

**Leadership for India Inc: Practical Concepts and Constructs**  
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**Week - 12**  
**Legendary Leadership**  
**Lecture - 56**  
**Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam**  
**President without Precedent**

Hi Friends, welcome to the NPTEL course Leadership for India Inc: Practical Concepts and Constructs. We are in week 12 our final week of this course discussing Legendary Leadership. During this week, we will study 5 leaders from the fields of public eminence, academic excellence, industrial competitiveness, pharmaceutical innovation and conglomerate development.

These iconic leaders teach us several insights for development of leadership as a knowledge domain. The course concludes with a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, a leader who defies any comparison nationally and internationally.

It builds a model of authentic leadership drawing 10 instructive lessons from his life. In conclusion, we will conduct a broad review of our course and understand the key takeaways from this course.

In this lecture, we will focus on Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, the president without precedent.

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### Dr A P J Abdul Kalam: President without Precedent



Dr Abdul Kalam was an accomplished Indian aerospace scientist who became the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India between 2002 and 2007. Widely referred to as an intellectual "People's President", after his term, he returned to his civilian life of education, writing and public service. He always liked sharing his thoughts with students and children.



Dr A P J Abdul Kalam (1931-2015)

The universal respect and affection Dr Abdul Kalam commanded from the vast millions of India has few comparisons in modern India. He had many firsts to his credit from being the driving force for a number of civilian space and military missile technologies to being the first people's President and an ordinary Indian extraordinaire!



The most glowing and compelling tribute to the legacy of Dr Abdul Kalam was penned by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and is a must-read for everyone (<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/bharat-has-lost-a-ratna-pm-modi-on-apj-abdul-kalam-s-death/article1-1374010.aspx>).

Dr. Abdul Kalam was an accomplished Indian aerospace scientist, who became the 11th president of India between 2002 and 2007, widely referred to as an intellectual people's president. After his term, he returned to his civilian life of education, writing and public service. He always liked sharing his thoughts with students and children.

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### Dr A P J Abdul Kalam: President without Precedent



Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a glowing tribute to former president APJ Abdul Kalam calling him his 'marg darshak' (guide) who epitomized the values of self-restraint, sacrifice and compassion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the scientist-President never measured success by material possessions.



Prime Minister said, "BHARAT has lost a Ratna, but the light from this jewel will guide us towards APJ Abdul Kalam's dream-destination: India as a knowledge superpower, in the first rank of nations. Our scientist-President - and one who was genuinely loved and admired across the masses - never measured success by material possessions. For him, the counterpoint to poverty was the wealth of knowledge, in both its scientific and spiritual manifestations. As a hero of our defence programme, he shifted horizons; and as a seer of the spirit, he sought to liberate doctrine from the narrow confines of partisan tension to the transcendental space of harmony."



Dr Abdul Kalam receiving Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award from K R Narayanan, President of India in 1997

Dr Abdul Kalam demonstrated the true meaning of scientific self-reliance by designing and developing space missiles while at Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).



Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a glowing tribute to former president A P J Abdul Kalam calling him his 'marg darshak' guide who epitomized the values of self-restraint, sacrifice and compassion. Here, we see our Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the former president Abdul Kalam. Dr. Abdul Kalam receiving Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award from K. R. Narayanan, president of India in 1997 is also shown.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, the scientist-president never measured success by material possessions. The Prime Minister said, "BHARATH has lost a Ratna, but the light from this jewel will guide us towards the APJ Abdul Kalam's dream destination, India as a knowledge superpower, in the first rank of nations.

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Dr. Abdul Kalam demonstrated the true meaning of scientific self-reliance by designing and developing space missiles while at Defence Research and Development Organization, DRDO; a government of India organization.

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### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tribute - 1

The tribute by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a comprehensive and succinct sweep of what Dr Abdul Kalam stood for in his life, endearing himself to all sections of the Indian society.




Prime Minister said, "Every great life is a prism, and we bathe in those rays that find their way to us. His profound idealism was secure because it rested on a foundation of realism. Every child of deprivation is a realist. Poverty does not encourage illusions. Poverty is a terrible inheritance; a child can be defeated even before he or she has begun to dream. But Kalamji refused to be defeated by circumstances. As a boy, he had to support his studies by earning money as a newspaper vendor; today, page after page of the same newspapers are filled with his obituary notices. He said that he would not be presumptuous enough to say that his life could be a role model for anybody; but if some poor child living in an obscure and underprivileged social setting found some solace in the way his destiny had been shaped, it could perhaps help such children liberate themselves from the bondage of illusory backwardness and helplessness. He is my marg darshak, as well as that of every such child."

**Dr Abdul Kalam's Life  
A Role Model**

- Born into rural poverty
- Self-made as an outstanding leader of science
- An inspiring beacon for children and youngsters
- Became a highly loved and respected People's President

The above succinctly summarizes what Dr Kalam's life and accomplishments stand for. Dr Kalam stands out as an outstanding developmental role model for students and youngsters.



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Dr. Abdul Kalam's life is a role model because he was born into abject rural poverty. He was a self-made person and became an outstanding leader of science. He was an inspiring beacon for children and youngsters. He became a highly loved and respected People's President.

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### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tribute - 2

In his tribute, Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought out the child-like simplicity of Dr Kalam and at the same time his remarkable ability to connect with students. He left no stone unturned to educate children on good values.

Prime Minister continued, "His character, commitment and inspirational vision shine through his life. He was unencumbered by ego; flattery left him cold. He was equally at ease before an audience of suave, globe-trotting ministers and a class of young students. The first thing that struck one about him was that, uniquely, he combined the honesty of a child with the energy of a teenager and the maturity of an adult. He took little from the world, and gave all he could to society. A man of deep faith, he epitomized the three great virtues of our civilization: dama, self-restraint, dana, sacrifice; and daya, compassion."

The ability of Dr Kalam to connect the hoary principles of Indian culture and civilization to the needs of modern times and mould positive thinking has been phenomenal.

Virtues of Indian Civilization

Dama (Self-reliant)

Dana (Sacrifice)

Daya (Compassion)



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The ability of Dr. Kalam to connect the hoary principles of Indian culture and civilization to the needs of modern times and mould positive thinking has been phenomenal and his remarkable ability to connect with students and children was also equally phenomenal.

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### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tribute - 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also pointed out how Dr Kalam's intellectual accomplishments and patriotic fervour combined to position India strongly in the defence arena.



