

## The Art of Greatness; Tao of Loyalty

Prof. Dr. M. Amr Sadik

Greatness and loyalty are two virtues that often intertwine yet are seldom discussed in relation to one another. Greatness is typically defined as achieving outstanding, exceptional, or admirable status in a particular field. Meanwhile, loyalty denotes a steadfast allegiance or commitment to a person, group, or cause. Together, these qualities can cultivate an environment where individuals thrive, fostering mutual growth and success.

From HR point-of-view, keeping an effective workforce can eventually help companies develop, grow, perform and compete efficiently and effectively in their industry. And to do that we have to have loyal people in place.

Loyalty is first and foremost about reciprocity. Employees should have the feeling that the organization wants the best for them, and as a result they will continue to do their best and not look for another job. Employee loyalty is thus above all determined by how the organization has arranged things and the way this is conveyed to the employee. Therefore, the concept of loyalty in principle can fall under the Tao philosophy as semantic.

### **The Essence of Greatness**

Greatness is not merely a matter of reaching the pinnacle of success. It encompasses a continuous pursuit of excellence and a drive to improve oneself and one's surroundings. True greatness is rooted in humility and an understanding that there is always room for growth and improvement. Those who possess this mindset strive to uplift others, share knowledge, and mentor those around them, creating a ripple effect of positivity and progress.

Moreover, greatness involves a sense of purpose and dedication to a cause larger than oneself. This purpose fuels perseverance, enabling individuals to overcome challenges and setbacks. Those who embody greatness do not shy away from obstacles; instead, they use them as stepping stones towards greater achievements.

### **The Tao of Loyalty**



The Tao is not a thing or a substance in the conventional sense. It cannot be perceived, but it can be observed in the things of the world. Although it gives rise to all being, it does not itself have being. And in a very simple definition we can

say, everything and its opposite, light and dark, sun and moon, reward and punishment...etc.

Loyalty is often viewed as an unwavering commitment to someone or something. It is a foundational element of trust and is essential in building strong relationships, whether personal or professional. In the context of the Tao, loyalty transcends blind allegiance and is rooted in wisdom and integrity.

The Tao of loyalty emphasizes understanding and discernment. It involves a careful balance between standing by one's beliefs and being open to different perspectives. This form of loyalty encourages individuals to remain true to their values while also being flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

Loyalty also plays a crucial role in teamwork and collaboration. When team members are loyal to one another, they work towards common goals with shared dedication and trust. This creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and support, leading to more efficient and harmonious outcomes.

### ***The Intersection of Greatness and Loyalty***

The synergy between greatness and loyalty can be seen in individuals who excel in their fields while remaining committed to their communities, teams, and values. Such individuals inspire others through their actions and lead by example. Their loyalty to their purpose, people, and principles reinforces their greatness, making them role models and leaders.

For instance, a great leader exhibits loyalty to their team by providing support, guidance, and encouragement. In return, the team remains loyal to the leader, working cohesively towards shared goals. This relationship creates a cycle of trust and respect, fostering a productive and positive environment.

Similarly, greatness achieved with loyalty is often more sustainable and meaningful. When individuals remain loyal to their ethical standards and values, they can maintain their success over time without sacrificing integrity.

### ***Cultivating Greatness and Loyalty***

Cultivating greatness and loyalty requires intentional effort and reflection. Here are some ways to nurture these qualities:

**Self-awareness:** Understanding one's strengths and areas for improvement allows individuals to continuously grow and develop.

**Mentorship and coaching:** Providing guidance and support to others fosters loyalty and encourages a culture of greatness.

**Consistency and reliability:** Being consistent in actions and words builds trust and demonstrates loyalty.

**Adaptability:** Balancing loyalty with flexibility helps navigate changing circumstances and fosters growth.

**Respect and appreciation:** Recognizing the contributions of others cultivates loyalty and strengthens relationships.

From the above-mentioned simple explanation, we, then, can talk now about *Employee Loyalty* as a phenomenon ought to be addressed.

### **Who is the Loyal Employee?**

The starting point here is the traditional and in many cases outdated understanding of employee loyalty. The employer pays the employees, so they must oblige to the company, quietly trust in good management, and make their contribution to the company's success. This is nonsense, and such an understanding is no longer meets to the reality of work today and beyond due to the shortage of qualified employees.

