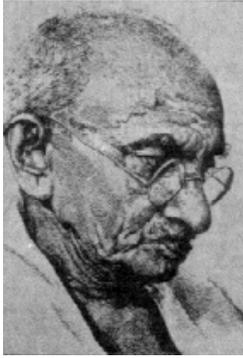


Gandhi



I especially want to recognize Ved Mehta's book *Mahatma Gandhi & His Disciples*, and Dennis Dalton's *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action*. Gandhi's own *Hind Swaraj* is also essential reading.

The Leadership analysis and commentary is my own, faults and all.

One of the greatest figures of the twentieth century, and perhaps of the millennium, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Gujarat on October 2nd, 1869, and was assassinated January 30th, 1948.

He was both one of the most successful Leaders of the century, and, by his own standards, one of the least successful. He was charismatic, but he was also deliberate and analytical. Gandhi was very much a product of his times, yet one of his greatest sources of inspiration was the *Bhagavad-Gita*, written thousands of years ago. He was a politician, a writer, an intellectual and an orator. Without doubt he was a very complex man, but a man who believed in simple things.

So where do we start with an analysis of his Leadership style, ability and results?

Gandhi declared that Action is my domain, so it is necessary to study the details of his life to begin to form a clear picture of his Leadership. The start point is also the end – he was called both Mahatma, meaning great soul, and Bapu, meaning Father. He was both of those things, not only to his native India, but also to millions of people around the world.

Family history

Gandhi was born into a minor Hindu political family, whose beliefs were influenced by Jainism (a non-violent religious group), and who were vegetarian. Both his father and grandfather were at one time Prime Minister of nearby, small princely States. Of note, Gandhi means grocer in Gujarati.

Married at 13, his father died when he was 16. This greatly hurt him, not least as he was with his wife at the time rather than at his father's side when he died. Some commentators argue that this event was a root cause of Gandhi's later celibacy vows. I find this difficult to accept, as those vows were only made 16 years later, as part of a broader determination to focus his values. In fact, Gandhi had four sons.

Gandhi was a lack-lustre scholar, later deciding to be trained as a lawyer in London, where he resided from 1888 to 1891. In so doing, he both broke convention and left behind his young, illiterate wife, Kasturbai. His London period was one of avoiding temptation, and of learning new ideas. For example, he apparently liked the New Testament, but disliked the Old.

After a brief stint unsuccessfully in an Indian law practice back home, he moved to South Africa in 1893, working as advisor to a well-to-do member of the Muslim Indian community. He went back to India to be with his wife in 1901 but returned in 1902 at the request of the South African Indian community.

Swaraj

Gandhi spent 21 years in South Africa. A critical event in his life was one week into his stay there, where he was asked to leave the First-Class compartment of a train by a European. Despite having the right ticket, he was forcibly removed from the train. He suffered other racial indignities in those early months.

His two central ideas were born in South Africa. These were

- Swaraj (Independence for India, and personal spiritual renewal of all Indians),
- Satyagraha (truth, love and non-violence). Importantly, Satyagraha is more than just civil disobedience, as in Gandhi's view passive resistance could easily change into active resistance, and thus violence. Rather, in his conceptualization, respect for the other party was central, and all kinds of violence were forbidden absolutely.

Related to these two ideas was the Constructive Programme - Gandhi's Social Reform platform, consisting of three points:

1. Hindu/Muslim unity,
2. The abolition of Untouchability
3. Swadeshi, the manufacture and use of indigenous products.

Gandhi's goal was none other than the complete transformation of India and its people. Whilst many of his later political colleagues shared some of these ideals, few shared all. We will return to these thoughts as we analyze Gandhi's Leadership.

Whilst in South Africa he learnt from Jewish and Christian friends and developed respect for the ideas of Leo Tolstoy amongst others. Tolstoy's work *The Kingdom of God is within You* stated that all Government is based on war, and that one can only counter these evils through passive resistance. Gandhi also got involved in humanitarian activities. For example, he led a Red Cross unit in the Boer War, in 1899, and was decorated by the British authorities as a result.