"But this persona was powered by the fire of endeavour. Dr Kalam's vision for the nation was anchored in freedom, development and strength. Given our history, freedom had a political context of course; but it also included freedom of the mind and expansion of intellectual space. He wanted India to leap out of the under-developed trough, and eliminate the curse of poverty through inclusive economic growth. Wisely, he suggested that politicians spend only 30% of their time on politics, and 70% on development; a suggestion which he often followed up by calling in MPs from a state and discussing the socio-economic issues of their region with them. The third pillar, strength, was not born of aggression, but of understanding. An insecure nation will rarely discover the route to prosperity. Strength commands respect. His contributions in our nuclear and space achievements have given India the muscle to be confident of her place in the region and the world."



Freedom needs to be accompanied by development for a nation to acquire strength. This is true of nations as well as individuals. Dr Kalam's work to make India stronger through his defence projects are based on this philosophy.

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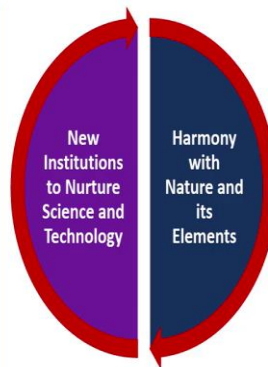
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#### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tribute - 4

Prime Minister Narendra Modi while paying the glowing tribute to former president APJ Abdul Kalam also touched upon how his legacy of science and technology could be institutionalized.



"Dr Abdul Kalam's memory is best honoured by the creation of new institutions that nurture science and technology, and enable us to find a beneficial equation with the awesome power of nature. Too often, greed makes us predators of our environment. Kalamji saw poetry in a tree, and energy that could be harnessed in water, wind and sun. We should learn to look at our world through his eyes, and with the same missionary zeal."



Nature can be reclaimed and preserved and sustainability ensured with judicious use of science and technology. As discussed earlier in this course, leaders need to utilize science and technology for sustainability.



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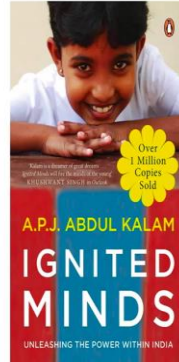
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### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Tribute - 5



The life and teachings of Dr Abdul Kalam reflect the importance of teaching, knowledge sharing and value building. Such a mentor is a gift to the society. The concluding part of Modiji's tribute brings out this emotionally.

"Human beings can shape their lives through will, persistence, ability and sheer courage. But we have not been given the right to script where we are born, or how and when we die. However, if Kalamji had been offered an option, this is how he would perhaps have chosen to say goodbye: on his feet, and in front of a classroom of his beloved students. As a bachelor, he was childless. But that is wrong. He was a father to every Indian child, teaching, cajoling, urging, exciting, clearing darkness wherever he found it with the radiance of his vision and the passion of his involvement. He saw the future, and showed the way. As I entered the room where his body lay in state, I noticed the painting at the entrance that depicted a few lines from an inspirational book he wrote for children, Ignited Minds. The good that he did will not be interred with his bones, because his children will preserve his memory through their lives and work, and gift it to their children."



Dr Abdul Kalam's book Ignited Minds is a 'must read' book containing several progressive messages for building a value-based and knowledge-based society.

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He saw the future, and showed the way. Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded, as I entered the room, where his body lay in state, I noticed the painting at the entrance that depicted a few lines from an inspirational book he wrote for children, Ignited Minds. I show the image by the side. The good that he did will not be interred with his bones, because his children will preserve his memory through their lives and work, and gift it to their children."



Dr. Abdul Kalam's book *Ignited Minds* is a 'must read' book containing several progressive messages for building a value-based and knowledge-based society.

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### Messaging through Inspiring Books

Dr Abdul Kalam made it a point to visit colleges and universities, and also interact with school children and college students in literary forums. He used all the sessions to exhort the audience to aim higher.

Addressing a session over his book 'Ignited Minds' at Jaipur Literature Festival he said, "Small aim is a crime, have great aim."

Kalam's session was interactive with the participants and he inspired them to set their aim high and to bring glory to the nation while being a good member of the family, nation and the world. He told the youth that success and failure will be there in life, and you have to defeat the fear.

Kalam's session was one of the rare sessions of Jaipur Literature Festival which not only witnessed a jam-packed audience but also heard the gathering cheering the guest shouting hip-hip hurray on his arrival. Majority of the audience were school children and youth.

Sharing his life experience from how keen he was to fly from his childhood, to being an aeronautical engineer, making missiles and satellites, and being the president of India, he said, "If four things are followed-having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work and perseverance then anything can be achieved."

He started the session with a message: Wings to fly- believe that I am born with potential, goodness and trust, idea and dreams, greatness and confidence. And I am not meant for crawling because I have wings and I will fly.

Dr Abdul Kalam's messages were also about bringing out leadership in every individual, based on aspiration, competence, confidence and achievement.



Source: Abdul Kalam with Bilal Debnayal-e-session-on-The-History-Dr-APJ-Abdul-Kalam-at-the-festival-Photo-Mohd-Zaki-IT

"Sometime you don't get what you want."

Dr Kalam's message is "If you dream and aim in life, gain and acquire knowledge and do hard work, defeat the problem then you will succeed."



Dr. Abdul Kalam was a man of letters. He was man of science and technology; but more fundamentally, he was a man of letters. He made it a point to visit colleges and universities, and also interact with school children and college students in literary forums. He used all the sessions to exhort the audience to aim higher.

Addressing a session over his book, *Ignited Minds* at Jaipur Literature Festival he said, "Small aim is a crime, have great aim." Kalam's session was interactive with the participants and he inspired them to set their aim high and to bring glory to the nation while being a good member of the family, nation and the world. He told the youth that success and failure will be there in life, and you have to defeat the fear.

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said, “If four things have followed-having a great aim, acquiring knowledge, hard work and perseverance then anything can be achieved.”


He started the session with a message - Wings to fly-believe that I am born with potential, goodness and trust, idea and dreams, greatness and confidence. And I am not meant for crawling because I have wings and I will fly.” He was also an inspirational realist. Sometimes you do not get what you want. Dr. Kalam’s messages is “If you dream and aim in life, gain and acquire knowledge and do hard work, defeat the problem then you will succeed.”

Dr Abdul Kalam’s messages were also about bringing out leadership in every individual, based on aspiration, competence, confidence and achievement. His life which was an open book and continues to be an inspiring book. Dr. Abdul Kalam’s life which is an inspirational life will provide us with several leadership insights as we mellow what has been said so far and also, go through what I am going to lay out for you.

