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RESEARCH INTO FOLLOWERSHIP  
- A PRACTITIONER'S RESPONSE

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## Executive summary

In my work as a learning and development consultant, many of the people I come across in workshops and development programmes think of themselves as leaders or potential leaders. Yet when they are in situations where they are not leading, such as group projects or exercises, they find it difficult to contribute effectively. I therefore decided to explore the concept of followership, to see if there is anything I can do in my own workshops to address this issue.

In my research, I found that the resistance to the concept of 'following' is very strong across cultures, and concluded that this is the main reason why it has not become established as a topic for discussion and development in organisations.

In order for followership to be considered alongside leadership, the current leadership paradigm must change. An alternative paradigm which has been proposed is that of the leadership-followership paradigm, which considers leadership and followership to be temporary states rather than something fixed. Anyone can be in one of these states at any time, regardless of hierarchical position or title. This is closer

to the approach taken by 'bossless' organisations such as W. L. Gore or Morning Star, and seems to better fit the need for people to work both autonomously and collaboratively.

Obviously, a full paradigm shift constitutes a major change, not just in organisations but across society. There is the constraint that in many organisations the very people who would have to make the decision to change are those with the most to lose by it (i.e. those at the top of the organisation). In addition, such a shift will also have to take place outside organisations – notably within the leadership development industry, which could also be said to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. However, the increase in the number of bossless organisations and the growing interest in the Agile way of working are positive indicators that the existing leadership paradigm is being challenged.

On an immediate and practical level changes can be made in the area of soft skills development which will help people build the skills and competences they need to both lead and follow effectively.





# Why followership?

## Scenario 1

It's a breezy day at the end of March, and a group of four people are standing in an indoor arena with two horses. The brief: get everyone, horses and people, moving around the arena together. The challenge: no lead ropes, no touching the horses to get them moving. The observers: the other four members of the team in which they work.

With the objective agreed between the group members, they start to move. At first the idea seems to be two people per horse, one in front and one behind, moving together in the same direction around the arena. One group member, who is the boss (or 'Global Director' to give him his professional title) of the full team of eight back in the office, has a long lunge whip to help move things along.

Under the critical eyes of their colleagues, things quickly degenerate. The boss is absorbed in understanding the dynamic between himself, the lunge whip and the horse he is working with. The horse is not moving much – she takes a step or two when he hits the ground with the whip, but stops again immediately. On the other side of the arena, two of the group are trying to get the other horse to move, with little success. The horse is paying attention to them, but they are moving around her, without any forward momentum to get things going. The fourth group member is somewhere between the two horses, moving between them and watching her colleagues. She was originally supposed to be guiding the horse that the boss is now working with, but she seems to have stepped back from this task.

Overall, there doesn't seem to be much progress towards the group's stated objective, but no one points this out or attempts to stop proceedings and refocus. There are no constructive suggestions to the whole group to get things back on track, although some different ideas are discussed and tried between the two ladies working with one of the horses. After fifteen minutes, with the objective still not achieved, we break and go back to the training room to debrief.

## Scenario 2

Another day, a different arena. This time it's just one person and one horse. The brief: get the horse to move around the arena. The challenge: no lead rope, no touching the horse to get it moving.

The participant is allowed some practice time, walking around the arena holding the lead rope which is still attached to the horse's head collar. After a while he feels comfortable enough to come over and ask for the lead rope to be removed.

He starts walking again, one hand on the head collar; after a few steps he drops his hand and keeps walking. The horse walks with him, same direction, same pace. He changes direction; the horse does too, but she is alongside him now, and starts lowering her head to sniff the ground. He stops walking and uses his voice and gestures to get her attention again, and it works for a minute – she matches her pace to his again.

They reach the other side of the arena and the horse's head goes down. She starts sniffing the ground again, moving away and paying no attention to the participant in spite of his attempts to get her attention as before. Eventually she is so far away from him that he has to go after her – he moves towards her but as soon as he is within ten paces of her she moves away. He continues to walk after her, and this time as he gets closer she breaks into a trot.

We talk about how he's feeling. Confident, he says, and determined to get her to follow him again. He keeps trying to approach her; the more he tries, the further out of reach she moves. It gets to the point where he only has to take a step in her direction to start her trotting away. Eventually the session ends, with the horse still at the other end of the arena.

