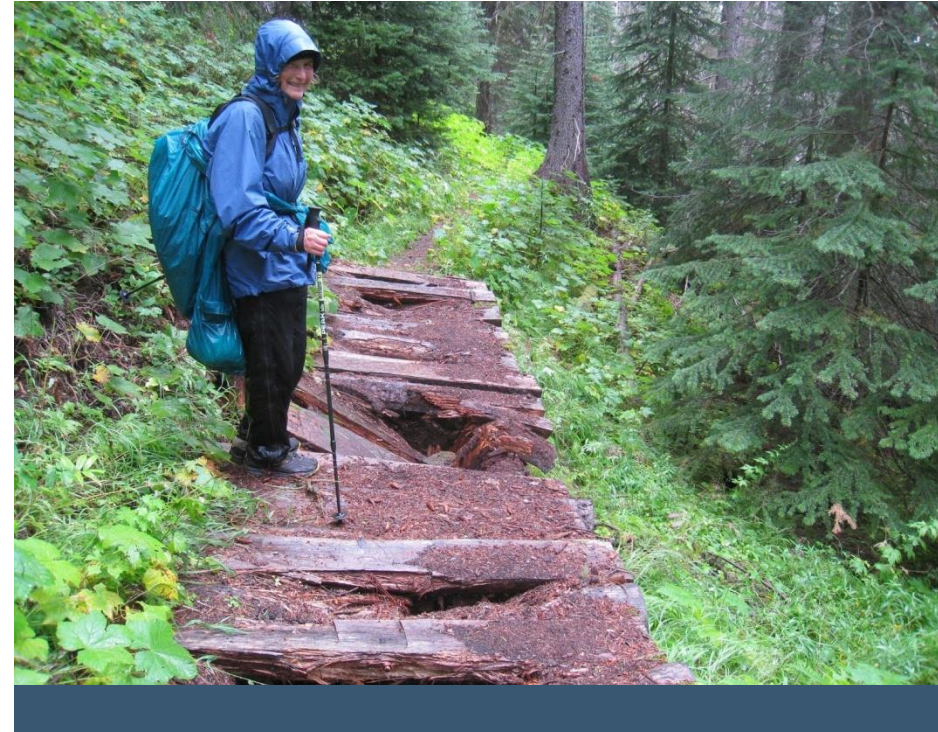
“If you are intelligent, if you are alert, the ordinary becomes the extraordinary.”

Osho, The Secret of Secrets

Passion for success

- Reaching the summit is a goal that requires strong motivation that always pushes the leader to do their best and to never give up.
- When excellence is like oxygen to you, you will always be successful.

The story of the director who hung a paper in front of their employees announcing that “tomorrow is the funeral of the person who prevented you from achieving excellence”. The next day, when they opened the coffin, they found a mirror with the following sentence written under it: “The only person preventing you from achieving success is you.”



The importance of conviction

- Leaders must have strong dedication and determination under all circumstances.
- Every step must be steady, because in the leader's journey towards the summit, every step forward could lead to another or could mean the end of the journey.

“It always seems impossible until it's done.”

Nelson Mandela

The importance of learning from mistakes

- If we do not learn from our mistakes and those of others, the journey would be a failure.
- The leader and their team must take the necessary time after every failure and every success to analyze what went wrong and learn from the mistakes they made, in order to avoid making them in the future. These lessons must also be shared with all members of the institution.
- This practice can be inspired by many large and global companies who study what is known as the “anatomy of failure”, drawing lessons in order to avoid making the same mistakes again.

“The best experiences are the ones you learn from.”