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**The Many Facets of Dr Kalam - 1**

Dr Kalam was an amazing combination of many versatile parts; a self-developed technocrat from very humble beginnings, he became an icon of scientific accomplishments, academic inspiration, and national governance.




- A brilliant leader of science and technology who launched (literally!) many space and missile projects
- A passionate believer in the development of indigenous science and technology
- A connoisseur of art and music – an ardent fan of M S Subbulakshmi, the legendary singer, and a consummate player of Veena
- A selfless man who entrusted all his savings to a trust, PURU
- A visionary and dreamer with practical solutions for the planet’s issues

A leader of many parts

Science and Technology

Arts and Humanism

Dr Abdul Kalam demonstrated the true meaning of scientific self-reliance by designing and developing space missiles while at Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).



There are many facets of Dr. Abdul Kalam, he was an amazing combination of many versatile parts; a self-developed technocrat from very humble beginnings. He became an icon of scientific accomplishments, academic inspiration, and national governance.

Science and technology as well as arts and humanism constituted his leadership profile, his individual profile. His personality was that way very unique. A brilliant leader of

science and technology who launched literally many space and missile projects. A passionate believer in the development of indigenous science and technology.

A connoisseur of art and music, an ardent fan of legendry M. S. Subbalakshmi, the singer from south India and a consummate player of Veena. A selfless man who entrusted all his savings to a trust, PURU. A visionary and dreamer with practical solutions for the planet's issues. Dr. Abdul Kalam demonstrated the true meaning of scientific and technological self-reliance by designing and developing space missiles while at DRDO.

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### The Many Facets of Dr Kalam - 2

Dr Kalam is remembered for his many contributions to education and for his belief in motivating and inspiring school children and India's youth. Some of his masterly traits in this domain were endearing and invigorating.



It is this unique combination of multiple parts that makes Dr Abdul Kalam a truly differentiated leader. There are a few inspirational thoughts that flow from the observation of the life and works of Dr Kalam which must be the guideposts for all truly indigenous leaders.



There are more facets of Dr. Kalam. He will be remembered for his many contributions to education and for his belief in motivating and inspiring school children and India's youth. Some of his masterly traits in this domain were endearing and invigorating. A bundle of joy and happiness with children and an inspirational icon for youth. An enthralling coach and mentor for students and researchers. A humanist who never allowed himself to be distanced from people.

A thoughtful writer with an impressive fusion of knowledge, ideation and execution. A builder of institutions and a renaissance leader in all sense of the term. He was a true secularist too. Very proficient in his Islamic religion. He was also versatile with Hindu scriptures. It is this unique combination of multiple parts that makes Dr. Abdul Kalam a truly differentiated leader. There are a few inspirational thoughts that flow from the

observation of the life and works of Dr. Kalam which must be the guide post for all truly indigenous aspirational leaders.

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**Indigenous, Ingenious**

In an era where international education, higher degrees and global stints are seen as hallmarks of superiority, Dr Kalam epitomizes the quintessential Indian spirit that could shape a genius from the poor village roots of Rameshwaram, in South Tamil Nadu.



A genius shaped through India's own MIT (Madras Institute Technology) with an engineering degree and through India's own public sector research laboratories (DRDL/DRDO and ISRO) to lead some of the most prestigious defence technology projects for India.

As Dr Kalam gratefully acknowledges, his interest in education had been kindled by relatives and friends who motivated him to study, school teachers who inspired him to excel and educational institutions which provided the necessary foundations.

Dr Kalam's education and career had been shaped and influenced by some of the best professors and best space and defence scientists who believed in the development of indigenous science and technology.



In an era, where international education, higher degrees and global stints are seen as hallmarks of superiority, Dr. Kalam epitomizes the quintessential Indian spirit that could shape a genius from the poor village routes of Rameshwaram, in South India.

Dr. Abdul Kalam was a genius shaped through India's own MIT, Madras Institute of Technology with an engineering degree and through India's own public sector research laboratories DRDL, DRDO and ISRO. He led some of the most prestigious defence technology projects for India.

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Dr. Kalam's education and career had been shaped and influenced by some of the best professors and best space and defence scientists who believed in the development of indigenous science and technology. In many parts of this course, I have talked about mentoring, nurturing, the importance of leaders acting as and living as coaches and mentors for youngsters. This is a living example of the importance of that particular aspect of leadership.

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### Great Defence Projects

Dr Abdul Kalam's indigenous scientific ingenuity is demonstrated by the several high technology projects that he undertook at DRDO.



<b>Satellite and Missile Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Satellite projects such as Rohini, missile projects such as Prithvi, Akash, Trishul, Nag and Agni and nuclear projects such as Pokhran</li></ul>	 
<b>Developmental Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>carbon-carbon and fibre-reinforced plastic, phase shifters, magnesium alloys, motors and servo-valves for missiles as well as novel stents and tablets</li></ul>	 
<b>Indigenous Ingenuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ingenuity in indigenous development is the genius that India needs to inspire the millions of young students, scientists and technologists.</li></ul>	 

Dr Kalam's life illustrates that India's leaders would need to judge professionalism and accomplishments not from the international degrees one sports, the multinational corporate stints one does or even from the felicity with which one speaks or writes but essentially from the demonstrated ability to solve India's developmental challenges and fulfill India's economic aspirations with indigenous thought processes and talent pools.



Dr. Abdul Kalam's indigenous scientific ingenuity is demonstrated by the several high technology projects that he undertook at DRDO. Rohini satellite, Prithvi missile, Akash missile, Trishul missile, Nag missile, Agni missile are just some of the stellar achievements of his, within the satellite and missile projects, all of these which I mentioned brought him and the nation great glory.

And of course, he was associated with other projects such as Pokhran. Amongst the developmental projects, carbon-carbon and fibre-reinforced plastic, phase shifters, magnesium alloys, motors and servo-valves for missiles as well as novel stents and tablets constitute the leading developments.

He had Indigenous ingenuity of an outstanding caliber. Ingenuity in indigenous development is the genius that India needs to inspire the millions of young students, scientists and technologists. Dr. Abdul Kalam was a role model in that respect.

His life illustrates that India's leaders would need to judge professionalism and accomplishments not from the international degrees one sports, the multinational corporate stints one does or even from the felicity with which one speaks or writes. The professionalism and accomplishments must be judged essentially from the demonstrated ability to solve India's developmental challenges and fulfill India's economic aspirations with indigenous thought processes and talent pools.