The two examples above are not unusual. But these, and others like them, are what has started me thinking about followership, and whether we should pay more attention to developing it.

All the people in the two examples claim to be leaders at work. Those in the first example all identify with certain leadership styles or behaviours, and say that they demonstrate these behaviours in different situations – some professional, others outside work. But in this exercise no one took charge, or tried to save the situation when things weren't going as planned. No one had been specifically designated as 'leader'; as a group, they had agreed on an objective but no one seemed to be committed to achieving it.

The participant in the second example also thinks of himself as a leader at work because of his position and title. In the exercise described above, he was determined to be the leader in the arena as well. When it didn't work as he had hoped, he tried harder – but the more energy he threw into leading, the less successful he was.

So what happens when a leader can't lead? In the first example, no one had been designated as the leader for the exercise. The 'real' boss (i.e. the team's big boss at work) was in the group, but wasn't obviously 'leading' or taking charge of the situation. The

other three were not taking charge either – but if we describe them as following, it was not very effective in terms of achieving the group’s objective.

In the second example, the participant could only see himself as the leader. Following – relaxing, letting the horse choose the direction and set the pace for a while – was not an option he considered.

As mentioned earlier, these are not isolated examples. I therefore decided to do some research and see whether and if so how we can develop followership with a view to increasing the effectiveness of individuals in situations where they are not able to lead.

## The research





I used the following sources of information to look for answers to my question:

- My own observations from equine-assisted learning workshops with individuals and small groups over the last four years;
- Questionnaires, interviews and discussions with approximately 30 individuals from a range of different professional backgrounds;
- Published research and literature.

## Why hasn’t followership caught on?

In 2008 Robert Kelley, one of the most influential figures in followership research, wrote: ‘If I had a dollar for every time someone said to me, “You need to come up with a word other than ‘follower’ because it’s socially unacceptable,” I would be much wealthier today.’<sup>1</sup>

It appears that being a follower is still ‘socially unacceptable’ today. Some examples of responses to the word ‘follower’ from questionnaires I sent out include:

	<i>‘wolf leading the sheep’s</i> (describing the relationship between leaders and followers) Swiss university student;
	<i>‘If the leader is the brain, followers are the “arms and legs”.</i> Italian manager working at the Swiss headquarters of a global NGO;
	<i>‘...following makes people think they need to check their brains at the door and follow like sheep. Execute, don’t think, reason or question.’</i> Canadian business owner, talking about staff members in her business in Indonesia;
	<i>‘A majority is likely to describe oneself as a follower, without labelling oneself as such (i.e. ‘team player’, ‘reliable’, ‘competent...’) because ‘..it is not a very appealing way to call oneself a follower.’</i> Ukrainian former manager in a multinational organisation, now an independent consultant working in Ukraine.

The literature agrees that the word ‘follower’ is fundamentally and pretty much universally unpopular with those who would be doing the following. However, there is a lot of discussion on how to address the issue.

Some researchers, for example Joseph Rost, have tried to use different words (‘associate’ or ‘collaborator’)<sup>2</sup>. Others have focused on categorising followers into distinct types in order to identify the more effective ones – such as Kelley, with his Effective Follower (as opposed to Yes People, Survivors, Alienated Followers or Sheep)<sup>3</sup> – or Kellerman with her Participants and Activists, Isolates, Bystanders and Diehards<sup>4</sup>.

However, to date, none of these approaches appear to have been widely successful in overcoming our general distaste for the concept of being a ‘follower’.

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Kelley, Rethinking Followership (Chapter 1 of The Art of Followership, edited by Riggio, Chaleff and Lipman-Blumen)

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rost, Followership: An Outmoded Concept (Chapter 5 of The Art of Followership, edited by Riggio, Chaleff and Lipman-Blumen)

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Kelley, In Praise of Followership (Harvard Business Review November 1988)

<sup>4</sup> Kellerman, Barbara What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers, (Harvard Business Review December 2007)

# The hierarchy of authority

Inevitably, research on followership has to include a look at leadership. So what does leadership in an organisation mean? Who are the leaders, and how do they differ from managers and bosses?

Conceptually, I think most people would agree that 'boss' and 'leader' are different, but the word leader has made its way into the vocabulary of authority within organisations, resulting in confusion over the difference between position and behaviour.

