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Why "Being There" Is Essential to Leadership

JOANNE B. CIULLA

The first and greatest imperative of command is to be present in person.

—John Keegan[1]

One of the first things Americans hear on the TV or radio news each day is where the president will be and what he will be doing. In England, you can tell when the queen is staying in her castle if her flag is flying over it. People like to know where their leaders are, and that information is readily available to the public. In an era of video conferencing and satellite feeds, leaders can be seen and heard anywhere at anytime in the virtual world. Nonetheless, the presence of a leader on TV is sometimes not good enough. There are times when it is crucial for leaders to physically be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right sort of thing. This is especially the case when there is a disaster or crisis. Leaders who fail to understand the importance of "being there" in a crisis usually face public condemnation. When something bad happens, people want to know where their leaders are and what they are doing. This is about more than symbolic gestures or a sense of timing. Leaders have a moral obligation *to be there* for us because it is their job and it is part of what the job of leaders means to followers. This chapter examines how place and time are embedded in what it means to be a leader and the moral expectations of leadership.[2]

ON METHOD

The idea that leaders need to be at the right place at the right time is not particularly profound. It is almost a cliché. While from a common sense point

of view, the statement "leaders who are not in the right place at the right time risk condemnation" seems true, a leadership scholar from the social sciences would ask, "What evidence do we have that this is indeed true?" A social psychologist might create an experiment that tests how people react when a leader is or is not present in various scenarios, whereas a political scientist might collect data from polls and news articles on public reactions to leaders who did not show up at important events. Social scientists can tell us whether the statement is true and under what conditions it is true, but they do not tend to focus on questions such as "What does this expectation mean?" "Where did it come from in human history?" In leadership studies, the social sciences have gone a long way to describe and explain leadership, but they only scratch the surface of understanding; to dig deeper, we must turn to the humanities.[3]

The goal of this chapter is to explore why followers expect leaders to be at a certain place at a certain time. My goal is to understand what this means in relation to how we think about leadership. To do this I will draw from history, the classics, literature, and philosophy. One might call my approach hermeneutic. Hermeneutics is the art of interpreting texts and language. Theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher and historian Wilhelm Dilthey characterize "hermeneutics" as a theory of knowledge for scholars who study "culture, rituals, images, examples of the useful arts—in short, for such products as are the result of man's deliberate ingenuity rather than of nature's blind working."[4] The idea of leaders and leadership clearly falls into this category. As the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer notes, the hermeneutic approach allows one to discover the meaning of a part in the context of the whole.[5] In what is called "the hermeneutic circle," a scholar goes back and forth between interpretations of meaning that are explicit and implicit in the phenomenon under investigation.

In this chapter we will begin by looking at the container for "being there"—the normative aspects of time and space in general and in a particular piece of literature. We go on to examine a historical vignette about the Roman Emperor of Nero and what it came to mean to us in the present. Then we consider a contemporary case involving the former Russian President Vladimir Putin and use philosopher Martin Heidegger's work on time and care to pull together our analysis of why being there at the right time is morally important for leaders.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE HISTORY AND THE MEANING OF TIME

Time marks the space between birth and death in which we live our lives. In the past, events were the measure of time. For example, in Madagascar,

one-half hour was measured by the time it took to cook rice. The time it took to fry a locust measured a moment. In Chile, it took one Ave Maria to cook an egg and an earthquake could last two credos.[6] In the early days of Christianity, the Catholic Church gave a moral sense to time because it said that time belonged to God. Sloth was not, as people think today, the sin of not working. It was the sin of not caring. Sloth was considered a sin because God, having given us the gift of time, wanted us to pay attention to what we do in it and to enthusiastically attend to the things that we do in the time we have.[7]

Agrarian societies chart time by natural events, and in many cultures, people still primarily use religious events to mark the passing of time. Today, time measures events rather than events measuring time. We regard clocks and calendars as objective and rational ways to decide when to do things and when to go places. Even the kind of watch that a person wears portrays time differently. Traditional analog clocks allow you to see where you have been, where you are, and where you are going. The digital clock literally and figuratively depicts modernity—you only see time in the present. Clocks and calendars give us two different imperatives for action. The first imperative is based on objective measures of time: "It is June 4th hence, according to my schedule, I must go to New Orleans and be there by noon." The second is based on events that create a feeling of obligation such as, "New Orleans has been hit by a flood and people are suffering. I have an obligation to go there as soon as possible."