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### Igniting Minds

Having understood with perseverance and experience what an inspired and ignited mind could do, Dr Kalam applied himself to dreamy ideas, visionary thoughts, rousing plans and earthy solutions.

As the missile man and space scientist, Dr Kalam understood well the 'power of fire' and the 'joy of flying'

He was a prolific writer of many books and several other prosaic and poetic publications dedicated to people and social development

Connected all through his books has been a passion for India's immense potential and what India's mind power and youth power could achieve if channeled rightly

Many unique concepts that are both spiritual and scientific resonate in different forms and contexts in one sublime fusion through the many books of his. Dr Kalam's books became living examples of his tireless passion to communicate and share.



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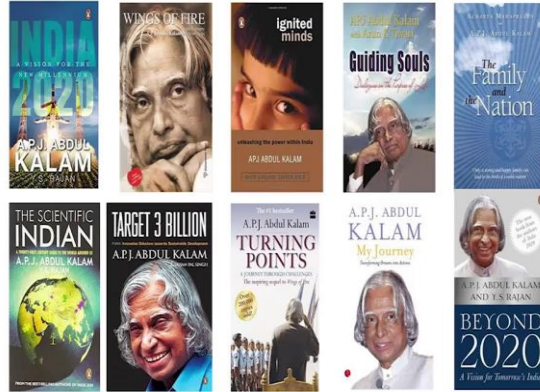
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### Igniting Minds

All of Dr Abdul Kalam's books are characterized by a strong nationalist passion and boundless evocative thoughts for people and the nation to soar higher.



The range of books, presented above, reflects his commitment to India and its people as well as to science and development.



Having understood with perseverance and experience, what an inspired and ignited mind could do, Dr. Kalam applied himself to dreamy ideas, visionary thoughts, rousing plans and earthy solutions which were all written about in his books. The range of books presented above reflects his commitment to India and its people as well as to science and development.

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### Teaching to Reach

Through each of his books, Dr Abdul Kalam brings forth certain powerful concepts of people development, social development, and national development in a simple and passionate manner.

In *Wings of Fire* he focuses on knowledge as a spiritual journey of connecting with one's own hidden knowledge, organizing his earthy mystique of thought in the four chapters of Orientation, Creation, Propitiation and Contemplation.

In *Ignited Minds* he seeks to focus on dreams and visions, role models, visionary teachers and scientists, saints and seers, patriotism, knowledge and collaboration as the factors to build a new State.

*Vision 2020* points out how Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai and Jawaharlal Nehru dreamed in the 1960s and succeeded in their nuclear mission for peaceful purposes. It postulates why and how the nation and its leaders and its people must continue to dream and execute.

Dr Kalam's books lay out a thoughtful vision for India. Kalam's spirit of scientific quest combined with his zest of a seer's spirituality make an eclectic combination that is worthy of emulation by leaders who are focused only on material transactions and performance metrics.



Through each of his books, Dr. Abdul Kalam brings forth certain powerful concepts of people development, social development, and national development in a simple and

passionate manner. In *Wings of Fire*, he focuses on knowledge as a spiritual journey of connecting with one's own hidden knowledge, organizing is earthy mystic of thought in the four chapters of that book; Orientation, Creation, Propitiation and Contemplation. In the book, *Ignited Minds*, he seeks to focus on dreams and visions, role models, visionary teachers and scientists, saints and seers, patriotism, knowledge and collaboration as the factors to build a new State.

*Vision 2020*, another book, points out how Homi Bhabha, Vikram Sarabhai and Jawaharlal Nehru dreamed in the 1960s and succeeded in their nuclear mission for peaceful purposes. It postulates why and how the nation and its leaders and its people must continue to dream and execute.

Dr. Kalam's books lay out a thoughtful vision for India. Kalam's spirit of scientific quest combined with his zest of a seer's spirituality make an eclectic combination that is worthy of emulation by leaders who are focused only on material transactions and performance metrics. And during this course, we have tried to say and emphasize that leaders must move way from materialism to sustainability.

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### Some Takeaways

As is widely known, Kalam's first love has been teaching and natural constituency has been Young India, led by students and children.

#### Integrity and Optimism

Here again, his personal integrity and unbounded optimism resonated instantly with the students

#### Connectivity with Children and Students

With the exception of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, no other leader has been able to connect with students and children as Dr Kalam has done.

#### Simplicity, Empathy and Intellect

Simplicity rather than pomposity, empathy rather than superiority and intellect rather than dialect were his differentiators

#### Affinity

His affinity to native thinkers and his propensity to mingle with his listeners helped him reach out to his students in a more indelible fashion than any typical teacher or professor could.

As a researcher who actually delivered huge indigenous innovations, he came across as a creative teacher who posed not only challenging questions and laid out dreamy visions but also provided practical solutions.



Some takeaways. As is widely known, Kalam's first love has been teaching a natural constituency for him has been Young India, led by students and children. Integrity and optimism was his high point. Here again, his personal integrity and unbounded optimism resonated instantly with the students. With the exception of Mahatma Gandhi and

Jawaharlal Nehru, no other leader has been able to connect with students and children in India as Dr. Kalam has done.

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As a researcher, who actually delivered huge indigenous innovations, Dr. Abdul Kalam always came across as a creative teacher who posed not only challenging questions, but also laid out dreamy visions and provided practical solutions for them.

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**Teaching to Reach**

Dr Kalam's penchant for teaching can be best described only in his words. In an interview with The Hindu (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/apiabdul-kalam-a-teacher-till-the-very-end/article7471318.ece>), Dr Kalam dwelt on many important aspects, some of which are extracted below.



"If the people remember me as a good teacher that will be the biggest honour for me"

"Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, calibre and future of an individual"

"Youth have a dream and also they have a pain. The pain comes out of their dream; they want to live in a prosperous, happy and peaceful India."

"This type of student's environment ignites me and leads me to interact with young minds".

His teaching was not confined to only to students; it enveloped all of his scientists and colleagues. The innumerable recounts of his colleagues testify to his dedication to on-the-job teaching.