In a 2007 article in the Harvard Business Review<sup>5</sup>, the words 'boss', 'leader' and 'management position' are all used to describe the first hierarchical position in which a person has people reporting directly to him or her:

*'Even for the most gifted individuals, the process of becoming a leader is an arduous, albeit rewarding, journey .... The initial test along the path is so fundamental that we often overlook it: becoming a boss for the first time. .... Executives are shaped irrevocably by their first management positions. Decades later, they recall those first months as transformational experiences that forged their leadership philosophies and styles...'*

On the other hand, there is a widely-held notion that anyone can be a leader, which is promoted not just in organisations but throughout the English-speaking education system<sup>6</sup>. Internet research shows parental concern over 'follower' tendencies in their pre-school age children<sup>7</sup>; popular writer on emotional intelligence Travis Bradberry wrote an article which was published in Forbes magazine entitled 8 Powerful Ways to Mold Your Children Into Leaders<sup>8</sup>. Potential applicants to university are encouraged to start early filling up their cvs with activities showing their leadership qualities.

And this notion that we all can and should aspire to be leaders continues within organisations. Cosmetics giant Estée Lauder Companies promotes the concept of 'Leadership From Every Chair'<sup>9</sup>. Presumably they are referring to behaviours and attitudes, not the fact that everyone is the boss in terms of hierarchical position – but given the confusion over terminology, what message is it sending to people in terms of career prospects and rewards?

Then if we consider leadership development, a lot of it seems to be directed only at those already in or destined for a certain level within the positional hierarchy of the organisation. Although as we saw earlier in the Linda Hill article<sup>10</sup>, even first-time managers are encouraged to work on their leadership skills.

If the literature is confused, so were the people I sent questionnaires to. Not necessarily about the concepts, which they seemed to have clear opinions about:

“  
...a boss isn't necessarily a good leader.  
Swiss manager, working in a start-up.  
  
...you lead people, you manage things.  
American consultant, working with  
multinationals around the world.  
”

but perhaps about the vocabulary:

“  
A boss can just give orders (e.g. a Team  
Leader at McD's). A leader defines the  
destination and how to get there.  
”

This respondent may have been aware of the irony of his own example, because later on he wrote:

“  
...you need to have a clear vocabulary  
separating out Leadership and people  
(just) being managed.  
Retired British manager who used to  
work in a Swiss-based multinational  
organisation.  
”

It seems that, whatever our subjective view of the concepts of 'boss' and 'leader', in terms of organisational vocabulary the two are closely linked in the positional hierarchy. This means that those people usually described as leaders are getting greater rewards, whether intangible – power, status, security; or material – salary, stock options, company car etc. So it's perhaps not surprising that people don't want to be identified as 'followers' – they can too easily see themselves or be seen as someone who will never get to the top or have access to the rewards that a leader has.

Based on my research so far, the answer to the first part of my question – whether we can develop followership – is no, if we continue to use the word 'followership'. Until we change the paradigm of leadership within which we currently function, it is hard to even talk about followership, because the very term and concept as it exists within the current paradigm is unacceptable to the majority of people.

5 Linda A. Hill, Becoming the Boss, (Harvard Business Review Jan 2007)

6 research in this area was limited to English-language websites

7 How To Handle My 4 Yr Old's 'follower' Personality (www.circleofmoms.com November 6 2010)

8 Travis Bradberry, 8 Powerful Ways to Mold Your Children Into Leaders (forbes.com, August 11 2015)

9 elcompanies.com

10 Linda A. Hill, Becoming the Boss, (Harvard Business Review Jan 2007)

## A new paradigm

Although it seems dramatic to us now, probably the shift in paradigms from believing the world was flat to believing it is round was quite imperceptible on a day-to-day basis. I'd like to think that we are currently experiencing an equally dramatic paradigm shift which will change the way we look at organisational structure.

In my research, I read an article by Ernest Stech<sup>11</sup> in which he proposes a 'leadership-followership state' paradigm. The principle concept is that leadership and followership are states or conditions which anyone can embody at any time – that leading and following are things that you do, or show, but from moment to moment and not necessarily all the time. As Stech writes: 'This gets away from the notion that a person either is or is not a leader. It also frees the subordinate or follower from being pinned in an inferior place for all time.'