Even our objective concept of time is a bit of a fiction. It used to be true that a watch measured every event and synchronized watches worn by different people would agree on the time interval between two events. However, when Albert Einstein noticed that the speed of light appeared the same to every observer, no matter how fast they were moving, scientists abandoned the idea that there was a unique absolute time. Instead, according to relativity theory, observers would have different measures of time as recorded by a clock that they carried. Different observers wearing different watches would not necessarily agree.[8] This is a more personal notion of time, relative to the space that is occupied by the observer who measures it. Time then is more than the numbers used to measure it. While clocks and calendars tell us when events take place, events still define time and place for us. Most people do not remember the date when John F. Kennedy was killed or when the Challenger crashed, but they usually remember where they were and what they were doing. Events tend to mark our memories more than calendars and clocks.

WHERE YOU ARE, WHAT YOU KNOW, AND WHO YOU ARE

We cannot treat space and time as separate containers or environments of human experience because they usually bleed together. Where we are

influences our moral outlook on the world. Edwin Abbott illustrates this point in the novel *Flatland*. Abbott creates a fantasy about spatiality to critique the arrogance and narrow-mindedness of colonial and Victorian morality of his day.[9] The book explores the complexities of imagining spatial and moral dimensions. In the story, a character named "A Square" sets out on a journey and discovers the epistemic limitations of living in his two-dimensional world of Flatland. Along the way, he meets up with the Sphere from Spaceland, who patiently helps A Square recognize a third dimension. Once A Square begins to see in three dimensions, he wants to continue in the "divine" search of knowledge about more dimensions, but Sphere arrogantly dismisses the possibility of more than three dimensions. Eventually, A Square returns to Flatland. This part of the story is similar to Plato's allegory of the cave. When a person breaks free from looking at shadows on the cave wall, and climbs out of the cave, he too sees reality in three dimensions. Like Plato's cave man,[10] A Square will never be at home again in the two-dimensional reality and morality of Flatland. By being somewhere else, he becomes someone else. He is a square who no longer fits in with the other squares.

Flatland raises an interesting question about physical reality and our moral perceptions of the world. Does watching the two-dimensional pictures of war, floods, and famine on the news have the same moral impact as being there? How does being there enhance a leader's capacity to empathize and meet the moral expectations of his or her followers? For our purposes, how does being there at the right time alter or perhaps make a leader? For example, on 9/11 the physical presence of Rudolph Giuliani at the site of the disaster played an enormous role in the public perception of him as a leader, regardless of the quality of what he did at the time or before it. In other words, in times of crisis, being there in body, heart, and mind may be as important or more important than what a leader actually does at the time.

DID NERO FIDDLE WHILE ROME BURNED?

The significance of *where* you are, when you are there, and what you are doing is contingent on *who* you are. The meaning of a leader occupying a certain place at a certain time is unique. For example, we all know the story of Nero playing his fiddle while Rome burned. There is nothing wrong with Nero playing the fiddle on the roof of his palace; however, there is something that is not only wrong but also immoral about Nero playing the fiddle on his roof at the time in which Rome burns below. It is this point that connects space and time to the implications of Nero's identity as the leader of Rome. If Nero were an ordinary citizen who lived alone, his behavior in that place at that time would be considered odd, but not necessarily immoral. The fact that Nero is a leader makes his location at that time morally significant,

because there is a sense in which we expect him to be somewhere else in Rome attending to the disaster. In this case Nero is physically looking down on Rome, but it does not appear that his heart and mind are on the fire.