When he was about to leave Durban in 1894 to return home to India, he was galvanized by newly written comments in the papers about the proposed Natal Franchise Amendment Bill. His friends and business acquaintances, hearing what he had to say about this, and how he said it, urged him to stay.

Thus, he drafted the first Indian Petition to the Government in 1894, against the Bill, which took away voting rights from Indians. In 1894 he also founded the Natal Indian Congress to build

support for the Indian cause. He actually succeeded in reducing some of the harshness of the bill. However, his other campaigns against unjust laws and discrimination were not successful. Of note, British law overrode Natal law, and prohibited racial discrimination. But Natal had freedom on administrative matters, and loosely worded laws allowed much abuse. His activities and his support for the causes of the poor were rapidly building his reputation, in South Africa and in England.

South Africa

Another critical event was in 1906, when Gandhi organized an ambulance corps to go to Zululand. The Natal Government mounted a campaign to suppress the Zulu Rebellion, started when a chief killed a tax collector. The intense suffering of the Zulu's, and the lack of caring exhibited by the authorities for the wounded left him deeply moved. In his Autobiography, Gandhi had noted that nursing was one of his principal joys. In any event, in Zululand Gandhi made his famous vows:

- Brahmacharya - celibacy, an ancient Hindu vow
- Satyagraha - truth, love and non-violence, Gandhi's own invention
- Ahimsa - non-violence to all creatures, and vegetarianism, a Jain vow

Gandhi later in his life slept naked with some of his women associates. These experiments in sexual self-control were often seen as controversial, but Gandhi's intent was to probe the limits of sexuality, and to show that it was possible to attain absolute and child-like innocence.

It was in 1904 that he first started a weekly journal (the Indian Opinion) and began living in communes, on the Phoenix Farm in Natal. In 1910 he started the Tolstoy Farm, near Johannesburg. This later was an 1,100-acre farm given to him by a close Jewish friend, saying a great deal about Gandhi's uncommonly wide and somewhat eclectic following, even in those early years.

Satyagraha

In 1906 in the Transvaal, the Government wanted Indians to register and be fingerprinted like criminals. The law also meant that only existing Indian residents could be registered, Indians could not freely travel between Provinces, and future immigration was to be controlled. At that time there were about 13,000 Indians in Transvaal, and about 100,000 in all of South Africa, so it was a large group affected. Gandhi even went to England to gain support for his view.

But, despite reassurances he won there, and some concessions he received from the Transvaal Government, the law was passed in 1907 as the Asiatic Registration Bill. Gandhi and his followers called it The Black Act.

Gandhi at that moment galvanized his ideas into Satyagraha and founded the Passive Resistance Association. Importantly, Satyagraha combined both Political and religious goals in Gandhi's mind, for the first time, with a very clear focus an action.

Gandhi and others refused to register. He was involved in a mass burning of registration documents, he was tried, and he went to jail. This was in Pretoria, in 1908, and it was his first time in jail. He served two weeks of his sentence.

After many Indians were jailed, Gandhi reached a compromise with General Jan Christian Smuts, the South African Leader. If Indians voluntarily registered, all Indian protesters in jail would be released. Gandhi agreed, although it led to his being attacked by extremist Indians and rescued by a white police officer. Smuts later reneged on the deal. Nevertheless, this left Gandhi relatively undeterred, and he believed totally in his non-violent approach.

His second imprisonment was also in 1909 (his third was in 1910). On his way back from England later in 1909, where he was again soliciting support for the Indian cause, he wrote Hind Swaraj, his seminal work which set out his philosophy and action plan. It was published in December 1909, in Gujarati.

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was created from the provinces, giving yet more legal autonomy to the Government.

In 1913, Judge Searle ruled that only marriages performed under Christian Rites were legal, instantly making Indian, Muslim, and other marriages irrelevant. Gandhi wanted to fill the jails with Indians. October of that year he led a march supporting mineworkers across the Transvaal border, and was arrested several times, including twice in one day. Pressure was mounting on the Government to open an independent inquiry. However, at that time European railway workers went on strike, and the Government was in real jeopardy. So, Gandhi called off the Indian actions, as he did not want to take advantage of his government opponents' weaknesses.