This makes sense to me because it allows for the de-coupling of leadership from the rewards of hierarchical position, thus addressing what I believe to be one of the reasons why the concept of followership is unpopular. I also think it is more realistic in terms of what actually happens in groups when they function effectively.

One of the people I interviewed describes herself as a leader. When I asked her what percentage of her time she spent leading versus following, she estimated 90%. However, when I asked her to tell me what she does in a typical meeting with her team, what she describes sounds very much like the switching between leading and following states that Stech talks about.

She said that she clarifies and sets direction for the team if there is conflict or misunderstanding about where they should be heading – but the direction she sets is not necessarily the direction she has chosen. It could be the suggestion of one of the team members, or the result of an idea from one person built upon and refined by others.

She said that she does a lot of listening to ideas and suggestions. She asks questions to understand the challenges her team members make to her own ideas. She contributes to discussions, and makes sure others have space to do the same.

She also talked about offering different team members different opportunities to contribute – some feel more comfortable challenging or giving suggestions in a smaller group or a one-to-one setting, so if she picks up on someone's body language or facial expression during the meeting, she might catch up with them later to make sure they have the chance to say their piece. Clearly, she has spent some time trying to understand the needs and behaviour of each member of her team, and pays attention to their non-verbal behaviour during meetings.

I believe that Stech's paradigm is starting to be seen in bossless organisations such as W. L. Gore<sup>12</sup> and Morning Star<sup>13</sup>, in which the old hierarchies and traditional leader/bosses (Stech's 'leader-follower' and 'leadership-followership organisational position' paradigms) no longer exist.

Companies outside the technology sector are also starting to embrace the Agile approach, which may be less dramatic than switching to a bossless organisation model but is still revolutionary in its challenge to the traditional hierarchy of authority. As the authors of Harvard Business Review article *Embracing Agile* write: '...Agile methodologies...are a radical alternative to command-and-control style management...'<sup>14</sup>



Lead ☐  
Follow ☐

<sup>11</sup> Ernest L. Stech, A New Leadership-Followership Paradigm (Chapter 4 of *The Art of Followership*, edited by Riggio, Chaleff and Lipman-Blumen)

<sup>12</sup> Gary Hamel, Innovation Democracy: W. L. Gore's Original Management Model (Management Innovation eXchange September 23 2010)

<sup>13</sup> Gary Hamel, First, Let's Fire All the Managers (Harvard Business Review December 2011)

<sup>14</sup> Darrel K. Rigby, Jeff Sutherland and Hirotaka Takeuchi, Embracing Agile (Harvard Business Review May 2016)

# What about behaviour?

Regardless of where we are in terms of a paradigm shift for leadership and followership, I want to look at how we can increase the effectiveness of individuals in situations where they are not able to lead. To explore this, I looked in more detail at the behaviours people use when they are not leading. I started with another exercise from an equine-assisted learning workshop, this time one in which the objective was achieved.

## Scenario 3

Back in the arena with one person and one horse. The brief: get the horse to move around the arena. The challenge: no lead rope, no touching the horse to get it moving.

The participant is allowed some practice time, walking around the arena holding the lead rope which is still attached to the horse's head collar. The lead rope is loose; participant and horse are moving at the same pace, in the same direction.

I call her over and remove the lead rope. The participant is asked to move the horse around the arena without touching the head collar.

She walks away from the horse, which starts moving after her. Horse and participant are perfectly synchronised, the horse mirroring the pace and direction set by the participant as they move around the arena and negotiate various obstacles together. The participant is looking where she wants to go, but has one eye on the horse, and is talking to the horse all the time. One hand is reaching out to the horse, almost but not quite touching it, the other is pointing ahead, signalling the direction. After a few minutes, the horse changes direction and walks away from the participant. She makes several attempts to walk up to the horse and engage its attention again, but can't manage it. I step in with a bit of coaching; the participant listens, asks questions, reflects. She asks for my support, and together we try something different, which enables her to get the horse moving around the obstacles with her again.

In perfect harmony, the pair continue to move around the obstacles until the session is over.

On the surface, if we take the physical definition of leading, i.e. who's in front and who's behind when both parties are moving, it's pretty straightforward – the participant was leading quite a lot of the time, but there was a bit in the middle when the horse stopped following, so the participant was not leading. She then had to go after the horse to get her back, i.e. follow the horse (go in a direction designated by the horse, not by herself).