The story of Nero playing his fiddle has come down to us through the ages. It is repeated in various forms by a number of ancient historians and then it shows up (as do so many things from the past) in William Shakespeare's work as well as in the work of a number of modern writers. Today we sometimes use the phrase as shorthand to describe a leader who is self-centered, inattentive, and irresponsible, and who fails to look after something that is important—"She is like Nero who played the violin while Rome burned." To fully understand the significance of this story for our understanding of leadership, we must first ask, is it true that Nero played the violin while Rome burned? Curiously, for our purposes the truth of the story is not that important. The more interesting question is, Why have people from Nero's own time up until now kept repeating this story?

In AD 64 there was a huge fire in Rome. It lasted six days and wiped out large portions of the city. One of the more reliable accounts of the fire comes from the Roman historian Gaius Cornelius Tacitus (AD 56–120). Tacitus reports that Nero was not in Rome when the fire started. The emperor was at his summer home in Antium and did not return to the city until the fire got close to one of his houses in town. When Nero finally arrived in Rome, Tacitus tells us:

> But as a relief for the evicted and fugitive people, he opened up the Plain of Mars and the Monuments of Agrippa, in fact even his own gardens, and he set up improvised buildings to receive the destitute multitude; and comestibles were sailed up from Ostia and nearby municipalities, and the price of grain was reduced to three sesterces. All of which, though popular, proved unavailing, because a rumor spread that at the very time of the City's blaze he had actually mounted his domestic stage and sung of the extirpation of Troy, assimilating present calamities to olden disasters.[11]

If this really was rumor going around Rome, be it true or false, it is one that speaks volumes about how Nero was perceived as a leader. (Imagine President George W. Bush ordering disaster relief after Hurricane Katrina and then getting up on his home stage and singing a song that compared the disaster to the destruction of Troy!)

Ancient historians were known to present gossip as fact and embellish history to make the story more interesting. Tacitus was no admirer of Nero, but his account seems more measured than other historians (and he was a near contemporary of Nero's). For example, the historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (AD 69–140) claims that Nero set the fire to plunder and destroy ancient monuments and the houses of the rich and powerful in the city.

According to Suetonius, "Pretending to be disgusted by the drab old buildings and narrow, winding streets of Rome, he brazenly set fire to the city." [12] Suetonius then writes:

> Nero watched the conflagration from the tower of Maecenas, enraptured by what he called "the beauty of the flames"; then put on his tragedian's costume and sang "The Sack of Ilium"[13] from beginning to end. He offered to remove corpses and rubble free of charge, but allowed nobody to search among the ruins, even of his own mansion; he wanted to collect as much loot and spoils as possible himself. Then he opened a Fire Relief Fund and insisted on contributions, which bled the provincials white and practically beggared all private citizens.[14]

This is a far more sinister account of the event. One in which Nero does, as the saying goes, "fiddle while Rome burns." Later writers followed Suetonius's story line, only some had Nero singing a different song or playing a different instrument while others, such as Cassius Dio (AD 150–235), had him singing and watching the fire from the roof of his palace.[15]

Despite any exaggeration or poetic license, we know that Nero was an immoral and somewhat bizarre person in his private and public life. He killed his mother and kicked his pregnant wife to death after she complained about him coming home late from the races. Nero perfected the idea of bread and circuses, giving handouts and violent public entertainment to keep the masses happy. Fiddling while Rome burned was nothing compared to the fact that he then blamed the fire on the Christians. After the fire, Nero rounded up the Christians and had them brutally tortured and killed, often as public entertainment. Among those killed were the Saints Peter and Paul. It is all too easy to caricaturize a leader like Nero, but as the classicist Edward Champlin points out, the real Nero may not have been as bad as his monster-like image in history.[16]

CITHARAS AND FIDDLING

Nero was a brutal man and a vain artist. He was a serious musician who liked to compete in music contests and longed for artistic recognition. The story of him fiddling while Rome burned seems to speak to the public perception of him as uncaring, self-centered, and disjointed from the people. One thing we can be certain of is that he did not play the fiddle because it had not yet been invented. According to classicist Mary Gyles, Nero probably played the cithara (a stringed instrument resembling a lyre) because he had coins and statues of himself as a cithara player.[17] So the interesting question is, why do we say that Nero played the fiddle? Here is where we can see how the study of language offers insight into the origin of certain ideas.

