

## Revisiting Felicito Payumo's Classic "In Search of Leaders" - MabuhayRadio

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

By Former BOI Gov. Ben Sanchez

I am certain that readers will be interested to read Felicito Payumo's article, entitled, "In Search of Leaders".

Tong Payumo was formerly a congressman representing the 1st District of Bataan and the Chairman of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

I missed reading this article when he sent it to me last year. After I read it, I decided to distribute it to my online friends. But before distributing it, I edited out references to the May 2010 elections in order to make the article relevant for all seasons.

I want to reproduce it now in this instant column. Here is Mr. Payumo's classic of an essay:

### In Search of Leaders

By Felicito C. Payumo

{xtypo\_quote} With words we govern men – Benjamin Disraeli {/xtypo\_quote}

There are many books on leadership but authors who studied the subject agree on one trait that leaders have – they are good storytellers. Leaders communicate or relate their stories to their audience effectively, but above all, they embody in their lives the stories that they tell.

Howard Garner, in his book, *Leading Minds, An Anatomy of Leadership*, provides a cognitive approach in identifying the authentic from the phonies, the true from the false "leaders."

## Revisiting Felicitó Payumo's Classic "In Search of Leaders" - MabuhayRadio

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

As we watched the funeral cortege of President Cory, the question came to mind: was she the leader who embodied in her life the principles she professed, namely, that she believed in the truth, that she believed in democracy, and that she believed that in a democracy a public office is a public trust, and none more so than the presidency? (Speech at the Church of Gesu, 13 September 2005 ).

Did her life exemplify her core values of simplicity and honesty, aside from being a woman of faith, courage, and strength as Father Arevalo's homily portrayed her? The hundreds of thousands of people who lined up to visit her wake, crowded and slowed down her cortege gave us the verdict.

A 450 year-old company, the Society of Jesus, preached the same tenet. Chris Downer, a former Jesuit turned investment banker, said in *Heroic Leadership* that leadership springs from within. "It's about who I am as much as what I do or say." A leader's greatest power is his vision (story), communicated by the example of his daily life (embodiment).

### Linguistic Intelligence

"The facility and inclination to use words well, combined with personal intelligence" or the capacity to listen, reach and affect other human beings, "make for an effective communicator, and perhaps, a promising leader." Leaders must possess a modicum of linguistic intelligence.

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

But it helps that speeches have quiet eloquence.

Lincoln's "we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground," stated eloquently his stand for the abolition of slavery.

The stirring call to action, "We shall fight on the beaches... we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender," was Churchill's at his fighting best as the might of Hitler's army loomed across the English Channel (both used repetition as a rhetorical device).

But eloquence is coaxed not only during embattled moments.

Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country," the most memorable line in his inaugural address, was a peace time call to duty. He tapped into something deep with this call to service.

Martin Luther King's "I have a dream today..." painted his lifelong aspiration for an end to

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

segregation and racial discrimination.

And Obama's audacity of hope inspired Americans anew in his call "for a change we can believe in."

At home, President Manuel Quezon's preference for a "government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans," and Ninoy Aquino's "the Filipino is worth dying for," are familiar quotations. Quezon's statement encapsulated his nationalism, while the quote from Ninoy embodied his courage to meet death rather than capitulate to the Dictatorship.

And who would forget the defiant words of Senate President Jovy Salonga when he voted "No" to the extension of the US Military Bases stay in the country: "This does not strike me as a Treaty of friendship; it is a Treaty of surrender. It is not a Treaty of cooperation; it is a Treaty of capitulation. It is not a Treaty of security; it is a treaty of greater insecurity." As he uttered these words, he knew that he was sounding the death knell to his ambition for the presidency.

One of President Cory's best speeches was her address to the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress. That she did restore our democracy – we know. But she would be remembered not only for what she said or did, but for what she did not say or do. She obstinately refused to entertain any suggestion to hold on to power by seeking another term, an option she was not barred from doing. To her, "the presidency bestows enough honor which no one deserves a second time."

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

From her hospital bed she had to issue a statement against the House move to amend the Constitution. But it was her death that would seal the coffin on Con-Ass. Think of it: Ninoy had to die to signal the beginning of the end of the Martial rule; Cory had to die to put an end to all efforts to prolong a rule.

### Walk the Talk

But sadly, the local landscape has long been arid for the flowering of eloquence. For speeches that would be read and scrutinized by succeeding generations, it is surprising how shallow and banal are the major addresses of our top officials. It is not that the people now thirst for alliteration, metaphors, and cadences in the orations of our leaders.

Wordsmiths can write elegant pieces that candidates can mouth. But what is important is that leaders communicate their messages by the way they live. In short, they don't "walk their talk." And it doesn't matter whether they deliver them in English or in their mother language, for eloquence is not just glibness of tongue. In this hi-tech age, it is not even the ability to click agency-crafted power points.

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

Lee Kuan Yew was called by Mahathir the "little emperor" for his blunt language. He was rude with his remarks when President Marcos and Imelda landed in separate "his and hers" planes on an official visit to Singapore. But to the rest of the world, Lee Kuan Yew's name is equated with competence, honesty, and effective governance.

It helped that in the post-financial crisis when everyone was expected to make some sacrifice, his personal life and that of his family, including his son, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, exemplified honesty and frugality. Lee Kuan Yew didn't have to pontificate. Like Cory's, his lifestyle was testimony to his message.

Our people yearn for such leaders. Do we have them in our midst?

### **From Domain to National Leaders**

Leaders are not just those who direct or command.

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

There are indirect leaders that work chiefly in their domains or fields of expertise, such as cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, scientist Albert Einstein or artist Van Gogh, who exerted influence by virtue of the quality of their work within their domains.

Among local indirect leaders, I would include environmentalists Gina Lopez who took on the daunting challenge of saving the Pasig River, and Tony Oposa, a lawyer who succeeded in leveraging the Law to rehabilitate Manila Bay, Tony Meloto whose *Gawad Kalinga* has provided holistic solutions to the shelter and livelihood problems of more than 200,000 families in 900 communities, low-profile Jaime Aristotle Alip whose Center for Agriculture and Rural Development has extended microfinance services to 700,000 families, and Onofre Pagsanghan for his life-long dedication to and excellence in teaching.

Among business leaders, many cite Manuel V. Pangilinan who has turned around a telecommunications company that now provides the cash flow for investing in an equally pressing public need – the development of our toll-ways infrastructure to world-class standards by expanding and integrating the North and South Luzon Expressways.

Unfortunately, only a rare few cross the line from domain to direct leadership. While most indirect leaders lead upright lives, "their personal lives are not germane to their influence"; it did not matter to their colleagues whether anyone of them is a womanizer, an eccentric or a recluse as some of them are.

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez  
Saturday, 25 September 2010 21:16 -

---

On the other hand, direct leaders who would presume to direct or reorient an entity – a Church, a military command, a community or a nation – must conduct their lives in ways that must be “clearly perceptible by those whom they hope to influence.”

Gandhi and Mandela, would not have succeeded in their non-violent campaign for independence of India and South Africa had they shown even a streak of violent behavior at home. “People who do not practice what they preach are hypocrites, and hypocrisy mutes the effectiveness of their stories.” # # #

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)