In any event, in this case Gandhi won. He reached agreement with Smuts in 1914, and the introduction of the Indian Relief Act of 1914 made Indian and other marriages fully legal. The head (poll) tax was also abolished, which had been a long-standing source of discontent. He did not, however, succeed in reversing the Immigration restrictions.

Fasts

It was in South Africa that Gandhi first used fasting as a tool in Satyagraha. Gandhi recognized that fasting could be misconstrued by others (he was, for example, accused of selfish egoism exhibited in his fasts!), so he developed very clear rules. In essence, fasts were an expression of suffering love, in a deeply Christian sense.

According to Bhikhu Parekh, in his book in the Past Masters series, Gandhi's reasons for fasting were essentially fourfold:

- it was his way of expressing his own deep sense of sorrow at the way those he loved had disappointed him
- it was his way, as their Leader, for atoning for their misdeeds
- it was his last attempt to stir deep spiritual feelings in others and to appeal to their moral sense
- it was his way of bringing the quarrelling parties together.

Gandhi also placed limits on when fasting was appropriate.

- Fasts could only be undertaken against those people he loved
- Fasts must have a concrete and specific goal, not abstract aims
- The fast must be morally defensible in the eyes of the target
- The fast must in no way serve his own interests
- The fast must not ask people to do something they were incapable of, or to cause great hardship.

Gandhi followed these principles on every fast. During his lifetime, he fasted 17 times.

To India

As a result of his activities, Gandhi became quite well known in India, and this gave a virtually instant platform for his activities when he returned.

Throughout the South African period he was never anti-British and was quite civil even towards General Smuts. He believed in his duties to the Empire, especially in time of war, as demonstrated by his organizing another (perhaps less successful) ambulance group for the British in World War I and recruiting troops for the British Army when back in India in 1918.

Rather, Gandhi was pro- Indian, pro- truth and pro- non-violence. In essence, he was pro- human rights (to steal a phrase he never actually used in its current Western meaning), but with a profound personal intensity and commitment. He carried this attitude with him as he returned to India.

He thus left South Africa with the basis of his life philosophy, a proven method of organizing people to get political results, a growing reputation, and massive personal self-confidence.

Bengal Partition

From 1905 to 1911, the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, had divided the province of Bengal into two - West Bengal, Bihar & Orissa, with a Hindu majority, and East Bengal & Assam, with a Muslim

majority. He did this largely for relatively short-term political reasons, but it had long term implications. Most importantly, it served to awaken the Indian population to the need for Independence, to control their own destiny. Clearly, as is evident from Gandhi's Collected Works, he was well informed about these developments.

Return to India

In 1914, Gandhi left South Africa, first spending a few months in England, where he organized an ambulance corps of Indians to help Britain in World War I. He arrived in India towards the end of 1914.

In 1915, he founded the Sabarmati (Satyagraha) Ashram, near the Sabarmati River at Ahmedabad. (In 1936, he founded the Sevagram Ashram, near Wardha).

For a time, before launching into new action, he carefully studied the Indian condition and the political landscape. Then, in 1917 he launched his first Satyagraha campaign in India, for the rights of farmers on indigo plantations in Champaran, Bihar. He was arrested, but the case was not pressed. In 1918, he led a mill worker's strike in Ahmedabad, reaching an agreement with the owners after a three day fast, his first Satyagraha fast in India. Events built momentum.

Considering it his duty, in 1918 he actively recruited Indian volunteers to fight in World War I.

April 1919, he organized a National Hartal or mass strike against the British authorities. He fasted for three days in penance for violence from Hindu activists, but unfortunately the Hartal partly set the stage for the infamous Amritsar massacre.

The Government banned public meetings in the Punjab, and when one such meeting took place, 379 unarmed Sikhs were massacred, and 1137 wounded – men, women and children. This followed the orders of British General Dyer. Unsurprisingly, this dreadful event polarized public opinion in India and in Britain when the facts became known. The resultant report from the Hunter Commission largely exonerated Dyer, and thus severely discredited the Colonial Raj.