According to Gyles, the Latin word "fides" means string, and the Roman writer Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–143 BC) uses fides and the diminutive "fidicula" to refer to a stringed instrument, which in his day would be a lyre or a cithara. She traces the term to the AD 500s and finds that "fidicula" is used in English and Continental Germanic to refer to musical instruments such as the harp, lyre, and rotta. Gyles says that by the fourteenth century the word evolved into the word "fiddle" and applied to the violin when it was invented a century later.

So what does all this have to do with Nero and leadership? The story of Nero playing the fiddle lay somewhat dormant in literature until it re-emerged in the seventeenth century in Shakespeare's *Henry VI* where Henry proclaims:

> *Plataginet, I will: and like thee, Nero,*
> *Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn.*[18]

Gyles argues that it is significant that Nero shows up in this play as a musician, but that in *The Taming of the Shrew,* Shakespeare makes it clear that he thinks a lute is the same thing as a fiddle.[19] She then points to a number of authors who follow Shakespeare and repeat the story that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Because of the Nero story, the verb "fiddled" enters the English language with two very different meanings. Consider the definition from Samuel Johnson's dictionary, written between 1745 and 1755:

1. To fiddle, from the noun.
2. To trifle, to shift the hands often, and to do nothing like a fellow that plays upon a fiddle. Good cooks cannot abide what they justly call fiddling work, where abundance of time is spent and little done.[20]

One rarely associates playing an instrument with "doing nothing," but if we go back to the Nero story we see that both the story and the word for playing the instrument in the story (albeit the wrong instrument) take on a meaning that includes in it moral condemnation of Nero, who was doing something trivial and unhelpful at the wrong time. In modern English it is an even harsher term that can mean to cheat or swindle,[21] to make frivolous movements, and to waste time.[22]

The intent of this (somewhat off the beaten path) account of Nero and fiddling while Rome burns is to show how sayings can be graphic summaries of what people have thought and felt about how leaders should not behave over a long period of time. People expect leaders to attend to the problems of followers. In times of crisis, people condemn leaders who are not there and/or do something at the time of the crisis that the public perceives as

pleasant or enjoyable to the leader. When leaders behave this way, the public thinks they are fiddling around. In our next examples, we see that the perception of fiddling around need not involve playing an instrument.

THE PROBLEM WITH NOT BEING THERE

Russian President Vladimir Putin offers a striking instance of a leader who failed to understand the importance of "being there" when he stayed on at his vacation dacha instead of returning to his office in Moscow or going to the port at the Barents Sea after the Russian nuclear submarine *Kursk* sank in August 2000. Consider some of the reactions to Putin's behavior at home and in the world press.[23] "Particularly irksome," declared a Moscow daily, was that "he has not interrupted his vacation . . . if only for an hour, to support the seamen in distress." Igor Chernyak wondered about Putin's ability to empathize.

> How come that in the past five days, Putin, who once spent a night aboard a submarine and knows what being underwater means, has not found time to address the families of the Kursk's seamen? Why does he think he can remain silent these days, with all of Russia keyed up, its heart going out to the people aboard the hapless sub?

In democratic societies, the public is supposed to hold their leaders accountable for where they are in times of crisis. For example, the British paper the *Independent* editorialized (August 18): "No democratic politician can afford to remain on holiday in a crisis." Oslo's *Dagbladet* observed: "every other democratically elected head of state would have gotten as near the site [of the accident] as humanly possible." Michael Backhaus argued in the tabloid *B.Z.* of Berlin (August 18):

> The czars and their Soviet successors simply did not have to take care of public concerns. In their majority, the Russians still want a strong man, a kind of czar, at the lead. But they want someone who takes care of the people and who is with them in times of misery. Putin's heartless silence and the serious shortcomings during the rescue mission could destroy his reputation as the savior of the Russian motherland.