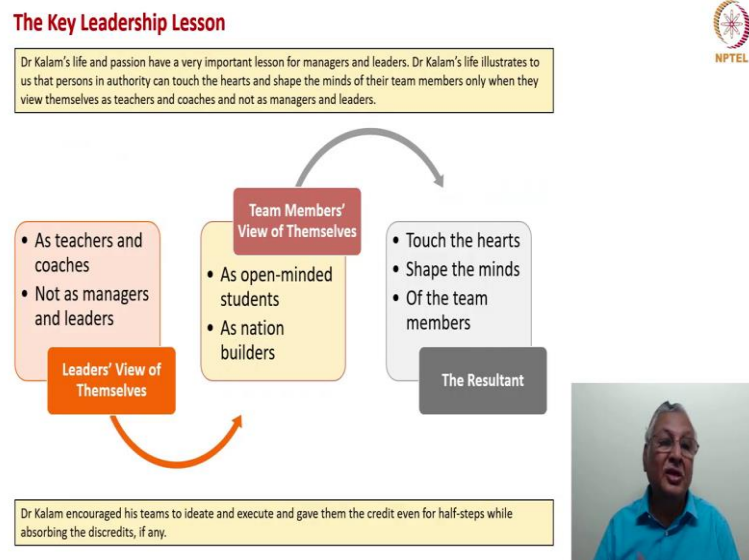


Dr. Kalam's penchant for teaching can be best described only in his words. In an interview with the Hindu, Dr. Kalam dwelt on many important aspects some of which are extracted below. "If the people remember me as a good teacher that will be the biggest honor for me", see how simple his expectation; but how profound the thought behind that expectation was.

"Teaching is a very noble profession that shapes the character, caliber and future of an individual". "Youth have a dream and also they have a pain. The pain comes out of their dream; they want to live in a prosperous, happy and peaceful India."

“This type of student’s environment ignites me and leads me to interact with young minds”. His teaching was not confined to only students; it enveloped all of his scientists and colleagues. The innumerable recounts of his colleagues testify to his dedication to on-the-job teaching.

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The key leadership lesson that comes from Dr. Abdul Kalam’s life and passion is that persons in authority can touch the hearts and shape the minds of their team members only when they view themselves as teachers and coaches and not as managers and leaders.

Leader’s view of themselves unfortunately is not as teachers and coaches, they treat themselves as managers and leaders in the commonly understood sense of the term. Again during this course, we have tried to emphasize that the ability to teach, develop, coach is an extremely important aspect of leadership. The fact that out of the leadership attributes ten are developmental attributes.

So, leaders view of themselves must be as teachers and coaches first and not as managers and leaders. Team member’s view of themselves must be as open-minded students and as nation builders. The resultant then will be touching of the hearts, shaping of the minds of every team member. Dr. Kalam encouraged his teams to ideate and execute and give them the credit even for half-steps while absorbing the discredits, if any. Again, that is what a true leader does.

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### Soaring Higher

In Dr Kalam one would always find an ardour for values and principles to improve quality of thought and life. His books provide insightful observations on how he developed himself in a helpful ecosystem.



Probably all this made him more committed to be with children and inspire them constantly, almost as an essential call of duty.

He goes on to write in his *Wings of Fire* how his father and mother with great family values, unschooled brothers with sharp native wisdom, his close friends from highly orthodox Hindu Brahmin families with secular bonding, and his Brahmin science teacher with great faith in his capabilities together shaped the positivity and creativity in his early life and enabled him to soar high.



He wrote in *Wings of Fire*: “Every child is born with some inherited characteristics, into a specific socio-economic and emotional environment, and trained in certain ways by figures of authority”.



Probably all this made him more committed to be with children and inspire them constantly, almost as an essential call of duty. One can summarize a few critical parameters of such an ecosystem which has nothing to do with riches or prior endowments.



He always soared higher. In Dr. Kalam one would always find an ardour for values and principles to improve quality of thought and life. His books provide insightful observations on how he developed himself in a helpful ecosystem. He wrote in the *Wings of Fire*, “Every child is born with some inherited characteristics, into a specific socio-economic and emotional environment, and trained in certain ways by figures of authority”.

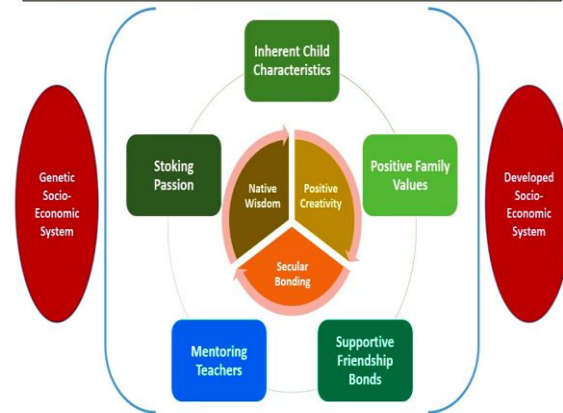
He goes on to write in his *Wings of Fire* how his father and mother with great family values, unschooled brothers with sharp native wisdom, his close friends from highly orthodox Hindu Brahmin families with secular bonding, and his Brahmin science teacher with great faith in his capabilities together shaped the positivity and creativity in his early life and enabled him to soar high. Probably all this made him more committed to be with children and inspire them constantly, almost as an essential call of duty.

He became committed to his students, his children and inspired them constantly because every one of India was considered by him as his personal student, as his family child. It was almost an essential call of duty as he said. One can summarize a few critical parameters of such an ecosystem which he wanted to nourish and it has nothing to do with the riches or prior endowments.

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### Native Model of Soaring Higher

Dr Abdul Kalam believed that irrespective of the socio-economic characteristics a child is born into, the child will have certain inherent characteristics that can be shaped into talent with the support of family, friends and teachers.



His positive experiences of growing up from "ordinary" to "extraordinary" have made transformation of young minds an abiding priority and passion. He saw this as directly contributing to social and national development.



The native model of soaring higher is as follows. You should have native wisdom, you should have positive creativity, you should have secular bonding. There would certainly be inherent child characteristics.

But that must be reinforced by positive family values, supportive friendship bonds, mentoring teachers and all of these things internally as well as through those external and familiar inputs must stoke passion. Then, the genetic socio-economic system gets transformed into a developed socio-economic system which the leader would develop with his passion, with his intellect and with his commitment.

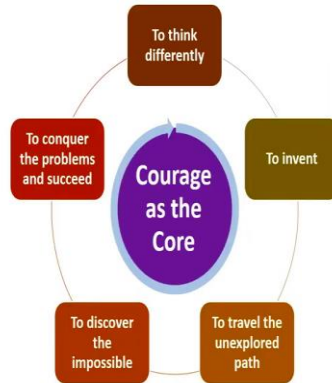
Dr. Abdul Kalam's positive experience of growing up from "ordinary" to "extraordinary" have made transformation of young minds and abiding priority and passion. He saw this as directly contributing to social and national development.