Congress

In 1920, Gandhi became the leader of the All India Home Rule League, and he drafted the first constitution of the Indian National Congress. Not without dissent, Satyagraha was adopted as the policy of Congress, and it remained so until Independence.

It was thus in 1920 that the non-cooperation movement was first launched nationally. This included such powerful symbols as burning foreign cloth, although poet Rabindranath Tagore (later a Nobel Prize winner) was amongst several key leaders who felt Gandhi was overly feeding nationalism. Tagore was a friend of Gandhi (he first called him Mahatma), yet still he felt that Gandhi should pay more attention to the need for India to be properly integrated into the Global

Community. Gandhi seemed to agree with this in principle but believed it necessary to have an independent India in its fullest sense, as a pre-requisite to India's emergence on the global stage.

Bardoli

In Bardoli in 1922, Sardar Patel led a Satyagraha against unfair taxes. This was a positive and pivotal event in the story of independence, which demonstrated the power of a grass roots issue as a key to future actions. Unfortunately, it also led to riots, and Gandhi fasted for five days in penance for this violence. 1922 was also the year Gandhi was arrested for the first time in India, for burning foreign cloth. At trial he so moved the Colonial judge that the judge admitted that no one would be better pleased than he if the Government were to release him sooner than the statutory 6 years he had placed as a sentence on Gandhi. Gandhi thanked the judge in a most courteous exchange, and in fact he was released after 22 months.

From 1924 to 1928, Gandhi was relatively quiet. He even observed a year off in 1926, devoted to reflection and experimentation. During that time the Indian predicament worsened, and the political scene got yet more difficult.

Salt March

It was in 1930 that Gandhi led the famous Salt March. The Colonial Government had taxed salt for many years, and unauthorized production of this essential mineral was illegal. So, this law affected poorer people even more than most other laws. Without doubt the march, which touched the poorest of Indians and gained global notice, was the most successful event of the entire independence campaign. Whilst the idea was not fully supported by all Congress Leaders, Gandhi had found a brilliant yet simple way of touching everyone's heart. Of note, the march got widespread support from women, and Gandhi cleverly used both Indian and Global media to further the cause.

In 1915, he During the early days of the march, Gandhi made one of the most moving speeches of his life, berating his supporters for being overzealous in using the resources of villages on the way in supporting the marchers. Gandhi called for personal purity, and an equality between marcher and suffering populace. He succeeded, and the march from that point was on the firmest moral ground, in his view.

It took 24 days and 241 miles to complete the march - from March 12th, departing from Sabarmati Ashram, to reach the coast at Dandi, on April 6th. He started with 78 followers and ended with thousands. Gandhi was 60 years old when he symbolically picked up salt on the beach and broke the law. He and thousands of others were arrested, but he was not put on public trial.

Unfortunately, the Salt Tax was not abolished until October 1946, during Nehru's interim Government.

To England

Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, was ambivalent about the arrest of Gandhi, especially given the Government's defeat at Bardoli, and also partly because he agreed with Gandhi about the unjustness of some laws. Still, Gandhi and other leaders of Congress were arrested, and only released in January 1931.

March of that year Gandhi and Irwin came to an accord and civil disobedience ended. In August 1931 Gandhi attended an unsuccessful conference in London, and on his return Satyagraha restarted. During that trip he met many Leaders from all spheres of activity, including the King, and it was at that time he addressed mill workers in Lancashire – explaining that his rejection of foreign cloth was not an attack on them. He won their support.

Churchill called him shortly afterwards a half-naked fakir, for which Gandhi thanked him and remarked

(I) would love to be a naked fakir but was not one as yet.

Children of God

1932 Gandhi was arrested again (in all, he spent 2338 days in prison in India and South Africa) but was released without trial. In 1933 he launched his weekly Harijan and started a major campaign in support of the Untouchables, or Children of God, as Gandhi preferred to call them.