An editorial in the Italian *La Stampa* (August 18) notes:

> According to the Russians, today Putin should be at the Barents Sea . . . following the rescue operations. Yesterday's public surveys, conducted for "Echo of Moscow" radio, heated up its switchboards: Most of the radio listeners wanted Putin to immediately interrupt his vacation, (adding) "Clinton does it all the time."

Putin replied to these criticisms and acknowledged his mistake in an interview with Voice of America:

> The only thing which could have been changed in my conduct as head of state, it could be possible to halt my working meetings, to suspend them at the place of my vacation in Sochi, the Black Sea, I could go back to the capital, to Moscow. But, again, it would have been a P-R (public relations) activity since in any city of the country, or all over the world, I'm always linked to the military, I have communication means, I can discuss any problems on the table.[24]

Putin thought that going to his office or to the site of the submarine was simply a matter of public relations. In other words, he cared, but failed to *show* care. The cause of outrage was the public perception that he chose to stay on vacation rather than be where the public thought that he should be. In short, he appeared to be fiddling around when he should have been doing his job as leader. Note that Putin, like Nero, did seem to attend to the problem at hand. The key issue for followers was that they believed that their leaders were not paying attention and were doing something enjoyable while others suffered. Such leaders appear self-interested, callous, and indifferent to the plight of their followers.

Putin's case is particularly revealing when it comes to the difference between caring and showing care. On the one hand, he is a product of his personal background as head of intelligence and growing up in an undemocratic culture. So one might argue that he did not know that leaders were supposed to stop vacationing and go to Moscow or the site of a disaster right away.[25] On the other hand, this does not get at the question of whether Putin really cared about the right things. Some believed that Putin was more concerned with showing that Russia did not need help than caring about the 118 men who were trapped in the submarine. The other rumor going around was that there was something to hide on the submarine.

There are many other cases of leaders who failed to be in the right place at the right time. Coincidentally, a year later, we see another example of this involving a submarine. In February 2001, when Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori found out that the U.S. submarine *Greeneville* sank a Japanese fishing boat called the *Ehime Maru's*, he actually called and asked his secretary whether it was all right for him to continue his golf game. Apparently she said yes, because he went on to play for two more hours.[26] He was widely condemned by the public and the press. (Mori's political career was already on thin ice at the time.) His response to criticisms of his behavior was more clueless than Putin's. He said: "Why is this an issue of emergency management? It is an accident isn't it? I think I exercised my leadership." [27] In an editorial, Japanese writer Shin'ya Fujiwara criticized Mori's behavior and the failure of the captain of the *Greeneville* to apologize to the Japanese families. Fujiwara aptly sums up the expectations that people have for leaders to be there. He writes, "both men have shown this capacity to go missing when they are needed, leaving us alone again in our grief and frustration." [28]

Being there in a time of crisis is central to leadership in all contexts. As John Keegan notes in the opening quote of this chapter, a leader's presence is central to military leadership for practical as well as moral reasons. Business leaders have also been condemned when they fail to show up in times of crisis. One notable example of this is the failure of Exxon CEO Lawrence G. Rawl to visit the site where the *Exxon Valdez* broke up in Alaska and caused one of the worst oil spills in history.[29] It took him about a week to finally get there, in the meantime making Exxon seem like it did not care or take responsibility for the environmental disaster.

CARE AND BEING THERE

Let us turn now to what "care" means and how it is related to being there. "Care" has two different but interrelated meanings. It can mean anxiety or concern and is often used as a noun as in "She has many cares" or "She has no cares." The verb form of "care" often means solicitous, paying attention *to*, taking responsibility *for*, or even worrying *about* someone or something, as in "I care about or for her." The two different meanings come together in "I must care for her especially when she has so many cares." The word "care" comes from the Latin word "cura," which is also the root of the word "cure."

