



Philosophically Speaking —What, Factors Constitute Great Nations, Great Leaders, and Great Followers

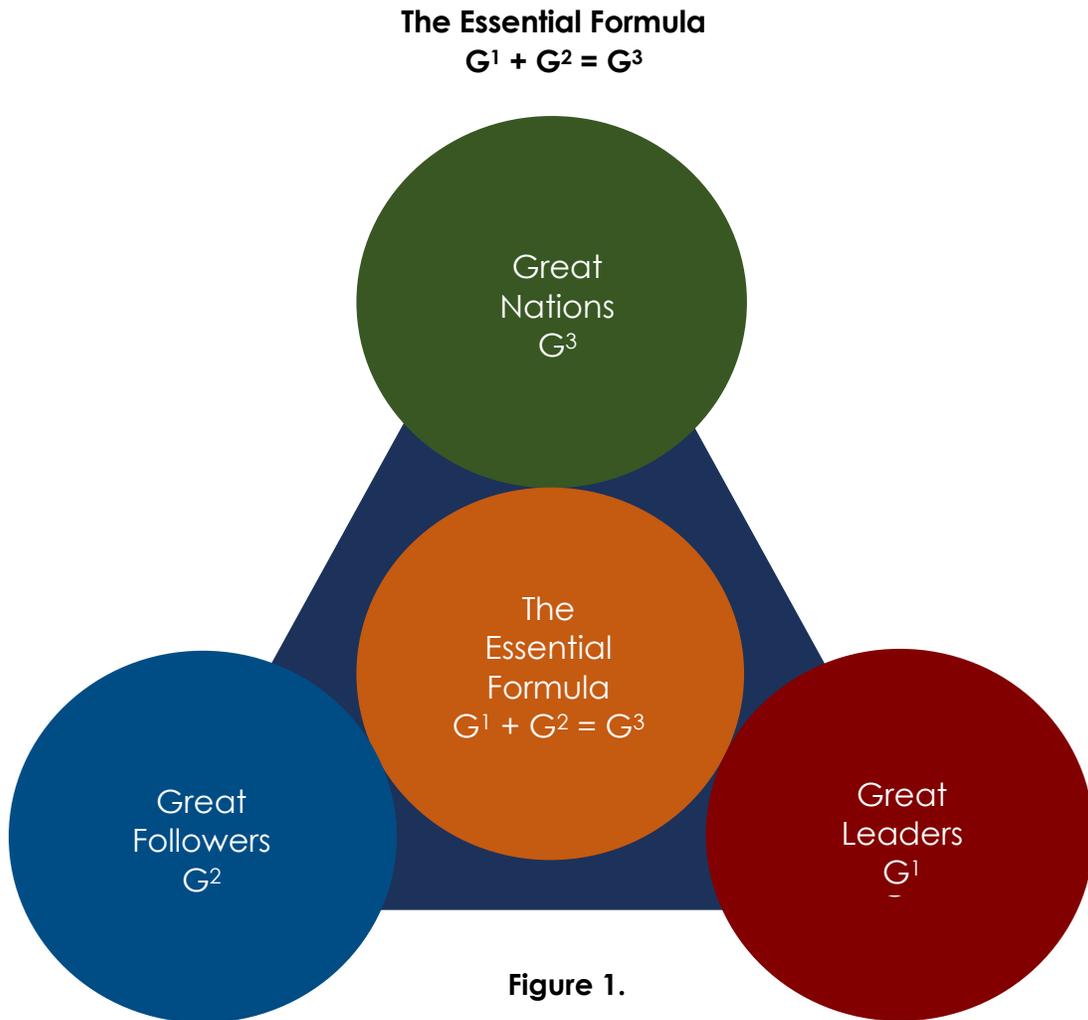
15 September 2018 | Errol A. Gibbs

“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself” —Henry Ward Beecher (1813 –1887).

The world has witnessed many different political systems of leadership (from dictatorship to democracy), and many types of leaders (from autocratic to democratic) but what factors constitute great nations, great Leaders, and great followers? Another perspective is that great leaders, enabled by great followers create great nations that help to create a human ecosystem for people to grow, prosper and achieve their highest ideals.

In a general sense, one can view leadership from two distinct perspectives: (1) leadership, which derives its authority from God, and (2) leadership, which derives its authority from human beings. Regardless of the origin of leadership and its inherent authority, leadership should never be the imposition of one’s will upon others. God, who

is the supreme authority for humanity, does not impose His will on humankind. The “Big Question” then becomes “Where does this desire to create great nations begin?” It begins with great leaders and great followers (**See: Figure 1**). Following are five factors that constitute great leaders, great followers, and therefore great nations:



FIVE FACTORS THAT CONSTITUTE GREAT LEADERSHIP —G¹



Great leadership begins with a leader with a vision, enabled by great followers. Great leaders have a worldview that squares with the complex needs of an interconnected postmodern world. Great leaders prepare themselves for leadership through diligent research, industrious study, and experiential knowledge. There is a tendency to assume that what qualifies the individual as a leader is his or her position of power, election to an office, head of an organization, or personal attributes – erudition, charisma, or courage.