It was clear to Gandhi that the whole issue of caste and Untouchability was a potential disaster in the making for India, and it became one of his main themes. His efforts were not always accepted by the Untouchables themselves, and at the end of his life he saw his work for the Untouchables as incomplete. In this instance, after heavy negotiation and another fast, he did however secure a three-way agreement between Congress, the Untouchables Leader Ambedker, and the Government.

Hindu & Muslim

Gandhi was much less successful with Hindu / Muslim relations, which continued to deteriorate through the end of the decade. Jinnah, the Muslim Leader, and eventually Pakistan's first Prime Minister, was in many ways Gandhi's greatest intellectual adversary. Muslims had ruled over Indian for many centuries in its past, and there was much fear of reprisal by a Hindu majority state. To some extent, Gandhi's potent use of Hindu history and imagery actually helped the Muslim separatist cause.

In 1934 Gandhi inaugurated the All-India Village Industries Association. He also resigned his Congress position, at which time Jawaharlal Nehru became Congress' Leader (and later India's

first Prime Minister). Also, that year three attempts were made on Gandhi's life, something he just shrugged off.

There were provincial elections in 1937, which gave much power to the States, and also gave Congress a strong platform. The Act of 1935 which made this possible was generally accepted to be the forerunner of Independence. But elections also served to deepen the rift between Hindu and Muslim.

Negotiations

In 1939 Gandhi returned more vigorously to Political Life. With Congress, he decided not to support Britain at the outbreak of World War II, unless India received unconditional independence. He was interned in 1942 but released two years later because of his poor health.

In 1942 Churchill sent left-winger Sir Stafford Cripps to India, and he came up with a plan for conditional but rather limited Indian Independence. Congress rejected the British proposal, and in August the final national Satyagraha was undertaken. The British blamed Gandhi for the breakdown in negotiations, and it was in November 1942 that Churchill said:

I did not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

It was in August 1942 that Gandhi demanded that the British quit India unconditionally and told Congress workers to consider themselves free of British rule from that moment. Gandhi and other Congress Leaders were arrested and held at the palace of the Aga Khan at Poona. Disobedience soon became violence, for which Viceroy Lord Linlithgow accused Gandhi of being responsible. Gandhi was shocked by this and attempted to engage the Viceroy by letter. With no positive response, in February 1943 Gandhi fasted for 21 days to help break the deadlock. He survived but his health was seriously affected from then on.

On February 22nd, 1944, whilst they were together in prison for the last time, Gandhi's wife Kasturbai died, at age 74. On May 6th Gandhi was released from prison. He had spent 5½ years in British Jails in India.

Independence

In 1944 the British Government formally agreed to Indian Independence. One of the conditions of this was that the Hindu Congress Party and the Muslims resolve their differences. Despite Gandhi's implacable opposition (including a four-month 116 mile walk through East Bengal late 1946), this led to the partition of India and Pakistan at independence in 1947. In fact, in March 1947, at a conference with Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, and Jinnah, Gandhi opposed Congress's agreement to this partition.

In August, the month of Independence, Gandhi started a fast until his death to stop the incredible Hindu versus Muslim violence in Calcutta. His success prompted Mountbatten, a firm supporter of Gandhi, to write:

In the Punjab, we have 55 thousand soldiers and large-scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal, our forces consist of one man, and there is no rioting.

As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One-Man Boundary Force, not forgetting his Second in Command, Mr. Suhrawardy.

You should have heard the enthusiastic applause which greeted the mention of your name in the Constituent Assembly on the 15th of August when all of us were thinking so much of you.

August 15th was Independence Day, and Gandhi refused to attend the celebrations because of his opposition to partition. After Calcutta, he went to Delhi, and mingled with both Hindu and Muslim in an attempt to heal wounds. He also visited refugee camps, alone and without guards.

Assassination

When the Government of independent India later agreed (with popular support) to renege on earlier promises of transfer of assets to Pakistan, Gandhi successfully protested with a fast. This aggravated extremist opposition to Gandhi, and a bomb went off at one of his prayer meetings in January 1948.

Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse, a Hindu extremist. Godse first bowed to him, then shot him three times at close range, on January 30th 1948. It was the day after he wrote a draft constitution of the Indian National Congress.