In *Being and Time* philosopher Martin Heidegger traces the origins of the role of care in life to the fable of Care (Cura) by the Roman writer Gaius Julius Hyginus (64 BC–AD 17).[30] The fable ties the idea of caring to the origins and maintenance of humanity. It goes like this:

> Once when "care" [Cura] was crossing a river, she thoughtfully picked up some mud and began to shape it. While she was thinking about what she had made, Jupiter came by. Care asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. Care wanted to name the human after herself, but Jupiter insisted that his name should be given to the human instead. While Care and Jupiter were arguing, Earth (Tellus) arose and said that the human being should be named after her, since she had given her own body. Finally, all three disputants accepted Saturn as judge. Saturn decided that Jupiter, who gave spirit to the human, would take back its soul after death; and since Earth had offered her body to the human, she should receive it back after death. But, said Saturn, "Since Care fashioned the first human being, let her have and hold it as long as it lives.[31]

The myth demonstrates how care literally and figuratively makes us what we are and sustains us as human beings.

Heidegger ties the idea of care (Sorge) to what it means to be or to exist. He uses the word "Da-sein," to mean "being there." Heidegger says we not only exist in time, but we exist first and foremost as beings with the capacity to be concerned about our own being or self-identity. We are self-reflective in that we make sense of our ability to make sense of the world. Humans do not exist

by themselves. They exist in the midst of a world of other people and things. For Heidegger, care is the uniquely human way of being in this world. It is the experience of care that unifies the self and makes a person into an authentic human being. While Heidegger is looking at the broader philosophic question of "being there," it is instructive to use his observations to think about why care is fundamental to what we are as humans and how we understand our common morality.[32] This last point is most important for the issue at hand concerning leaders. The "being" of a leader has some unique aspects to it. Since leaders cannot exist without followers, they exist in the context of followers. What sets them apart in that context is that their role carries the expectation and obligation to care. Failure to place a value on being there at a particular time is, like the vice of sloth, failure to care.

THE ETHICS OF CARE

One of the oldest and ubiquitous moral principles is the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" or "do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you." It assumes a common ability to empathize, and it encompasses expansive notions of space and time. The "others" in the rule are just like you and me no matter where they are or what time it is. The rule implies that people are the same based on their wants and needs. The golden rule gives us guidance on how to treat people, but it still does not quite capture what it means to care. Perhaps that is what makes it such a useful principle. Care requires attention, solicitude, and active involvement. Unlike the golden rule, which is objective and egalitarian, care entails having certain dispositions and feelings, and it is highly subjective and selective.

In the twentieth century, feminist scholars began to formulate an ethic of care.[33] One impetus for this was psychologist Carol Gilligan's surprising discovery that girls progressed up Lawrence Kohlberg's scale of moral development more slowly than boys. Gilligan went on to conduct her own study of moral development of girls and found that women and girls thought about ethical problems in "a different voice" than men.[34] Rather than reasoning from moral principles, females were more concerned with relationships and contexts. One might argue that if a leader thinks about morality in this "female" way, he or she might be more likely to sense why being in the right place at the right time is important for his or her relationship to followers. It is the same disposition that leads mothers and fathers to go to their screaming babies, even when the babies are not hurt or in danger. According to psychologist Erik Erikson, the human inclination to care is rooted in the impulse to "caress" someone who in his helplessness emits signals of despair.[35]

The ethics of care is often contrasted with the ethics of justice. Philosopher Virginia Held describes an *ethic of justice* as one that focuses on fairness, equality, individual rights, and abstract principles as well as the consistent application of them. An ethic of care is about cultivating caring relations, attentiveness, responsiveness to need, and narrative nuance (which includes time and place). She says, "Whereas justice protects equality and freedom, care fosters social bonds and cooperation."[36]

The basic ideas behind the ethics of care, such as the role of emotions, empathy, and sympathy, have been discussed by many thinkers in the history of philosophy and are not considered feminine or masculine, but merely other ways to think about ethics.[37] For example, Søren Kierkegaard introduced the notion of care as a means of counteracting the excessive objectivity of philosophy in the early twentieth century.[38] The Roman philosopher Seneca (who, by the way, was Nero's tutor) observed that behaving rationally is only part of morality. He said humans were given reason so that they can achieve the good. They were given the capacity to care so that they can perfect the good.[39] The dichotomy between those cold, hard, objective, moral principles based on reason and justice, and moral feelings such as empathy is extremely important when we consider the ethics of leadership. Followers want and expect leaders to have moral principles and moral feelings. Not all leaders have both, but this does not necessarily mean that they are immoral or that they cannot learn or at least compensate for missing moral feelings related to care.