Looking in more detail, I observed the following behaviours in the participant:

- Setting direction– choosing a path around the arena; walking in the chosen direction;
- Guiding – walking in a particular direction, slightly ahead of the horse, pointing and looking in that direction;
- Giving feedback – talking to the horse, stroking or patting it, using encouraging sounds, using gestures;
- Walking after the horse in the direction set by the horse;
- Receiving feedback/challenges – getting reactions from the horse (changes in body language or behaviour) which caused the participant to change her behaviour in some way;
- Trying to understand the horse's needs/responses/behaviour – watching the horse, asking (the facilitator) questions, trying different tactics and assessing the outcome;
- Listening (to the facilitator), reflecting, trying new behaviour;
- Responding to feedback/challenges (from the horse) – changing behaviour in response to action by the horse.

Looking at it from the other side, what behaviours did the horse show?

- Setting direction – moving decisively away from the course taken by the participant;
- Guiding – walking in a particular direction, ahead of the participant, looking in that direction;
- Giving feedback – lowering or raising head, flicking ears, swishing tail, letting out breath;
- Challenging – stopping, changing direction or walking away from the direction and path set by the participant;
- Walking after the participant in the direction set by the participant;
- Receiving feedback – getting reactions from the participant (stroking, talking, sounds and gestures);
- Responding to feedback from the horse from the participant – changing behaviour in response to action by the participant.

In other words, the same behaviours were shown by the horse and the participant, or to put it another way, by each of them when they were both leading and following.

Going back to the workplace, another of the people I interviewed said that he currently works in a department with a very flat structure. He has a role in the regional headquarters, so he doesn't have people reporting directly to him, but part of his job is to use his regional perspective to help markets choose the best approaches and solutions. The other part is to craft solutions, working with people from different functions who have the knowledge and expertise that he needs to get the results he is looking for. He said he spends about 60% of his time leading and 40% following.



When I asked him to describe what he does when he's leading, he said that he has to:

- Communicate clearly and convincingly, using his technical and business expertise and knowledge of the market (from prior research) to provide rationale for his arguments;
- Have clear objectives;
- Build relationships with people, applying his knowledge of the local culture and sensitivities;
- Listen;
- Ask the right questions;
- Respond actively to feedback and challenges (by doing further research – observing, talking to people, looking at figures etc.).

When I asked him to describe what he does when he's following, he said he has to:

- Communicate clearly and convincingly, using his technical and business expertise to provide input for discussion;
- Have clear objectives;
- Build relationships with people;
- Listen;
- Ask the right questions;
- Challenge the suggestions put forward by others based on critical analysis (based on his own needs).

Again, he described virtually identical behaviours in both situations.

In the article *In Praise of Followership*<sup>15</sup>, Robert Kelley wrote:

*"...the qualities that make effective followers are, confusingly enough, pretty much the same qualities found in some effective leaders. .... effective leaders and effective followers are often the same people playing different parts at different hours of the day."*

Other leading authors on followership agree. Ronald E. Riggio<sup>16</sup>, says:

*'Many of the same qualities that we admire in leaders – competence, motivation, intelligence – are the same qualities that we want in the very best followers.'*

The evidence seems to show that if we were to try and help people become more effective when they're not leading, it would look a lot like helping them become more effective when they are leading, in terms of the qualities and behaviours we would focus on.

This evidence also fits in well with Stech's proposed leadership-followership paradigm<sup>17</sup>, in which leadership and followership are states that we move in and out of according to the needs of the situation. If neither the underlying qualities nor the behaviours change between leading and following, it should be easy to move smoothly from state to state.

<sup>15</sup> Robert E. Kelley, *In Praise of Followers* (Harvard Business Review November 1988)

<sup>16</sup> Ronald E. Riggio, quoted by Gwen Moran 5 Ways Being A Follower Makes You A Better Leader (Fast Company 4 March 2014)

<sup>17</sup> Ernest L. Stech, *A New Leadership-Followership Paradigm* (Chapter 4 of *The Art of Followership*, edited by Riggio, Chaleff and Lipman-Blumen)





# What can be done to help people to become more effective when they're not leading?

Although I do believe that the seeds of change have been sown, and the shift to a new paradigm of leadership (and followership) is underway, I believe that there are concrete actions I can take immediately within my own sphere of influence. I intend to use the research I have done to make immediate changes in my approach to soft skills development.

