

The Leader with Seven Faces

by Leandro Herrero

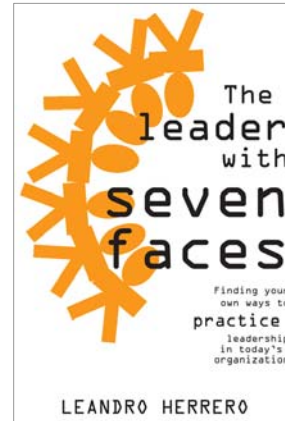
meetingminds (2006)

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I was sent a copy of Leandro Herrero's new book, [The Leader with Seven Faces](#), in hopes that I would enjoy it. I've interacted with Leandro a few times and have enjoyed his prior writings, which he tells me have made it into this book.

The basic idea behind the book is that leadership is exhibited in many different ways, which Herrero calls Seven Faces. These are

1. **What you say:** language
2. **Where you go:** maps, direction
3. **What you build:** spaces, structures
4. **What you care about:** value, beliefs
5. **How you do it:** drivers, style
6. **What you are:** identity, responsibility
7. **What you do:** role model, practice



Not all leaders have all of these faces - most usually exhibit only a few. But one of the purposes of this book is to help people see that these faces exist and help them think that in some situations, an unfamiliar face might be more appropriate than the one they always use. I think here of the discussions of learning and teaching styles. As a teacher, if you realize that there are multiple learning styles, it helps raise the awareness of other ways to instruct your students.

The book is written in a very conversational style, which is both engaging and frustrating. Engaging from the perspective that it feels like Herrero is sitting with the reader. He takes you through his thoughts and shows how leaders need to behave with positive and negative examples. And frustrating in that a number of discussions feel like rants about the "way things are done" without a useful resolution.

I enjoyed the section on trust in the "what you do" section (p 272ff). I have been thinking trust is one of those hidden aspects of knowledge management (and people in general).

And in the same section, there was a discussion of "challenging the default position" of organizations, which leads to discussions of "change" and "resistance to change" that is helpful in my thinking on this topic (p 283ff). I particularly like the comment that process-centric view, such as Kotter's much discussed steps for change, does more to make people feel like change is manageable. Herrero's perspective is much more cyclic and network-like than linear.

As I started reading the book back in the fall, I came across this item from Andrew Rixon at Anecdote that nicely parallels Herrero's seven faces with, The 7 story forms valued within organisations. I note that many of these story types have connections to Herrero's faces.

“When is storytelling valued within your organisation?” was one of the questions we explored within our [Australian wide survey on awareness and attitudes of story and narrative techniques in organisations](#). Categorising the responses from almost 400 senior executives and decision makers from public and private organisations across Australia, there emerged 7 popular story forms. Those were:

- Hero stories – seen particularly for sales, customer service
- Success stories
- Inspirational stories
- “Lessons/Learning” stories
- “Who we are” stories – an embodiment of company values in action, not just espoused values
- “How we got here” stories – stories exploring a companies history and foundations
- “My time here” stories – provides insight into the individuals work/life history with the organisation

And one last, humorous tidbit from Seven Faces (p 34): In 1966 Alan Sokal, a professor of physics at NYU, submitted and had published an article, *Transgressing the Boundaries: towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity*, which was entirely fantastic. This recalls the program some students at MIT assembled to automatically generate scientific-sounding text and had it accepted before divulging the scam.

Review by Jack Vinson - [Knowledge Jolt with Jack](#) - 19th March 2007