Organizations depend on employees in order to be successful. The success of an organization mainly results from its ability to identify and manage technological, economical, ecological, and social challenges in the present and the future. Human Resources play a decisive role in this regard, as they create and implement company-specific success factors such as knowledge, product quality, or customer orientation.

Employees constitute the most fundamental resource for organizations in the long term as well as a competitive advantage in dynamic and complex business environments.

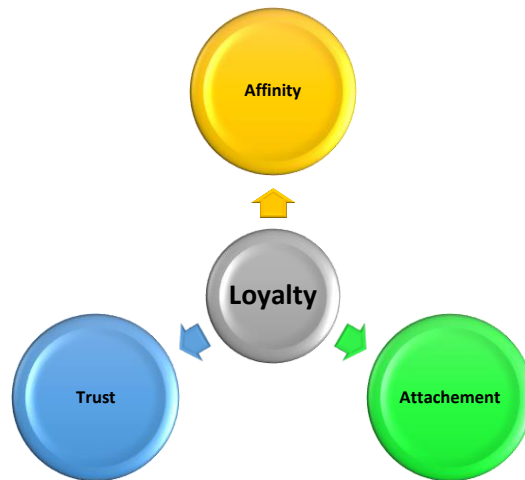
So, we have to ask ourselves does such an employee truly exist in an organization now, in the current times! Probably not. The end of loyalty has been a long time coming. Employee loyalty was in decline for two decades even before the pandemic.

One face of loyalty relates to the positive disposition that an employee has towards the organization, the "feel-good" element or how psychologically wedded the employee is to the organization. This is what we call Attitudinal or Emotional Loyalty. The second face relates to the stated future behavior of the employee or behavioral loyalty. Behavior relates to "action" or "reaction" to an object or event.

Every organization is unique and has its own loyalty level threshold. When an organization's loyalty level drops below such threshold level, the behavioral scores of the organization drastically change as well as their employees.

Thus, we should not expect employees loyalty if the organization is not demonstrating such concept in the first place. That is The Tao...

### Elements of Loyalty

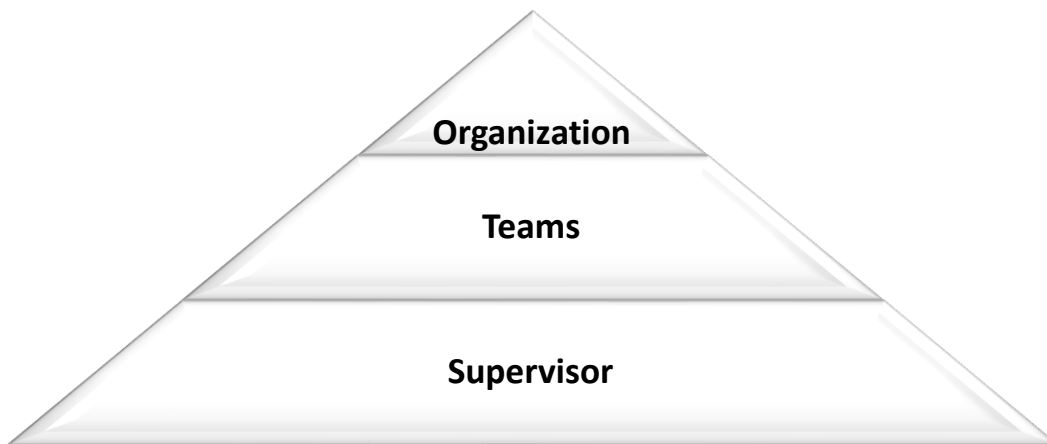


Employees find an **Affinity** when they enjoy what the company has to offer them. But, when a better option or offer becomes available, employees will think and tend to be swayed easily and compare between what they have and what they will get. Affinity without attachment or trust is a watered-down version of loyalty.

**Attachment** is less about liking the company and more about making employees their great asset. Employees can tell if they're valued by the relevance of the company's communication and attempts to engage. When a company successfully makes the effort to connect in a personalized way, employees feel appreciated and confident in the company's ability to meet their expectations.

**Trust** is the cornerstone of emotional loyalty. When an employee feels respected, their willingness to trust increases dramatically. Once trust is established, respect is then shown to employees in many ways, but one of the most meaningful is communication. Employees will put their trust in the company if every interaction and channel display similar genuine behavior.