Reflections from the Journey



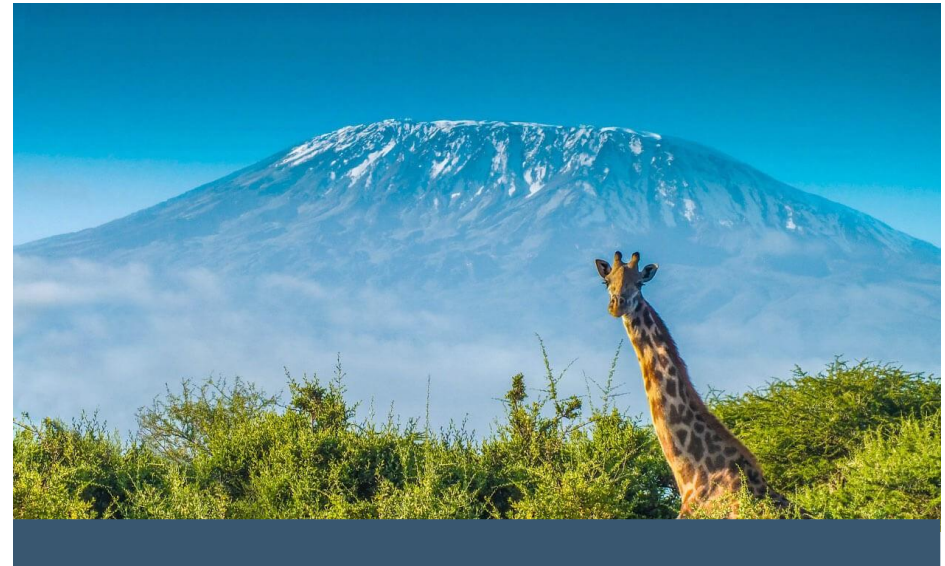
The feeling of the next summit

- The best feeling you get on the way to the summit, especially when drawing nearer to it, is longing for to the next summit.
- The leader's journey does not end when they reach the first summit. They always strive to tackle and overcome harder challenges. Above all, the leader seeks to learn from every endeavour they undertake.
- For leaders, reaching their goal is an opportunity to start anew, to persevere and keep accomplishing.



We must not underestimate other challenges

- If you climb a high summit, do not underestimate the next summit you tackle even if it is a lower one. Your past does not always determine your future.
- Most leaders who fail to achieve their goals did overcome challenges that are more difficult than the one that brought them down.
- Being always prepared and having the necessary skills ensure success, not necessarily past accomplishments.



“The only thing more dangerous than ignorance is arrogance.”

Albert Einstein

Embrace the mountain

- The journey to any summit is a journey with nature, not against it!
- On the way towards the summit, you are in an open dialogue with nature: at times you are amazed by it; at others you find it harsh. It is generous to you at times, and it makes you feel bitter at others.
- Embrace the mountain and do not try to defeat it; engage with the universe through the mountain and listen to the silence.



“ It is not the mountain we *conquer*, but *ourselves*. ”

Sir Edmond Hillary

Difficulties are opportunities in disguise

- Often, we see difficulties as barriers. We complain and try to avoid them. However, by recalling previous obstacles and distresses we have faced on our way to the summit, we discover that we are where we are today because of them.
- Your strength, resolve and perseverance are not the fruit of your time of leisure; they are the product of painfulness and hardships you faced on your way to the summit.



“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the rightly guided.”

Quran 2:155-157

The journey is an opportunity to learn modesty

- One of the most amazing moments upon reaching the summit is when you feel modest before the greatness of God the Almighty as you experience His glory.
- Looking down from such heights, everything seems small. And when you look around, you also get a feeling of how small you are amid God's creations. You cannot help but bow to His greatness – He who kneels before God can stand before anyone.



“Walk in your sandals until wisdom gives you shoes”

