

One Foot Forward, One Foot Back

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Each person leads differently, but the Harvard book, “On Leadership”, and Mr. Bob Patel (CEO, LyondellBasell) began giving a new shape to the definition of what a leader is. Mr. Patel uses his experiences and life stories and gives us a few lessons that define his



leadership success.

Mr. Patel’s mother had a business, and one summer when he was running the shop and interestingly, their customers had an unlimited tab. When he asked, “Why?” His mom simply said that they might need the money more than them and never refuse anyone food. These two things really stood out to me. It was reflective of the amount of trust Mr. Patel’s mother had on her customers.

Mr. Patel’s mother’s firmness on not letting someone leave hungry because they can’t pay for it shows how she didn’t shift her morals for profit. This goes back to what Mr. Patel said about how one should “value the people” because the leader just gives sources and direction, but the team does the execution. You have to trust the people around you and treat them well. This also supports why it is so important to use the “We not I” mindset because it is also reflective of how much one values another.

Another lesson that was seen through this story was how much Mr. Patel was moved by the story. The story is ages old, but he still very many lives by those principles and it reflects how your values will shape your career. When Mr. Patel talks about what he would like the next future CEOs of Lyondell to know; he said, “First, take care of my people, and second, do not forget where we came from– celebrate the journey.” While the leader does have to step up to responsibilities, a leader also has

to take the right decision for the whole enterprise, and you need to have values to drive your judgement otherwise it is easy to get swept up in the heat of the moment and shake the foundation of your company.

No matter how successful an individual gets, or a company gets, it is important to have on foot the ground so you don't stray from your values and lose direction.