Albert Einstein, in tribute, said Gandhi

... demonstrated that a powerful human following can be assembled not only through the cunning game of the usual political manoeuvres and trickeries, but through the cogent example of a morally superior life.

Gandhi & 4 E's

Gandhi learnt his Leadership skills during his years in South Africa and honed them in India.

Yes, he was naturally charismatic. Yes, he had a feel for his Follower's needs which was uncannily correct. But he did develop formal tools and methods to become a better Leader over time. What he learnt is instructive to us all.

Not surprisingly, I believe that he is a classic example of the Leadership model put forward in Leadership Truths. That is, he had a rock-solid value system from which all of his activities stemmed, he wanted to make major changes at every turn in his life, and he had a

totally interdependent relationship with his followers. And, as a man of action, he used the 4 E's throughout his life.

Beliefs

Before we delve into the analysis, it is important to understand a little more about Gandhi's beliefs, and how they relate to his actions. His entire program rested firmly on his moral code.

As discussed in the biography, whilst a Hindu, his wide-ranging interests and learning gave him knowledge and an eclectic assimilation of other faiths. He was without doubt a learner and an experimenter in almost every aspect of his activities, and throughout his life.

Some of his Christian followers once argued that his approach, especially as regards self-sacrifice and suffering love meant he should convert 100% to Christianity and be done with it! Indeed, he once walked through the Vatican, ignoring the artwork, but stopping to weep before the Crucifixion.

His beliefs are central to everything he did. He saw love in Christianity, a direct relationship with one's God in Islam, and the unity of life in Hinduism. Religion for Gandhi was what one did, not what one believed. Action was everything.

Western doctrine talks of either mind/body, or mind/body/soul, and then adds the mind distinction of the ego and the id. Gandhi however constructed a more complex, multiple layer theory of the human being. Some of the aspects were classic Hindu, and some were Gandhi additions or modifications. Frankly, some of Gandhi's writings are inconsistent with others, but that reflects his learning over time rather than some kind of intellectual immaturity.

Gandhi saw a four part whole making humanity what it is. First, there is the body, in the classic Cartesian sense. This splits into two parts - the physical aspects of the body, and then the senses by which we communicate with our surroundings.

Second, there is mind (or Manas). As many other thinkers do, Gandhi distinguished between consciousness (Chetana) and intelligence (Buddhi). So far, there is little new.

Third, Gandhi, like all Hindus, believed in the Spirit (or Atman). This is not a Cartesian Ghost in the machine, but rather it is the universal principle or force within us all, and which connects us to the Universe. This is critical to understanding of Gandhi's Satyagraha, as that was designed to rekindle the true spiritual self in all of us. Recall that in Swaraj he did not just want the independence of India – he wanted the independence of each one of us, in a spiritual rebirth. Going further, Gandhi believed that the Atman within each of us allows us all to have the charismatic effect needed to lead others – because it connects everything to everything else.

The fourth component is the psychological or moral disposition that we all have, which uniquely belongs to each individual (the Swabhava). He believed that this was more a product of rebirth and Karma than learned characteristics. This is because God in his view is not a person but is Truth. Thus, by discovering one's own true dispositions, one reaches one's own unique spiritual destination (or Moksha). Again, spiritual renewal is to Gandhi the key to personal freedom.

Values

For Gandhi, Truth was everything, and it was intrinsically linked with the concept of the non-violence and spiritual renewal that was Satyagraha and Swaraj. Satyagraha was not just a political method but a moral statement about how to act politically. Unless events were conducted the right way, he would rather not act, and often called off protests or other actions as a result.

Truth was also connected to humility, cleanliness, celibacy and poverty. It was connected to unity (of religions and beliefs), and to the goodness of humanity. He always believed that people were intrinsically capable of good – which was both a key to his success as a Leader, and one of the reasons for his failures. He believed in action, and not just words.

He believed in industry and in self-reliance. He was sceptical of Modern society, and especially of the breakup of the rural communities as people migrated to industrial cities. Gandhi believed that natural methods were the best way to keep one healthy, and except for an appendix removal never used modern medicine. Finally, to Gandhi, being vegetarian was more than a health issue. It was a question of morality.