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### Message of Courage to Young People

Dr Abdul Kalam's message to young people has been one that inspires and appeals to the age group. He emphasized the importance of the core dimension of 'courage' to think and act different.



Courage is a characteristic that comes with competence and conviction. Courage without the latter could be adventurous while latter without courage could be ineffective.



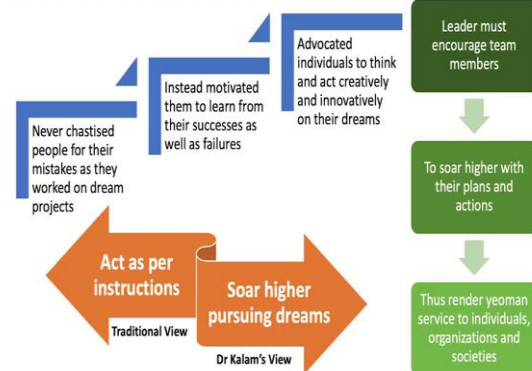
Dr. Abdul Kalam's message to young people has been one that inspires and appeals to the age group. He emphasized the importance of the core dimensions of 'courage' to think and act different. His model of development also had courage as the core and center. He wanted people think differently; he wanted people to invent; he wanted people to travel the unexplored path to discover the impossible and finally, to conquer the problems and succeed.

Courage is a characteristic that comes with competence and conviction. Courage without conviction could be adventurous while conviction without competence could be ineffective. Therefore, both competence and conviction as demonstrated by Dr. Abdul Kalam are necessary for a leader or for any individual to become a leader.

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### Message of Dreams to Young People

Another important message Dr Kalam gives to Young India is to dream big and dream creatively. He was a firm believer in dreams, for he believed that dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts transform into actions.



Unfortunately, however, several organizations and leaders are anti-theses of the principles of creativity and innovation. Leaders must focus on how they can bring out the potential by enabling them to think differently and creatively. That's where Dr Abdul Kalam's impassioned pleas become relevant.



Another important message Dr. Kalam gives to young India is to dream big and dream creatively. He was a firm believer in dreams for he believed that dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts transform into actions. Never chastised people for their mistakes as they worked on his dream projects. Instead, he motivated them to learn from their successes as well as their failures.

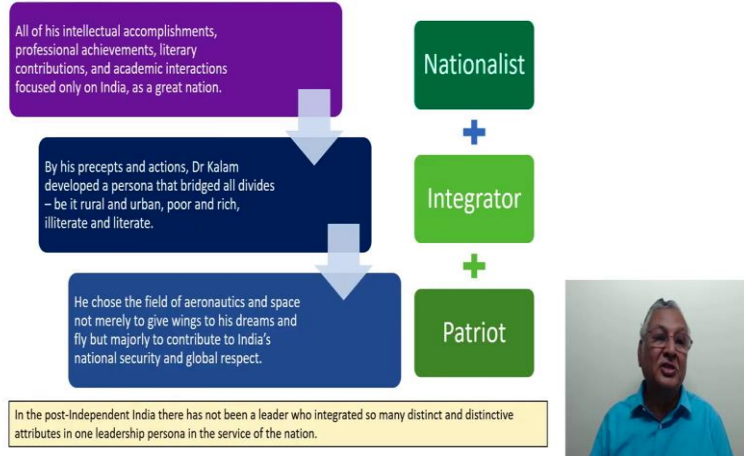
Advocated individuals to think and act creatively and innovatively on their dreams. Act as per instructions is a traditional view. Soar higher pursuing dreams is the model proposed by Dr. Abdul Kalam. For that, leader must encourage team members to soar higher with their plans and action. Thus, render yeoman service to individuals, organizations and societies.

Unfortunately, however, several organizations and leaders are the anti-thesis of the principles of creativity and innovation. Leaders must focus on how they can bring out the potential by enabling them to think differently and creatively. That is where Dr. Abdul Kalam's impassioned pleas become relevant.

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### Nationalist, Integrator and Patriot

Dr Kalam may not have been a great orator as the term is popularly known. Yet, people, young and old alike, flocked to listen to him. He was a genuine Nationalist, a committed Integrator and a fervent Patriot.



Dr. Abdul Kalam was a nationalist, integrator and patriot par excellence. He may not have been a great orator as the term is popularly known. Yet people, young and old alike, flocked to listen to him. He was a genuine nationalist a committed integrator and a fervent patriot. All of his intellectual accomplishments, professional achievements, literary contributions, and academic interactions focused only on India, as a great nation. That was the level of nationalism he had in his heart.

By his precepts and actions, Dr. Kalam developed a persona that bridged all the divides, be it rural and urban, poor and rich, illiterate and literate that was his integrating capability again par excellence.

He chose the field of aeronautics and space not merely to give wings to his dreams and fly, but majorly to contribute India's national security and global respect and that is his patriotism, again par excellence. In the post-independent India, there has not been a leader who integrated so many distinct and distinctive attributes in one leadership persona in the service of the nation.

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### Vajpayee on Dr Abdul Kalam

India's former Statesman-Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee (who was instrumental in bringing Kalam as the President in 2002) wrote a preface to Kalam's collection of poems titled **The Life Tree** (2003). He eulogized:



The confluence of scientific brilliance and poetic talent in Abdul Kalam

- Unique confluence



His heartfelt feelings of patriotism, love and faith that fill his expressions

- Heartfelt expressions

The tireless work that he reflects and epitomises

- Untiring

As the people of India, as individuals and leaders, work tirelessly in their professions they must, like Dr. Kalam, reflect and introspect on the larger purpose of life—a purpose that could make India a truly better place to live, and India a truly respected nation globally.

As Dr Kalam's many accomplishments demonstrate, these objectives are fulfilled only when Indians and India notch up tangible indigenous breakthroughs based on self-reliant scientific and technological development.

