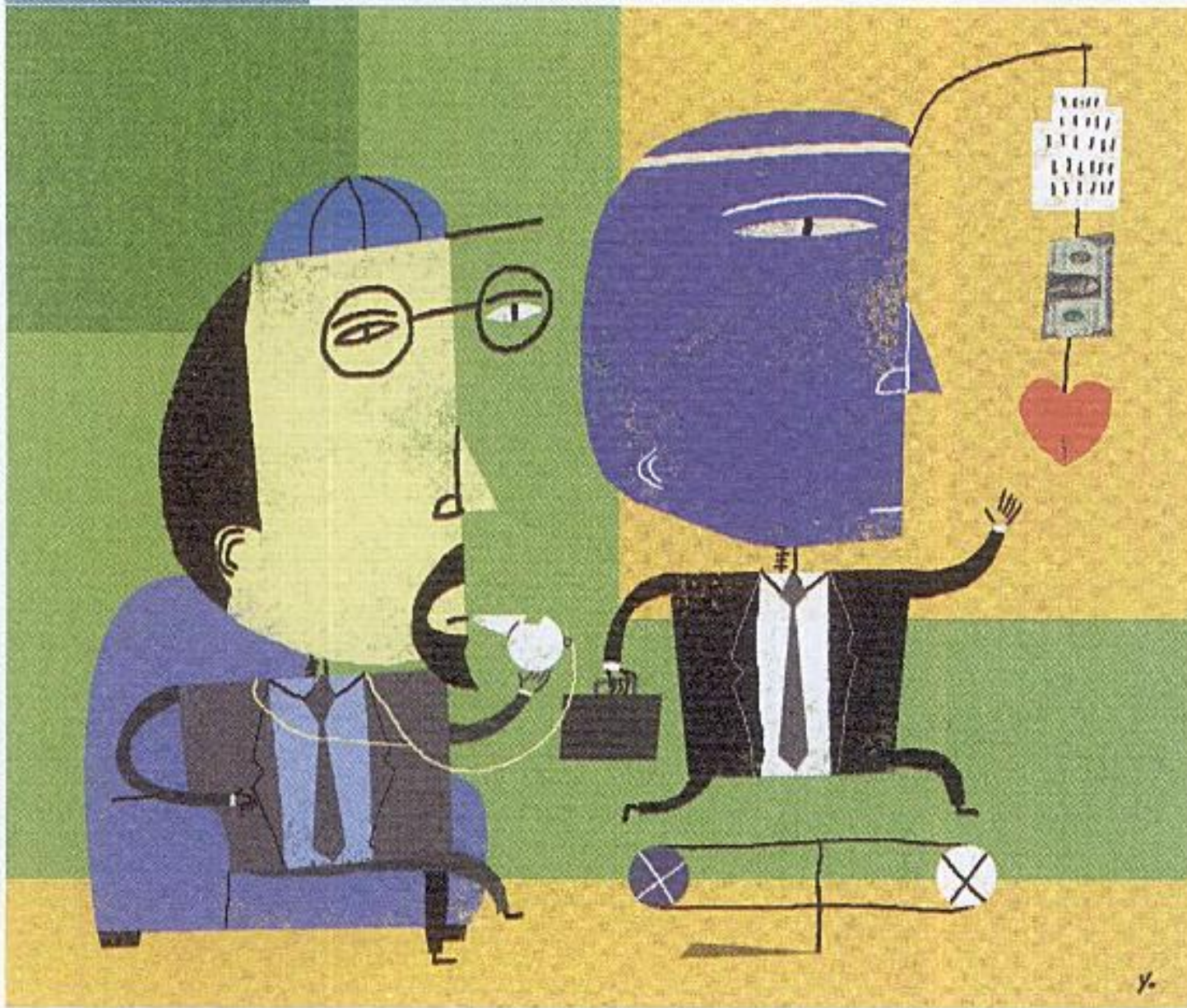


[On the coach]



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leadership for all

Common definitions of leadership are narrow and elitist but the decision to lead is open to anyone willing to take up the challenge by implementing a few simple principles.

WE ARE OFTEN CALLED UPON TO COACH LEADERS. BEFORE we became coaches we had an overworked and very shallow definition of what leadership is. Most often that definition revolves around the following:

- ▶ leadership is linked to some kind of position e.g. president, manager or family head;
- ▶ leadership consists of certain traits or competencies – be they physical, intellectual or emotional;
- ▶ leadership requires followers to designate who plays the role of leader

This gets us stuck into coaching against some set of real or imagined competencies and becomes a benchmarking and mirror-gazing exercise. The challenge with the above definitions is that they can become so restrictive and elitist that they end up applying to only a small handful of people. You are left with the impression that leadership becomes a difficult ascension through various levels and has to assemble a following for the title to be valid. So, ironically, you already have to be a leader before you can become a leader. This is how most people we interact with think about leadership – as exclusive.

But our world today needs countless leaders. It needs each of us to realise that we are being asked to lead – even if that is just ourselves – and make something of the chaos and crisis around us. We'd like to propose that leading is a choice available to anyone, and coaching is a means to unlock the possibilities of deciding to lead as a 'way of being' in our lives. So what does this involve?

Our holistic definition of leadership that we ask people to confront in their own lives is:

- ▶ leading is about showing up in an authentic way;
- ▶ leading is about taking responsibility for our own reactions to life;
- ▶ leading is about being responsive in creating a way of being in life that is useful and meaningful;
- ▶ leading is about offering ourselves in service of the things that those around us wish to achieve.

So our aim as coaches is to present a view of leadership that provides a way of allowing people to start seeking the leader within all of us – not just an exclusive few. That is something we can coach in everyone with compelling results.