Avicenna

Self-understanding

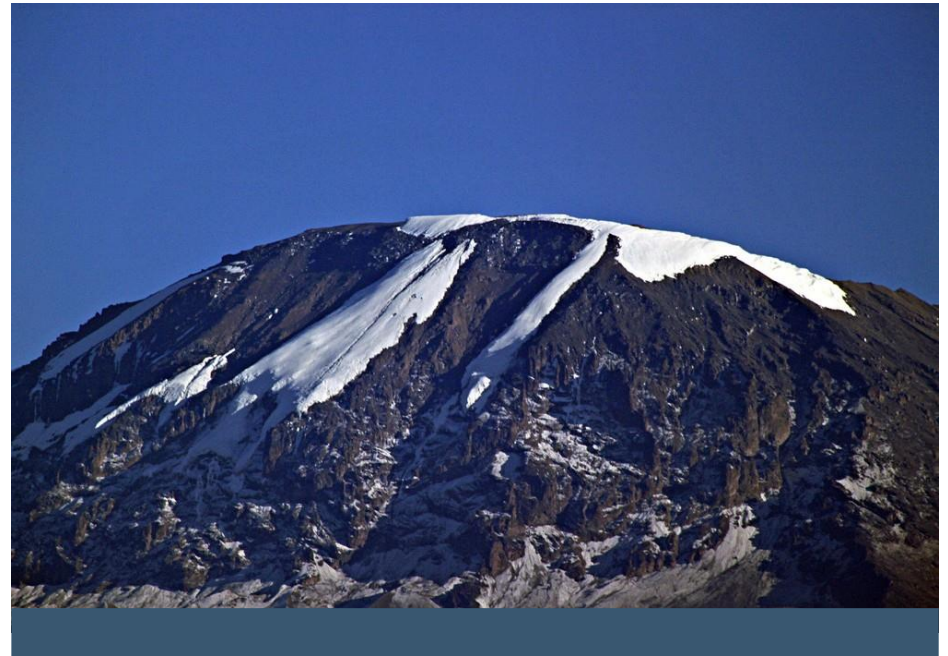
- Journeys take us to distant places, both in reality and imagination, but they must not distance us from ourselves.
- After completing a journey, the leader must look inwards in the depths of themselves to find out in what ways they have become better.
- A leader thinks through all moments of the journey, from beginning to end, including difficulties and challenges, moments of happiness and pain, surrender and hesitation, struggles with oneself and with others.
- Failure once does not mean defeat: A person might fail once or more, but that does not mean they are a failure. However, if they do not learn from their mistakes, they will keep failing.

“Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they become habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Never giving up

When you are doubting your ability to keep going and are on the brink of surrender, think of your goals, ambitions and aspirations. That will give you a second wind to push forward.



"Winners never quit, and quitters never win."

Vince Lombardi

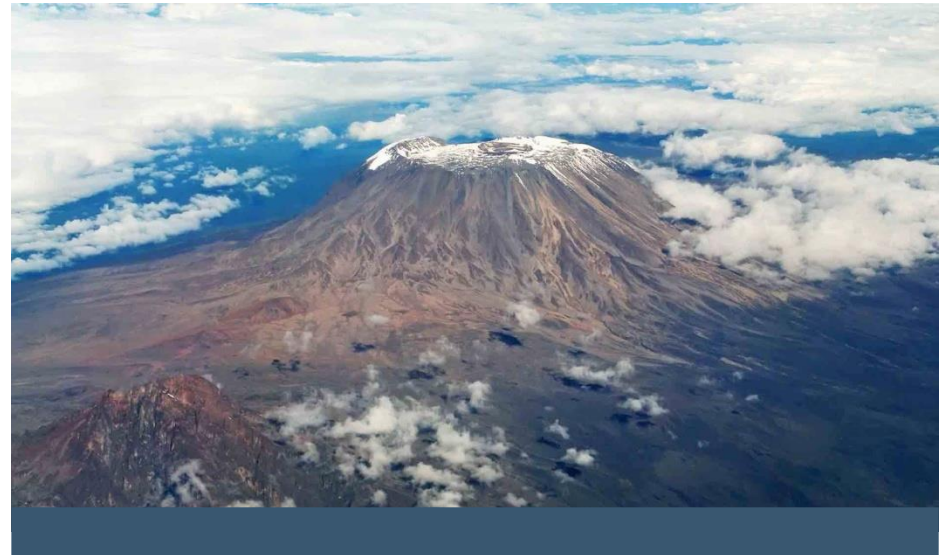
Achieving the impossible is ... possible

One can achieve the impossible through perseverance. Normal people can achieve extraordinary things by concurring their despairs and fears.



The weakest link

The weakest link in the chain can threaten the whole experience. That is why it is important to be dedicated and to work with one's companions along the road.