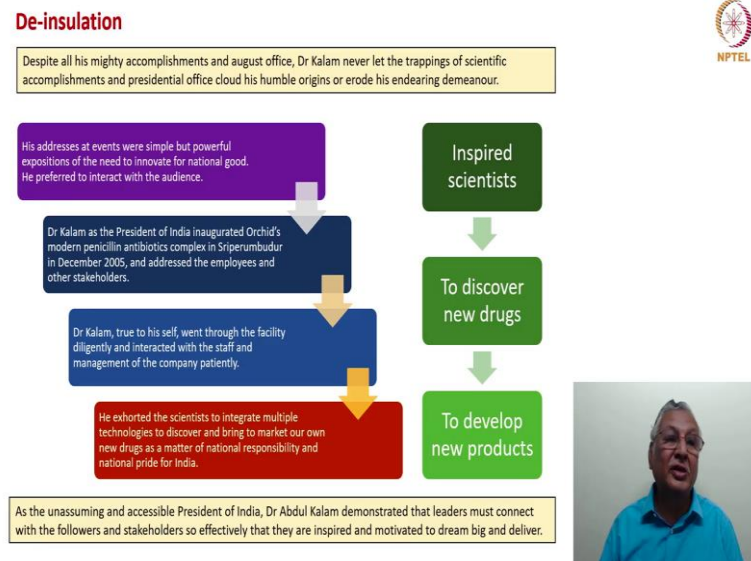


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He was also a votary of de-insulation that is merging with the environment. Despite all his mighty accomplishments and august office, Dr. Kalam never let the trappings of scientific accomplishments and presidential office cloud his humble origins or erode his endearing demeanor. His addresses at events were simple, but powerful expositions of the need to innovate for national good.

He preferred to interact with the audience rather than lecture to the audience. Dr. Kalam as the President of India inaugurated Orchid's modern penicillin antibiotics complex in Sriperumbudur in December, 2005. And I had the privilege of welcoming him to the podium and also, taking him around along with the founder of the company.

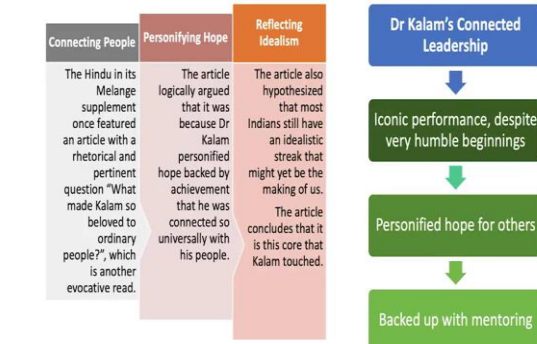
He addressed the employees and other stakeholders. Dr. Kalam, true to his self, went through the facility diligently and interacted with the staff and management of the company patiently. He exhorted the scientist to integrate multiple technologies to discover and bring to market our own new drugs as a matter of national responsibility and national pride for India.

He inspired scientists there to discover new drugs, to develop new products and take India to the very top in the global science paradigm. As the unassuming and accessible President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam demonstrated that leaders must connect with the followers and stake holders so effectively that they are inspired and motivated to dream big and deliver.

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### Endearing Demeanour

Dr Abdul Kalam was a truly people's president. He always desired to be with people as well as think, speak and work for people. His endearing demeanour only enhanced his people orientation even further.



Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/kalam-reach-to-the-ordinary-people/article7485695.ece?css=print>

Dr Kalam became a phenomenon of modern India because he never allowed himself to be insulated from others. He was keen to be connected with all and be engaged with their issues, despite seclusion that happens with the high office of the President of India.



Endearing demeanor. Dr. Abdul Kalam was an out and out people's person. Wherever he was, whether at the presidential office or in any other location, he always chose to mingle with people. The Hindu in its Melange supplement once featured an article with rhetorical and pertinent question "What made Abdul Kalam so beloved to ordinary people?" This is another evocative read. I gave the reference here.

The article logically argued that it was because Dr. Kalam personified hope backed by achievement that he was connected so universally with his people. The article also hypothesized that most Indians still have an idealistic streak that might yet be the making of us. The article concludes that it is this core that Kalam touched.

Dr. Kalam epitomized connected leadership. I talked about in another lecture earlier. Iconic performance, despite very humble beginnings; personified hope for others, he backed up with mentoring and that is connected leadership.

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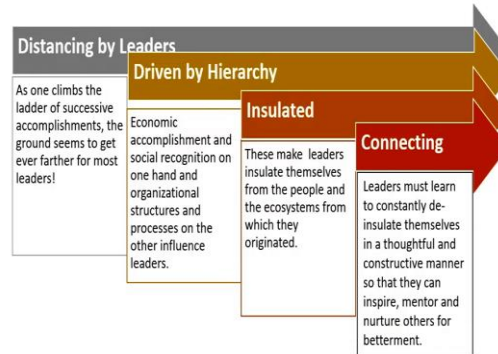


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### Takeaways from Dr Kalam



Leaders, indeed, have a great deal to learn from Dr Abdul Kalam not only in terms of institutional building and developmental transformation but more in terms of the fundamental leadership responsibility of staying connected with people in a genuinely humble, simple and humane manner.



Dr Kalam has become a phenomenon of modern India because he never allowed himself to be insulated from others. He was keen to be connected with all and be engaged with their issues.



Leaders, indeed, have a great deal to learn from Dr. Abdul Kalam not only in terms of institutional building and developmental transformation, but more in terms of the fundamental leadership responsibility of staying connected with people in a genuinely humble, simple and humane manner.

Leaders tend to get distanced and also, tend to distance others. As one climbs the ladder of successive accomplishments, the ground seems to get even farther for most leaders. As Dr. Abdul Kalam's life and living illustrate leaders need not be so, leaders can actually minimize the distance, eliminate the distance, reach out to people.

In corporate leadership, economic accomplishment and social recognition on one hand and organization structure and process on the other influenced leaders and they are driven by hierarchy. But which could be at a higher point in a hierarchy than being the president of India.

Yet, Dr. Abdul Kalam the President of India was with the people all the time. Why cannot corporate leaders be that? Leaders make themselves insulated from the people and the ecosystem from which they originated. Not to be insulated should be the primary goal of the leaders and that is what Dr. Kalam through his native simplicity and his inherent way of working achieved.

Leaders must learn to constantly de-insulate themselves in a thoughtful and constructive manner so that they can inspire, mentor and nurture others for betterment and that's where role models count. Whenever you feel distanced, whenever you feel you are driven by hierarchy, whenever you feel that you are insulated.

You can only think of and you must only think of Dr. Abdul Kalam and say that if such a great person, who was occupying the august office of the President of India, could connect with everyone in a very simple and humane and humble manner. Why can't I, that should be the question which every leader and even every individual must ask of themselves.