CONCLUSION: HOW DUTY AND PROPRIETY CAN LEAD TO CARE

Looking back on the Putin example, notice that he says that he was monitoring the situation with sophisticated communications at his vacation dacha. There was nothing that he could practically do to help raise the submarine. He appears to have been directing the action from afar. Putin may well have been behaving like a responsible and rational leader, who is in the wrong place at that time. The public controversy over Putin centered on what his absence at the Barents Sea port said about his feelings; however, there is another equally if not more important issue in the case. Putin not only appeared to lack the right feelings that would motivate him to be there, but he lacked the knowledge that he had a duty to be there. Staying at his dasha made him seem slothful—as if he did not care about how or where he did his work—or as if he was not giving the disaster the appropriate kind of attention. Care is about more than concern for others; it is also about concern for what one does in the role that defines what one is.

While we want leaders who have feelings of care for other human beings, there is much to recommend in a leader with a strong sense of duty. First, a leader like Putin does not need to have a tender heart to know when and where he should be in times of crisis. Care is largely about feelings, but it may also be framed in terms of attention to one's duty. Second, the duties of leadership can be taught in ways that moral feeling cannot. Leaders learn from their mistakes when they have a duty to be on the site of a disaster. Putin did. In later disasters, such as the massacre of school children in Beslan by Chechan rebels in 2004, he promptly arrived on the scene. Even if showing up is nothing more than public relations, it still means something to followers. It means the leader is "on the job" and paying attention to their plight. A leader's presence can give followers confidence in the leader, and this confidence can be a source of comfort.

It may be unrealistic to expect all leaders to have finely honed feelings of care, and not all of them do. This is rather like expecting all leaders to have charisma. I would argue that either care for one's duty or the care that comes from feelings is morally sufficient, albeit not as emotionally satisfying to followers. The duty to be with followers in a crisis is also captured by the concept of "propriety" or what is considered proper behavior for a leader. Confucius understood the importance of propriety and ceremony for leaders as a means of showing both respect and humility.[40] Ancient Greek and Chinese writers talked about propriety in terms of the virtue reverence. According to philosopher and classicist Paul Woodruff, the ancients considered reverence the most important virtue for leaders. It was the virtue that made leaders act as if they were a part of a larger whole and kept leaders from acting like gods.[41] As noted earlier, leaders simply cannot exist without followers.

We have been exploring how being there and care are essential elements of the moral obligations of leadership. Being in a certain place at a certain time is the context and existential aspect of leadership. The best leaders care because of how they feel *and* because of their sense of duty, but either motivation may be sufficient for filling their moral obligations and doing their job. A leader's duties are determined by how to do his or her job the right way. As I have argued elsewhere, the ethics of leaders is inextricably tied to and embedded in the skills, knowledge, and competencies of leadership.[42] Leaders can and often do learn their duties and proper behavior on the job. Duty and propriety offer guidance for leaders about where they should be at certain times, regardless of how the leader feels.

Physical presence affects the way that people perceive the world. Visiting the location of a disaster after it has occurred is different from watching it on a flat screen TV. Being at the site of a disaster may cultivate sentiments of care in leaders who do not have them or, at a minimum, help leaders

understand why they should be there. When leaders "fiddle while Rome burns," stay on vacation while sailors die, or play golf while families grieve, they fail to understand that these things do not happen to their followers without happening to them. This is why it is so important for presidents to visit wounded soldiers and attend the funerals of those who have fallen in war. Leaders need to experience the feelings of followers up close because they are players in the same tragedy. Since the time of Nero and perhaps before then, people have condemned leaders who fail to understand this point and "fiddle while Rome burns."

