

The Purpose of Leadership is for Life to be Better—for You **and** Me

Two of these share
99.9% of their
DNA.

They both share
98.8% of their
DNA with the
other.



The Practice of Leadership: The Big Issues

Influential Leadership is NOT a theory, a model, or an idea—it is a PRACTICE—it is the way we influence and shape every Leadership Moment to make things better for each and all of us.

It is in that context that fellow Influential Leadership activists and *On Leadership* recipients asked for practical ways in which we can tackle Leadership Moments.

In the first two part of this three-part series, I set the scene for how we can **use the purpose of Influential Leadership** to govern our engagement with both small and large Leadership Moments.

I argued too that big unproductive issues are just 'small' issues that have become monsters through a vicious cycle process. When we do not address an unproductive attitudinal or behavioural matter in its nascent state, it breeds until it becomes a normalised systemic monster.

In Part III we face off against one of the big issues that continues to plague humanity, since *Human #1*.

Human Conflict and Oppression

The three primary drivers of human conflict and oppression are—**bigotry, greed and fear**.

Each plays a distinct role, and together they form a self-reinforcing system.

1. Bigotry—*Hierarchy of human worth*

Bigotry establishes **who matters more and who matters less**. It legitimises exclusion, domination, and dehumanisation by asserting superiority based on identity, difference, or status.

Without bigotry, oppression lacks moral justification.

2. Greed—*Extraction without limit*

Greed drives the **accumulation of power, wealth, and resources beyond need**. It turns people, land, and systems into instruments for personal and selective gain.

Without greed, exploitation lacks motive.

3. Fear—*The emotional engine*

Fear is the **psychological fuel** that activates both bigotry and greed:

- fear of loss
- fear of displacement
- fear of scarcity
- fear of irrelevance

Fear makes domination feel necessary and hoarding feel rational.

Without fear, neither bigotry nor greed sustains momentum.

How they interact

- **Bigotry** provides a target and justification
- **Greed** exploits the situation for advantage
- **Fear** creates anxiety and threat perception

Together, they produce conflict, oppression, and systemic harm.

Human conflict and oppression are driven by **bigotry that seeks permission, greed that seeks advantage, and fear that seeks safety**.

This triad is especially powerful in Leadership because it clarifies that ethical-driven Leadership is not just about opposing injustice—it is about **dismantling the emotional, ethical, and material incentives that sustain it**.

We focus on **BIGOTRY** as our “little big issue” in this week’s *On Leadership*.

The opening infographic illustrates that the 8.8 billion humans on Earth **share 99.9% DNA**.

Yep, we are **different by one tenth of one percent** in the DNA department... no matter our:

- age
- race
- colour
- gender
- geography...

It is the 0.1% difference that tints our eye colour, shapes our noses, sculps our features and gifts our muscle composition.

Also, **we share 98.8% of our DNA** with our fellow apes, Bonobos and Chimpanzees.

Between any two humans there is barely a genetic breath of difference, yet we have built vast perceptual chasms where biology placed none.

Let's remind ourselves what the purpose of Influential Leadership is:

It is to **intentionally** shape the events we face, the conditions we create, and the circumstances we inherit—**for the betterment of our and others' lived lives**.

So, how does bigotry survive in a world where we apply such a purpose to our lives and leadership?

It cannot, yet it does. Why?

How does bigotry manifest itself in our lived lives?

What is Bigotry?

Bigotry is an umbrella term that captures **any attitude, pattern of thought or behaviour that asserts inherent superiority, entitlement, or exclusion based on identity, status, or perceived difference**. So defined, bigotry is not just prejudice—it is **systemic and hierarchical dehumanisation**.

While the core forms of bigotry are:

- racism
- the caste system
- exceptionalism
- bullying, and
- misogyny,

there are multiple facets and layers that include:

Identity-based bigotries

These target who people *are* or are perceived to be.

- **Xenophobia** – hostility toward outsiders or foreigners
- **Ethnocentrism** – judging others solely by one's own cultural standards
- **Sectarianism** – hostility within the same religion or ideology
- **Ableism** – devaluing people with disabilities or neurodivergence
- **Ageism** – discrimination based on age, young or old

Status-based bigotries

These enforce social hierarchies and entitlement.