## Levels of Loyalty



The very nature of the relationship between employers and employees has undergone a fundamental shift: Today, workers not only don't expect to work for decades on end for the same company, but they don't want to.

They are largely disillusioned with the very idea of loyalty to organizations. But, at the same time, they don't really want to shift employers every two to three years for their entire careers. Similarly, companies would grind to a halt if they had to replace large portions of the workforce on a similar schedule.

Nevertheless, if the loyalty exist, it will follow the above diagram. These three different levels, in turn, influence positive and desired, as well as negative and less desired human outcomes.

First, in the context of a psychological contract, for the employer, it's about making sure not to give the wrong perception to an employee and to make sure promises are upheld. Second, the group level concerned with how they communicate to each other, do the work together, and group dynamic and coherence. Third, is the relationship with the direct boss and feedback the individual receives on regular basis about his/her performance.

## Walk the Talk

### ***Actions Often Speak Louder than Words, but Together They Are Unbeatable***

Loyalty isn't the role of the organization only, but it is a joint effort between the leader, Human Resources and the direct Boss. Each and every one has to play his part to impact on loyalty.

For the leader, CEO, we talk about creating and communicating vision, mission and values and translate them into behavioral indicators. For HR has perhaps become the most crucial function in an organization, and is perhaps as important, if not more important, than supervisors. They can directly influence areas like performance appraisal systems—how relevant it is and how

useful it is. HR needs to ensure that all HR policies, procedures and programs are in sync with the organization's values and purpose.

For the direct boss, he has an important role to play in building the loyalty levels within the team by clearing to each member about the role clarity and remove any barriers or impediments a person might face in order to achieve her/his results.

In conclusion, the art of greatness and the Tao of loyalty go hand in hand. By nurturing both virtues, individuals can create a lasting impact in their fields and communities. Through continuous self-improvement, commitment to values, and dedication to others, greatness and loyalty can transform lives and inspire future generations.

**“EMPLOYEE LOYALTY BEGINS WITH EMPLOYER LOYALTY. YOUR EMPLOYEES SHOULD KNOW THAT IF THEY DO THE JOB THEY WERE HIRED TO DO WITH A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF COMPETENCE AND EFFICIENCY, YOU WILL SUPPORT THEM.”**

**HARVEY MACKAY**

## About Author



**Prof. Dr. M. Amr Sadik**, is a Co-founder & Vice President of Educators, VP Dimensions Consulting Ltd. UK, based in Cairo, Egypt. An HBR Advisory Council Member, Adjunct HR & Strategy Management Professor IPE Management School, Paris, Middle East Programs for, Victoria University, School of Management, Switzerland and HR Collegiate Council & HR Professor at GUST, Latvia. Ranked by Thinkers360 as Top 50 Thought HR Leader in 2024.

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Prof. Sadik is the Co-founder, Vice President, Educators Learning Solutions Ltd, (Educators) UK, and holds different positions such as Regional Director-North Africa for International Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, USA, Collegiate Council Member & Professor of HR Management, Global University of Science & Technology, Latvia, Executive Member, Ajeenkya D Y Patil University, International Academic Council (IAC), India, Professor of Management, The George Washington University of Peace, USA, Regional Director-Egypt, Chartered Institute of Management & Leadership, USA, Vice President of Chartered Institute of Leadership & Governance, USA, and last but not least Board & Advisory Committee Member at Arab Trainers Union, Jordan.

In 1998, he was nominated for Professional Excellence Award in HR from "SHRM" in USA, and in 2006 for Sheikh Rashid Bin Maktoum Award in the United Arab Emirates as the Best Arab Manager. The Stevies Award laureate in 2007 as first Egyptian/Arab winner, and who was ranked among the top 20 HR Most International Influential Thinkers in 2014 from UK, 2015 **Peter F. Drucker** in Management, UOSF, Panama.

As writer, he is a regular international contributor at HR-Future magazine in South Africa, and published 3 books in India and Germany. He frequently called in HR conferences and summits to opine in current practices and provide his insights. He is associated as adjunct professor at various business and management schools to teach at post-graduate studies; IPE Management School, Paris-France, Victoria University, Switzerland for Middle East Programs, and Frankfort School of Finance and Management, International Advisory Services, in Germany as HR and Training expert and Consultant.

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