Change

His entire life story is about action, to bring about positive change. He both succeeded and failed in what he sought to do, but he always moved forward, and he never gave up the quest for improvement, both social and spiritual, and both for individuals and for the Nation as a whole.

In some changes he succeeded, and in some he failed. And, in some case, the success came years after the action. For example, the Salt tax was only fully repealed at Independence. But, in every case his actions were targeted against a specific change he was trying to bring about.

Followers

Gandhi's life is one of total service to others, and of the unselfish representation of their needs. His spirituality and charisma just added to his plain hard-nosed rationalism in analyzing each issue he faced – to evaluate how best to motivate and therefore lead his Followers. Rarely has one man been able to generate such a band of willing followers.

Envision

His vision of the future was a combination of the spiritual, the moral and the practical, and it was through his consistent application of his vision that he led.

He clearly felt that the apparent Indian lack of self-respect enabled the British to rule India, so he felt that Indians should take prime responsibility for their own situation. Thus, as consistently noted, Gandhi wanted not only the political independence of India, but the spiritual renewal (and independence) of all of India's people.

His vision of the future of India was firmly rooted in the glorious, spiritual past of the Gitas, yet with significant influence from Christian and other values. In expressing his vision, Gandhi touched the hearts of millions, and to this day holds a moral beacon for millions more.

Practically, he chose causes that were of great importance to his potential followers and brought alive his vision of what success would look like. Examples are his work to bring fair treatment to people in South Africa, the repealing the Salt Tax and Indian Independence itself. In every case he did not just use philosophical statements or flowery visions, but he laid out concrete objectives which people could buy into and then act upon.

By contrast, his failures stemmed from not being able to make concrete his own deeply felt vision of a just society - most importantly the final Partition of India.

In all things he did as a Leader, he thus put forward a powerful and appropriate vision to the Follower group. He could write the most complex, intellectual work, to be sure his point was understood. Yet, he could express the feelings of his Followers in the most simple and eloquent ways. Picking up a handful of salt on the beach was perhaps the most dramatic practical expression of his vision of freedom from the salt tax, an act that was copied by thousands.

Vision?

On the other hand, he frankly had a model of modernity which was open to question. He respected the British people but did not respect Modern Civilization. He felt that the industrialization process led to irreligious society, and even felt it incongruous that women should be working in factories – although he did support the British suffragette movement. In essence he felt that the British were good people, with good institutions, but that they were being led off course by modernity.

It also seems that, whilst his prescription of self-reliance for India was a fair option, and one that rang a cord with the population, it was an exclusive vision – excluding the positive power of industrialization and the global economy in the making. It is somewhat ironic that a man of such inclusive ideals would not more actively seek to find better resolution between the opposing forces of core spiritual values and modern industrialization.

Whilst Gandhi clearly felt that the violence of all Governments meant that the people should control their own destiny in small scale groups, he did not per se argue for a plural democratic India. He believed that the small-scale village communities would be able to work things out. Nehru was the driver for mass democracy, with his vision of a socialist India, rooted in her history, learning from the British democratic ideal, but firmly and independently looking forward.

Enable

In formal organizational terms, Gandhi employed few unique methods. Yet, he clearly knew how to get people in the right place, to do the right thing. From arranging ambulance corps, to setting up formal protest organizations, to raising funds or even recruiting troops to fight in the War, he was no stranger to structure.

However, his greater enablers were in his own actions. He literally lived the life that he wanted other people to live. He demonstrated exactly how to behave, whether in normal day to day life, or in high-profile political protest. From the philosophy and structure of the Constructive Program, his use of a spinning wheel was both a symbol of revolution, and a method of demonstrating how to build the perfect Indian Society.

The Ashrams were permanent examples of how a society constructed of small, village groups should operate. The Ashram had very formal rules, which all built on the core value system he was adamant the inhabitants should have. Nothing helps humility or cleanliness come alive better than a turn at cleaning the latrine...