Dr. Kalam has become a phenomenon of modern India because he never allowed himself to be insulated from others. He was keen to be connected with all and be engaged with their issues.

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### Wharton on Dr Abdul Kalam



Knowledge@Wharton carried insightful papers on Dr Abdul Kalam. The issue of July 29, 2015 carried a very insightful aggregation of observations from different academicians.

In a 2008 interview with *Knowledge@Wharton*, Kalam explained his view of leadership. He emphasized that leaders should have a vision and not be afraid to go down unfamiliar paths. Most importantly, Kalam said, they should know how to manage failure. Tributes from some professors who met him:

<p>"A man of science, equally adept at designing ballistic missiles and coronary stents, nuclear devices and tablet computers, writing computer code or poetry. When it came to leadership, [he] relied more on faith, humility and integrity."</p>	<p>"Dr. Kalam was a 'People's President,' and ignited those he met with a passion not only to contribute to India's growth, but to aim for world-class standards in their pursuits and be the best on a global platform."</p>	<p>"He raised aspirations by catalyzing a demonstration effect. By showing that it was possible to think big and look far, he did what the best leaders always do: recalibrate what people think is possible."</p>	<p>"He was a teacher who cared about students and young Indians all his life up to the very end. As a President of India who commanded respect for the human being that he was, and not because of his title."</p>
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Source: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/remembering-a-p-j-abdul-kalam-leadership-lessons-from-a-peoples-president/>  
 Please also watch Dr Abdul Kalam's interview: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laG2a54deU8&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laG2a54deU8&feature=emb_title)

As the paper observed, "Indians tend to see Kalam as a father figure, but not as one in authority. He was not just a father figure. An outsider in politics and free of political affiliations, he redefined and demystified Indian presidency. From India's Missile Man, he became the People's President."



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As the paper observed, “Indians tend to see Kalam as a father figure, not as one in authority. He was not just a father figure. An outsider in politics and free of political affiliations, he redefined and demystified Indian presidency. From India’s Missile Man, he became the People’s President.”

Leaders must mull over this part of the paper. Every corporate leader, every business leader, every institutional leader can imagine how he can redefine and demystify the system in which he is and the system which he or she leads and that will be the greatest transformation, the leader can bring to himself or herself and also, to the institution that he or she leads.

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### Technology and Knowledge Grids



Dr Abdul Kalam was a great scientist, an epitome of hard work, but most importantly, a human being who was untarnished by the trappings of power. He believed that India must work hard to come up with our [own] definition of modernity, which must include science, technology, innovation and equality of opportunity for all.”



In Dr Kalam's vision for India's future technology plays an important role. He proposed three grids: the knowledge grid, the health grid and e-governance grid.

The knowledge grid empowers the village citizens with skill and knowledge.

The health grid brings the super-specialty healthcare that is available in the cities to the doorsteps of rural citizens.

And the e-governance grid brings transparent governance to the citizens.

According to Dr Kalam, these grids lead to economic growth and social transformation.

For India to reach her potential as an economic, political, and sociocultural superpower, we need many more leaders to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Kalam. He pushed the country to reach new heights and to aspire to lead the way in its global rise, rather than aim to merely catch up with the developed nations.”



Technology and knowledge grids. Dr. Abdul Kalam was a great scientist, an epitome of hard work, but most importantly, a human being who as untarnished by the trappings of power. He believed that India must work hard to come up with our own definition of modernity, which must include science, technology, innovation and equality of opportunity for all.”

So, he thought about three grids of technology; one the knowledge grid, two the health grid and three the e-governance grid. In Dr. Kalam's vision for India's future technology plays an important role. He proposed those three grids as the platform for that.

The knowledge grid according to him would empower the village citizens with skill and knowledge. The health grid brings the super-specialty healthcare that is available in the cities to the doorsteps of the rural citizens and the e-governance grid brings transparent governance to the citizens. Dr. Kalam said that, these grids would lead to economic growth and social transformation.

For India to reach her potential as an economic, political and sociocultural superpower, we need many more leaders to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Kalam. He pushed the country to reach new heights and to aspire to lead the way in its global rise, rather than aim to merely catch up with the developed nations.”

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### Six Leadership Traits as per Dr Kalam

Dr Abdul Kalam in his 2008 interview with Knowledge@Wharton also enunciated six traits which a good leader must have based on his life experiences and quoting specific examples.



- 1** The leader must have vision. Without vision, you cannot be a leader.
- 2** The leader must be able to travel into an unexplored path. Normally the tendency is for people to travel along well-laid out ways.
- 3** The leader must know how to manage success, and even more importantly, failure.
- 4** The leader should have the courage to make decisions.
- 5** The leader should have nobility in management. Every action of the leader should be transparent.
- 6** And finally, the leader should work with integrity and succeed with integrity.

Source: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/former-president-apj-abdul-kalam-a-leader-should-know-how-to-manage-failure/>

Dr Abdul Kalam is not only a People's President but also a Knowledge President. He had written a four-line, poem-like thing called "Creativity." It goes like this: "Learning gives creativity. Creativity leads to thinking. Thinking provides knowledge. Knowledge makes you great." He had made at least a million children repeat these lines.



There are six key leadership traits of Dr. Kalam. In his 2008 interview with knowledge at Wharton, he also enunciated those six traits. He said that a good leader must have these traits and he said that these are based on his life experiences and he quoted specific examples too.

One, the leader must have vision. Without vision, you cannot be a leader. Two, the leader must be able to travel into an unexplored path. Normally the tendency is for people to travel along well-laid out ways. Three, the leader must know how to manage success, and even more importantly, failure.

The leader should have the courage to make decisions. Five, the leader should have nobility in management. Every action of the leader should be transparent. Six and finally, the leader should work with integrity and succeed with integrity. These traits resonate all through our course and who could exemplify these traits other than Dr. Kalam.

Dr. Abdul Kalam is not only a People's President, but also a Knowledge President. He had written a four-line, poem like thing called "Creativity." It goes like this – "Learning is creativity. Creativity leads to thinking. Thinking provides knowledge. Knowledge makes you great." He had made at least a million children repeat these lines, as we went through various educational institutions and various interactions with children.

That is great Abdul Kalam for us and the leadership model, the leadership lessons, the leadership insight, he provides us are truly phenomenal and if we are able to follow those insights, those principles, I think corporate leadership or any institutional leadership would be transformational.

Thank you and we will see you in the next lecture.