- **Classism** – treating people as inferior based on economic or social class
- **Elitism** – assuming superiority due to education, wealth, or status
- **Credentialism** – dismissing worth or voice without formal qualifications
- **Colonial mentality** – assuming cultural or moral superiority over others
- **National exceptionalism** – believing one nation or people are inherently superior

Behavioural and relational bigotries

These operate through everyday interactions and power dynamics.

- **Dehumanisation** – reducing people to stereotypes, numbers, or functions
- **Scapegoating** – blaming marginalised groups for systemic problems
- **Othering** – framing people as fundamentally different or threatening
- **Moral superiority** – assuming one's values justify domination or exclusion
- **Gatekeeping** – controlling access to opportunity to preserve advantage

Structural expressions of bigotry

These are embedded in systems rather than individual attitudes.

- **Institutional discrimination** – policies that disadvantage certain groups
- **Cultural erasure** – suppressing language, history, or identity
- **Normalised exclusion** – treating inequality as natural or deserved
- **Silencing** – denying voice or legitimacy to certain groups

In essence, bigotry captures **any worldview or behaviour that ranks human worth**, restricts dignity, or justifies exclusion based on identity, difference, or power.

Bigotry is the belief—explicit or implicit—that some people matter less, deserve less, or belong less than others.

This framing is especially powerful for Leadership because it exposes bigotry not as a fringe attitude, but as a **failure of ethical imagination and shared humanity**.

What are we to do?

1. Each of us is almost identical to every other human—let us **treat everyone at least 99.9% the same**.
2. What we can treat differently is a person's **behaviour that is unproductive**—there lies the 0.1%.
3. Influence and shape things so that **you are better off with the other 99.9%**. The death of bigotry begins when we include 99.9% of the time.

We are not born to be bigots—we learn to be through the cycle of normalising it.

We can defeat bigotry by creating a virtuous cycle of inclusion.

The Benefits of Defeating Bigotry

Defeating bigotry produces benefits that are both **deeply personal** and **profoundly social**. It does not merely remove harm; it actively **unlocks human potential**, strengthens communities, and stabilises societies.

1. Personal benefits

Psychological freedom

Letting go of bigotry releases people from fear-based identity thinking. Individuals no longer need to defend superiority, manage resentment, or sustain false hierarchies. This creates:

- greater emotional security
- reduced anxiety and hostility
- a more stable sense of self-worth

Expanded relationships

Without bigotry, people form relationships based on character and shared humanity rather than suspicion or stereotype. This leads to:

- richer friendships
- deeper empathy
- increased trust across difference

Ethical integrity

Defeating bigotry aligns beliefs with ethical principles. People experience:

- less cognitive dissonance
- greater self-respect
- a clearer moral compass

Personal growth

Exposure to difference without fear broadens perspective. Individuals gain:

- creativity
- adaptability

- intellectual humility

2. Social benefits

Stronger social cohesion

Societies that reduce bigotry experience higher levels of trust and cooperation. This enables:

- more effective collective problem-solving
- reduced conflict
- greater resilience during crises

Economic and creative flourishing

When people are not excluded or diminished, talent is no longer wasted. Inclusive societies benefit from:

- broader participation
- innovation driven by diverse perspectives
- more sustainable and inclusive economic growth

Fairer institutions

Defeating bigotry improves decision-making in education, justice, healthcare, and governance by:

- reducing bias
- increasing legitimacy
- strengthening accountability

Reduced violence and conflict

Bigotry fuels dehumanisation, which makes harm easier to justify. Its defeat lowers:

- interpersonal violence
- systemic oppression
- cycles of retaliation

In essence, bigotry shrinks ethical imagination. Defeating it expands what people believe is possible—for themselves and for one another.

When bigotry is defeated, individuals gain dignity and freedom, and societies gain trust, creativity, and the capacity to build a future that includes more people rather than fewer.

This is why **Leadership treats the defeat of bigotry not as some farfetched notion, or an ethical luxury, but as a practical necessity for human progress.**

Resist it—on Both Sides

At any one time we might be on different ends of bigotry—the target and the perpetrator—**resist both.**

Do not consent to be a target—**resist it.**

Likewise, whether you unwittingly or deliberately practice bigotry, recognise it, take ownership of it—**cut it out!**

Aim for **a success rate of 99.9%**—Influential Leadership will take you there.

Regards,
Colin

Influential Leadership For Better

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