1. Great leaders lead by spirit, mindfulness, integrity, and authenticity

Great leaders lead by spirit, mindfulness, integrity, and authenticity. They recognize that God’s guidance ought to be at the heart and center of leadership. They also

acknowledge that the people are sovereign. Great leaders seek to develop daily — spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, and physically. Great leadership is a call for the exercise of moral duty without regard to color, race, culture, language, religion, nationality, or social or economic status. The ethical leader diligently strives to create opportunities for others to grow and achieve their highest productive capacity, while taking into consideration human strengths, weaknesses, and limitations —inherent, societal, or self-induced.

2. Great leaders acknowledge that the core strengths of leadership are humility and servanthood

Great leaders acknowledge that the core strengths of leadership are humility and servanthood. Servant leadership is a way of life. Only the leader who serves sacrificially and selflessly is qualified to lead. Great leaders make available equitable opportunities for the growth and development of their followers. He or she serves to achieve the better interest of his or her followers, which brings increased opportunities for self-transformation as they give consistent service to those whom they lead. Great leaders accept accountability for the mistakes of the group. They are quick to reward and slow to penalize those who follow.

3. Great leaders foster a common bond with their followers

Great leaders are aware of the importance of creating a common bond with their followers. Non-homogeneous nations in the twenty-first century often lead to inadvertent bias, conscious or subconscious prejudice against others with whom leaders do not have a common bond or heritage. Great leaders show respect, empathy, and care for those who follow their lead, and they take pride in their accomplishments, notwithstanding their differences in race, color, culture, religion, or social and economic class. Great leaders foster a win-win proposition focusing on the goals of the undertaking, as they place the interest of the people and nation before personal interest.

4. Great leaders communicate a clear vision and mission

Great leaders communicate a clear vision and mission. They create opportunities for others to be part of the intellectual pool of visionaries, to participate in the process, and to share (equitably) in the rewards of success —financially. Great leaders lead by a council as opposed to by a single-minded ideology that can have dire consequences. He or she sees not only through his or her eyes but also through the eyes of those who follow. Great leaders understand that a shared vision is the most salient attribute that determines the success or failure of an undertaking. This type of leadership is essential, because those who lead and those who follow may see problems or opportunities from a different vantage point.

5. Great leaders inspire, encourage, and motivate followers for success

Great leaders inspire, encourage, and motivate followers for success. They are not reluctant to engage followers who might be more qualified than they are. Great leaders lead by example and not by force or heavy-handedness. They set clear goals and objectives, and they lead with integrity and transparency. They direct, motivate,

teach, listen, encourage, participate, grow, mentor, and reward followers. These leadership attributes portray a leader as one who seeks to develop those who follow as a way of life, rather than to exploit human weakness and inadequacies. Great leaders do not measure their success purely in material achievements. Their followers esteem them for their business integrity, acumen, and transparency, as well. Following are five factors that constitute great followers:

FIVE FACTORS THAT CONSTITUTE GREAT FOLLOWERS —G²



Great followers follow great leaders. Paradoxically, following great leaders can be a double-edged sword that could either strengthen or weaken a nation. The most notable are the views of the capitalist-minded versus the socialist-minded political leadership agenda. Great leaders who are on either side of this leadership spectrum may lead a particular group and not the entire nation. This type of leadership diminishes the capacity of a nation to achieve its full greatness, and at the same time appease all followers.

1. Great followers understand and support the vision and mission

Great followers seek to understand and support the vision and mission. Except for some adolescences, every individual in the world performs the role of leader and follower at some level. Followers understand the consequences of the failure of a mission and work to ensure leadership success. Followers take an active or passive role in an undertaking. They seek clarity and strive to understand their role, responsibility, and accountability associated with the vision and mission to achieve success for the leader. They make the necessary contribution in time, money, and human effort to ensure mission success and national unity.

2. Great followers have the courage to question their leaders

Great followers have the courage to question leaders when a vision and mission seem unclear, though they have respect for them. Great followers know that leadership responsibility and accountability are two different operatives. On the one hand, a law enforcement officer has the inherent authority that demands compliance, but the position of leadership is not necessarily inherent in his or her title. On the other hand, a school principal has both leadership responsibility and accountability as a function of his or her title. Notwithstanding, followers respond more effectively to "moral persuasion."

3. Great followers help to shape the vision and mission

Great followers help to shape the vision and mission and not follow blindly. They seek to understand better the vision and the mission. They inquire about consequences and inherent human value of the proposition. They strive for a win-win proposition for everyone involved in the vision and mission. Great followers challenge the intent of the mission if it goes against certain moral and ethical principles, typical of a "whistle-

blower" with a legitimate reason to "blow the whistle." This type of follower would be willing to sacrifice his or her career for the good of the mission. A follower who "blows the whistle" for selfish motives without seeking the opportunity to help shape the mission would not be considered a great follower.