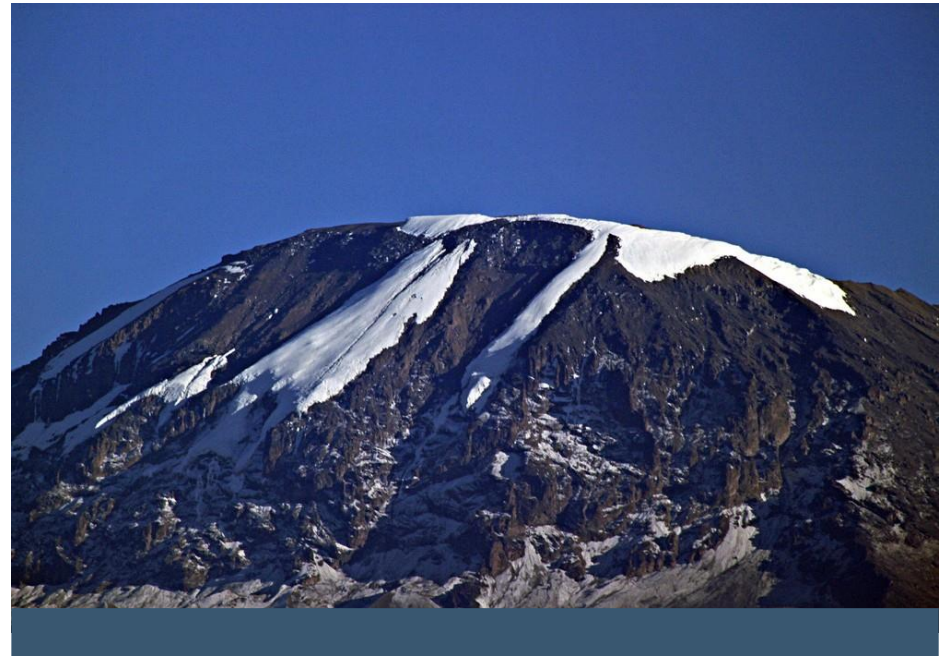


“And hold fast by the covenant of God all together and be not disunited.”

Quran 3:103

Being disconnected... Makes you more connected

When you are disconnected from modern means of communication, you become more connected to your inner, thoughts, and your depths and hence you discover the power within to innovate, inspire and create.



"Man know thyself; then thou shalt know the universe and God."

Pythagoras

Rest assured: The mountain will always be there

One might not achieve their goals from the first, second or even third try. However, one must keep trying to achieve their ambitions.

" The Experience ever."



Breaking free from fictional chains

- When you focus on the basics, all secondary things automatically fade away.
- You can substitute a certain routine with another one.



“Do what you must when you must.”

“This world is like a mountain;
the echo depends on you. If you scream
good things.
The universe will repay you with the same
if you scream negative things;
the universe will repay you with the same.
Even if someone speaks ill of you
Speak kindly of them
Change your heart, and the world will
change with it.”

Shams Tabrizi



Learning from out of the ordinary

- Many leadership lessons today are from large successful organizations, which is good, especially when the leaders of such organizations share their experiences in management, in addition to lessons of past successes and failures.
- However, many of these lessons are common, as these experiences unfold in employee offices and meeting rooms.
- The reflections and lessons drawn from the Kilimanjaro journey have a common message, which is that the leader must not only learn from their familiar environment, but they must also benefit from every experience, literally rather than figuratively, in order to learn lessons and share them. Unfamiliar environments often teach us much more than what limited and known environments can.
- Experiences teach us that we can expand our horizons through unfamiliar turfs that go out of the ordinary, just as Newton discovered gravity while lying under a tree!



Knowledge sharing

- At the end of this journey of lessons and morals, the most important lesson that every leader must remember from day one is the following: What knowledge and experience will I gain and develop when I return?
- This lesson means truly completing the journey before embarking on a new one, by reflecting on, and sharing, what one has learned so that it can be used by their fellow leaders and by future generations.
- The leader's journey does not only aim at improving and developing their personal capacities; it also serves to share these experiences with the largest number of people. That is why disseminating and knowledge sharing is important.



“The essence of knowledge is sharing it.”



CONGRATULATIONS!
BON VOYAGE

Which summit awaits you?

- It is true that not everyone might have the chance to climb a mountain, but they can learn the value perseverance, preparation and courage.
- The summit represents physical, mental and moral success.
- In our lives, some summits are forced upon us, and others we decide to undertake.



*What summit will we have to overcome next? And when? Who will join our team?
Who are our guides along the journey?*

These are all questions we could answer now or in our next trip... until then!



“Climb the mountain so you can see the world
not so the world can see you”

David McCullough Jr.

“Mountains may crumble, but you are everlasting.”

Anonymous

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Thank you for your attention.
Any comments/questions?



Handwritten signature in Arabic script: رعد حشرف الدين
Rued H. Cherafeddine