Gandhi also used words as enablers, ranging from writing protest letters to helping to construct the Constitution of the Indian Congress party. Satyagraha and Swaraj are themselves both words of description and words of action.

From his dedication to a life of action, everything he did enabled his Followers to follow and to act. Do what I do, not what I say was his greatest enabler. It was also his greatest energizer.

Empower

Gandhi's life was a combination of discipline and freedom, for himself and for his Followers. His greatest successes came from empowering people with the methods and the desire for Satyagraha. When those individuals faced attack or prison, they were both terribly alone, yet totally connected to their fellow protesters. They were free to pursue their goals, yet they had a contract with Gandhi and with each other. He needed to serve them, just as they served him, the cause, and each other.

Unfortunately, his belief in the goodness of everyone to some extent blinded him from the frailty of human nature. Letting people free who cannot overcome their own demons leads to unpredictable consequences. This was clear in the violence of Partition. His belief that Satyagraha

would have helped the Jewish people in their terrible struggle with Hitler was at best idealistic, and at worst inconsistent with the nature of the task

Energize

Gandhi had a knack of choosing causes which would have maximum impact, and which would have the maximum chance of touching everyone. Many members of Congress were sceptical of overly focusing on the Salt tax issue, as it had been a long-standing source of discontent. It could be seen as a minor issue in the grand scheme of the fight for Independence. Yet, the Salt March caught the imagination of the Nation, the global media and the world.

Not only could Gandhi energize on a large scale, but he could also touch individuals. A classic example is the response of the Judge who hoped Gandhi would be dealt with leniently, despite the Judge having to serve a mandatory sentence on him.

Gandhi's humility, and obvious care for his opponents as equally as his followers, meant that virtually everyone Gandhi met had an emotional response to the man and his actions. Witness the Lancashire mill workers in England, who should have disliked his boycott on their products. His obviously truthful and heart felt explanation, both of why he was doing what he was doing, and why he hoped the mill workers would not suffer, struck a significant chord.

Gandhi also chose his personal symbols well, from the white dhoti (cleanliness and humility) to only wearing sandals made of leather from cows that died naturally. The only decoration on the walls of his room at the Ashram was a crucifixion. He took the philosophy he espoused and turned it into visual representations of his story. These symbols clearly provided a consistency to the energizing process he consciously used.

From a story telling viewpoint, his speech on the Salt March, almost angrily denouncing the overzealous use of scarce rural resources for the benefit of the marchers was a classic case of his speaking from his values and galvanizing his Followers back onto the right course.

Single handedly, he stopped slaughter at partition in Bengal, with two of his most powerful energizing tools. He fasted without fear, and he met the combatants face to face, with no fear for his own safety. In fact, it is worth noting that his apparent fearlessness and disregard for himself was in itself a powerful energizing force, and a great problem for his opponents.

Yet, he also failed in energizing. The fait accompli of partition showed that he had failed to overcome both the fears of the Muslims in a largely Hindu India, and the nationalism / exclusiveness of Jinnah. He also failed to generate a sufficiently multicultural, pluralist sense in the leaders of Congress to build the right bridges. He could find insufficient enablers, and he could not energize a unanimous desire for One India. Equally, his use of Hindu symbolism and obvious

belief in the goodness of humanity, almost against the odds, at least partly contributed to his own assassination.

Influence

Gandhi's effect on the world was and still is immense. On the positive side, he helped create the world's largest democracy. He also gave to the world a way of thinking about and acting upon value systems that profoundly influenced such important figures as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Gandhi directly influenced the American Civil Rights movement, and thus the broader Human Rights concerns and activities of today.

From a practical viewpoint, his focus on Swadeshi formed the core of India's industrial policy, and that did deliver some real successes under Nehru's Leadership. Yet, it is clear that the lack of Indian openness to the world economy, and the internal bureaucratization of Indian systems have held back that country over time. How much one can apportion blame to Gandhi is moot, as certainly those that followed him share the responsibility. That is a subject for another essay.

Net, even with his failings, Gandhi must still rank as one of the most effective and most positive Leaders of this or any other century.