I will stop using the term 'leadership' in my equine-assisted learning workshops and make significant changes to the approach I take to this topic. I currently offer a collaboration workshop; one option would be to combine work on leadership and followership states with work I already do on collaboration. This would take the emphasis off leadership and highlight the idea of partnership instead.

As well as making it the focus of a specific workshop, I will explore the relationship between leading and following in all my workshops. The very nature of the exercises, involving as they do at least one horse and one person, automatically offers an opportunity to look at both sides of the partnership, something I have not exploited fully in the past. Horses are great followers – they challenge, give feedback and take initiatives all the time, and I can see huge potential for making the learning opportunities even richer by exploring this behaviour in more detail during workshops on communication, assertiveness and self-confidence, team working and so on.

I will offer workshops specifically for working teams, project groups etc. with mixed hierarchical levels attending the same workshops. Currently the only workshops in which this tends to happen are those designed around team working; I would like to extend this to other workshops as well, particularly the collaboration workshop. Doing exercises with the horses is a great opportunity to work outside the constraints of hierarchical authority, and I think it would be a good platform to start discussions about the difference between hierarchies of authority and influence.

All the actions I have outlined above could also be implemented within an organisation, whatever leadership paradigm it is currently operating within. It may be difficult to persuade those who have control over such things to remove the word 'leadership' from development programmes, but bringing in the perspective of the follower would only enrich such a programme.

Similarly, the second action I mention above could be a good way of introducing the concept of leading and following further down the organisation, bringing it into any soft skills programme.

One thing I would recommend for organisations looking to develop follower skills is more emphasis on emotional intelligence development. While the benefits of helping all employees develop their emotional intelligence are wide-ranging, there are specific links to many of the qualities, behaviours and competences that have been identified in effective followers.

For example, the ability to challenge – to speak up when necessary, whether to prevent costly mistakes, stand up for values or ethics which are in danger of being violated, or simply to share a brilliant idea. Kelley<sup>18</sup> and Kellerman<sup>19</sup> both name courage – the ability and willingness to challenge the leader – as one of the key qualities or attributes of an effective follower.

How do you develop that ability? One approach is to work on the emotional intelligence personal competences<sup>20</sup> of self-awareness and self-management. Self-awareness includes accurate self-assessment (knowing one's strengths and limits) and self-confidence (a sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities). Self-management includes transparency (displaying honesty and integrity; trustworthiness) and initiative (readiness to act and seize opportunities). Working to develop self-awareness and self-management, and specifically the competences mentioned, could certainly have a positive impact on a person's ability to speak up when needed.

As well as the personal competencies, emotional intelligence includes social competences – social awareness and relationship management. If we are truly heading for organisations in which the hierarchy of authority will be replaced by a hierarchy of influence, then these social competences are going to be invaluable. In the meantime, building the skills needed for developing others, teamwork and collaboration and conflict management – some of the competences in the relationship management pillar – will only make the leading-following dance smoother.

<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Kelley, In Praise of Followers (Harvard Business Review November 1988)

<sup>19</sup> Barbara Kellerman, What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers (Harvard Business Review December 2007)

<sup>20</sup> Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, Primal Leadership : Realising the Power of Emotional Intelligence (Harvard Business School Press 2002)

## In conclusion

I set out to see whether and if so how we can develop followership with a view to increasing the effectiveness of individuals in situations where they are not able to lead.

I concluded that the concept of followership is too firmly rooted as negative to be usefully discussed at this point; however, there are identifiable competences, behaviours and attitudes which can be developed and which will help people to contribute effectively whether they are leading or not. Hopefully a shift in our leadership paradigm is already underway, and if we continue to raise awareness and develop competences in line with changing practices and attitudes, we will reach the point of being able to address both leadership and followership equally.



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Roffey Park is committed to improving the world of work through research and education in the fields of leadership and organisational development. The research competition helps achieve that objective by providing an opportunity for practitioners and academics working in leadership and organisational development to share their research and ideas with peers and all those with an interest in improving working lives. The competition is made possible through the Val Hammond Fund. Val, formerly Roffey Park's Chair and Chief Executive, is a keen supporter of Roffey Park's proud tradition as a charitable research institute and is still deeply engaged in Roffey's research work through her participation in Roffey's research advisory group.

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