4. Great followers inspire leaders and other followers

Great followers inspire leaders and other followers. They go "above and beyond" mere following and helps leaders and companion followers to form powerful bonds to seek opportunities to bring innovative ideas to the table. They maintain a positive attitude in an undertaking even if it challenges the group dynamics. They evaluate ideas for viability, not merely for personal gratification, and not leave the plans for others to develop. Great followers are transparent; they perform their functions with spirit, integrity, mindfulness, and authenticity. They demonstrate a friendly personality that is infectious. They would share the success of an undertaking, even if they made the most significant contribution to it.

5. Great followers seek to become great leaders

Great followers seek to become leaders, not for personal gratification, but because they have something worthwhile to contribute to an office or undertaking. Great followers are servant leaders who only pursue leadership when they have achieved the requisite experience, expertise, and maturity to lead. Great followers are researchers and mentors. They are never in competition with leaders or with other followers. They prefer to be confident that they are capable of leading with a broad base of knowledge sufficient to manage situations that might challenge leadership capacity. A great nation cannot exist without great followers. Following are five factors that constitute great nations:

FIVE FACTORS THAT CONSTITUTE GREAT NATIONS —G³



What are the factors that constitute great nations? The turbulent twenty-first century presents the greatest challenge to the search for a great nation that can be a "light on the hill" for other nations to follow. Paradoxically, most of the calamities that befall the developed, developing or underdeveloped countries are either "humanly inspired," "humanly caused," or "natural disasters." At the "top of the list" human calamities reign in the form of catastrophic wars and the exponential rise in refugees of war (<http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>).

1. Great nations recognize that the people are sovereign

Great nations recognize that the people are sovereign. They hold sacred the life of all humankind, whether it is the life of a newborn baby or the life of one who has done great harm to humanity. That does not preclude criminal justice. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth" —Abraham

Lincoln (1809—1865). Over the past several decades, Western nations have made great efforts to ensure that leadership and authority are unbiased and transparent, particularly in the public services and in public corporations. Over the centuries, Western nations have written and amended constitutions, Charters of Rights, and Freedoms enacted civil rights laws and penned employment equity laws for the protection of citizens. They have formed Human Rights Commissions and other equity panels to combat all forms of systemic discrimination in the private and public square.

2. Great nations ensure that all of its citizens receive social and economic justice

Great nations ensure that all of its citizens receive social and economic justice, notwithstanding their social and economic status, educational standing, race, religion, culture, or color. Great nations foster a real sense of patriotism that is inclusive of native-born and those who have adopted the nation as their home. Great nations are the bedrock and beacon of “high ideals” for non-democratic nations to follow. In great nations, the voices such as the religious, the philosophers, the intellectuals, the academics, the engineers, the architects, the accountants, and the economists resonate with viable strategies for prison rehabilitation, healthcare, social justice, educational and intellectual development, innovation, and sustainable (macro level) job creation infrastructure.

3. Great nations are healthy human ecosystems for patriotism to flourish

Great nations are healthy human ecosystems for patriotism to flourish in the “Global Village.” Great nations have a strong moral foundation to overcome the fear of others coming from cultural areas that are less sophisticated. Great nations provide a sense of inclusion in a competitive arena of races, colors, cultures, and diminishing job prospects. Great nations offer many benefits to the understanding of the “new” global culture that challenges the homogeneous nation lifestyles of the past. Great nations can overcome these challenges through great leadership that promotes patriotism—love for people and country as the ideal. Great nations understand the devastating impact of global challenges such as terrorism, human trafficking, genocide, poverty, hunger, and the deficit caused in combatting these ills of humanity.

4. Great nations exercise restraint notwithstanding their great military might

Great nations exercise great restraint notwithstanding their great military might. They may face provocation that occurs between and among nations. Great nations that have engaged in and witnessed the human carnage of war up throughout the ages strive for an era of peacefulness through international agencies such as the United Nations (UN) (1945). Their sophisticated military Industrial complexes (MIC) are deterrents rather than means of pre-empting peaceful negotiated settlements.

Great nations know that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) upon the Earth have made human life more vulnerable, and have brought greater fear of human annihilation in a thermo-nuclear war (WWIII). Great nations know that the time on the Doomsday Clock is 2 minutes to midnight courtesy (<https://thebulletin.org/2018-doomsday-clock-statement/>). Great nations conscript all of the youths of the nation in the army or reserves to create emergency preparedness to respond to national and international disasters rather than war.

5. Great nations institute a Ministry of Happiness (MOH¹) and a Minister of Happiness (MOH²). They have a “happiness manifesto”

Great nations understand that “all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” —Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). Great leaders of great nations and great followers know that happiness has the highest potency and capacity to transform the lives of individuals, families, communities, corporations, and nations, notwithstanding race, religion, color, or culture. Hence, every country should institute a Ministry of Happiness (MOH¹) and a Minister of Happiness (MOH²), as core leadership initiatives (1, 2 to undergird other ministries of government in achieving national objectives), vital to a higher Personal Happiness Index (PHI) and National Happiness Index (NHI) of the country (<https://www.gibbshappinessindex.com>).

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