

JUST TALKING The Servant-Leader

Being comfortable with oneself is an important step to becoming a visionary leader who serves others, business executive Andrew Molson and Concordia University academic Jordan LeBel say

Q: What does being a complete executive mean to you?

Andrew: I look at a leader as being a servant, a servant-leader. A servant to the institution that has decided that this person would be the leader. And in serving this institution, the executive has to really know herself or himself well in order to better serve others. A leader or key executive needs to have emotional intelligence, needs to be able to listen, needs to be able to exercise judgment swiftly, often in very tense situations. From a health perspective, they need to be quite balanced in order to deal with certain situations when they heat up.



Q: In your career, what was a key challenge as you developed as an executive?

Andrew: Being comfortable with myself. Completely understanding my strengths and my weaknesses. Feeling comfortable about who I am and what I'm doing. It's only through knowing who I am that I can be of better service to others. It goes back to the concept of learning to be a servant-leader. You are there to serve and the emphasis is on serving; it is not on making more money and thinking about yourself and self-interest. So you can exercise your judgment, make your decisions in very intense situations in a straightforward manner where you're thinking about the company, and the importance of the strategy for that company.

Q: What could you advise young people about intense moments?

Andrew: I have been in very stressful situations. I believe that many of the people in our class of 2016 have also been in similarly difficult and demanding situations. I think you learn from such situations. The more you learn, the better prepared you are to handle these situations. If you can find a way to keep your head above the trees and learn to look at the entire forest, and take yourself away from the situation that you're in, it can be very beneficial. Learn to look at crises as opportunities in disguise.

Andrew Molson, a seventh-generation member of the Molson brewing family, is a partner and chairman of Res Publica Consulting Group Inc., and vice-chairman of Molson Coors brewing company. Mr. Molson became a member of the Quebec Bar in 1995 after studying law at Laval University in Quebec City. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University and a masters of science in corporate governance and ethics from University of London (Birkbeck College). He serves on several boards of directors, including boards of non-profit organizations. He is serving as champion for the Executive MBA class of 2016 at Concordia University's John Molson School of Business, thus continuing his family's longstanding relationship with Concordia University.

Q: What is your school's vision of a complete executive?

Jordan: A complete executive is someone who looks beyond the traditional sphere of business experiences and the surface appearance of things, someone who understands the role of good health and peak performance, who seeks to learn from and develop others. In other words, someone who doesn't just think business in the old profit and loss way. Let's have a broader vision and a more complete one.



Q: How will that broader vision help someone be a better businessperson?

Jordan: A broader vision allows you to tap into the insights of other fields and collaborate with other disciplines to develop more powerful solutions. Look at some of the developments in energy – engineers working with designers and architects, with anthropologists, with people who know nothing about energy. To dance that pas de deux across disciplines and sectors you need to keep an open mind and have a broad field of vision.

Q: Why the focus on physical and mental well-being?

Jordan: If you want to achieve and maintain a level of peak performance, you can't keep taxing your body, or even your mental capacity. Successful leadership over time requires health—both physical and mental—as well as strength and stamina. And many high performing executives tend to be Type A and don't pick up on the signs their body sends them – slow down, I'm running out of fuel here. It's not just about managing one's time, it's also about managing one's energy.

Q: Tell me about having Andrew Molson as champion for the students.

Jordan: I think it is very fitting that he is our inaugural champion. You talk to Andrew and find out how incredibly committed he is with volunteer causes and how involved he is. These are the types of things you learn best in candid conversations – things you can't find in any management textbook. These lessons stick with you, especially when shared by leaders like Andrew Molson.

Jordan LeBel, Ph.D., is director of the Executive MBA program at Concordia University's John Molson School of Business, where he is also the director of the Luc Beauregard Centre of Excellence in Communications Research and a professor of Marketing. He was an early adopter of online teaching technologies more than 10 years ago. He began working in professional kitchens at the age of 12, and is recognized as a world expert on chocolate. He is a recipient of the 3M National Teaching Fellowship.



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