NOTES

1. John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Viking, 1987), 329.
2. Joanne B. Ciulla, "The State of Leadership Ethics and the Work that Lies Before Us," *Business Ethics: A European Review* 14, no. 4 (2005): 323–335.
3. As C. P. Snow noted in his famous 1959 Rede lecture, there are "two cultures" of scholars, the humanities and the sciences. He said the sciences provide us with descriptions and explanations, but we need the humanities for understanding. C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.
4. Roy Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 1.
5. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 2nd ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1990), 190.
6. E. P. Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*, no. 38 (1967).
7. Joanne B. Ciulla, *The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work* (New York: Crown Business Books, 2000).
8. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988).
9. Edwin A. Abbott, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992 [1884]).
10. Plato, *Republic,* trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1992).
11. Tacitus, *The Annals,* trans. A. J. Woodman (Indianapolis IN: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 15.39, 323.
12. Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars,* trans. Robert Graves and Michael Grant (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 236.
13. This is a lost epic from Greek literature about the sack of Troy.
14. Ibid., 237.
15. Cassius Dio, *Roman History,* trans. Earnest Gray, Loeb Classical Library Edition, Vol. VIIII (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), sec. 16, 113.
16. Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 9.
17. Mary F. Gyles, "Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned," *The Classical Journal* 42, no. 4 (1947): 211–217.

18. William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1994), Henry VI, Pt. I Act I, Scene 4, 6.
19. Gyles, "Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned," 215.
20. Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. I (New York: AMS Press, 1967).
21. It is worth noting here that in the 1530s wandering minstrels had fallen into disrepute and by the seventeenth century were considered idlers and people who spread social unrest. This too contributed to the meaning of the expression "fiddling around," according to Gyles, "Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned," 215.
22. *The Complete Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 585.
23. All press quotes in this section, unless otherwise stated are from Federation of American Scientists. Available at http://www.fas.org/news/russia/2000/russia-000818-sub_comment.htm
24. Voice of America. Available at http://www.fas.org/news/russia/2000/russia-000909.htm
25. Terry L. Price, *Understanding Ethical Failures in Leadership* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
26. Stephanie Strom, "Sub Incident Erodes Trust in Japan Chief and the U.S.," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2001, N7.
27. Howard W. French, "A Sorry Mess: Taking Measure of Suffering," *The New York Times*, March 4, 2001, WK 16.
28. Shin'ya Fujiwara, "In Japan, Waiting for the Captain to Appear," *The New York Times*, February 14, 2001, A17.
29. Bruce Harrison and Tom Prugh, "Assessing the Damage: Practitioner Perspectives on the Valdez," *Public Relations Journal* 45, no. 10 (1989): 40.
30. Hyginus, *Fabularum Liber* (New York: Garland, 1976 [1535]).
31. In an edited form from Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 184.
32. See Robert C. Solomon, *From Rationalism to Existentialism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).
33. See Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
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36. Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15.
37. See, for example, Bishop Joseph Butler, *Five Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel; and A Dissertation upon the Nature of Virtue* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950 [1726]); and David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983).
38. Søren Kierkegaard, *Johannes Climacus; or, De Omnibus Dubitandum Est; and A Sermon*, trans. Thomas Henry Croxall (Paulo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958);

Frederick Copleston, *Contemporary Philosophy: Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1966).

39. Seneca, *Seneca ad Lucilium Epistulae. Vol. 3 of Epistulae Morales,* trans. Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

40. See Confucius, "Selections from the Analects," ed. and trans. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

41. Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

42. Joanne B. Ciulla, "Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory," *The Business Ethics Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1995): 5–28. Also see Joanne B. Ciulla, "Ethics and Leadership Effectiveness," in *The Nature of Leadership,* ed. J. Antonakis, A. T. Cianciolo, and R. J. Sternberg (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 302–327.