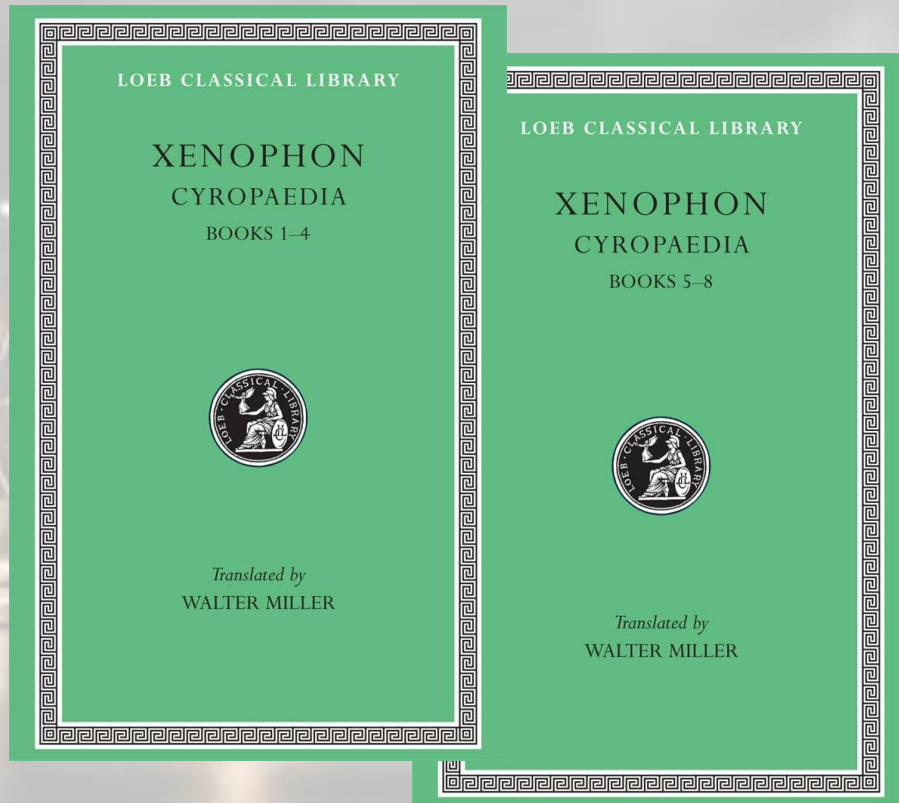


Cyrus

the Inspirational Leader

Based on Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*
(Loeb Classical Library)



Dimitrios Staikos
PhD(c)
Dec. 2024

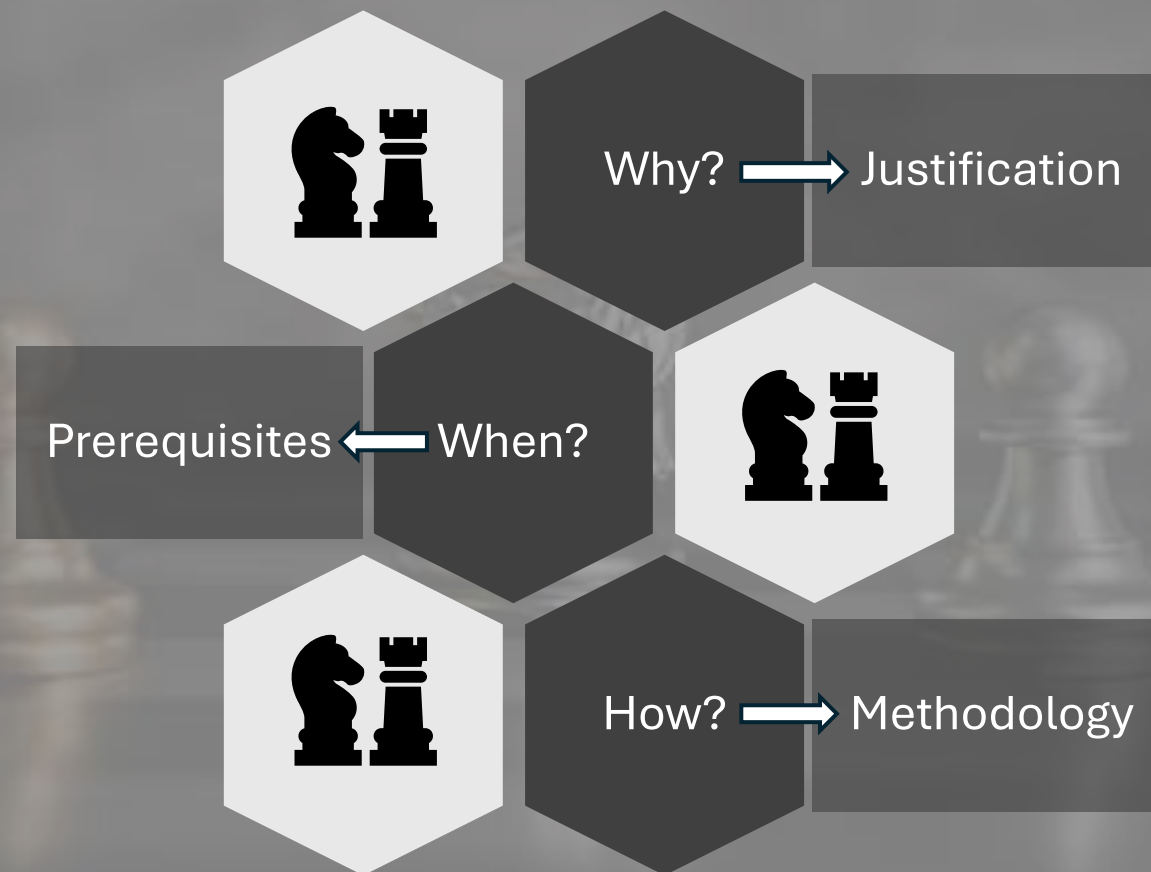
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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

Why?

Vision & Mission as sources of inspiration

“As for myself, I wish to make known to you why I have not hesitated to assume this office and why I have invited you to join me... I think that no virtue is practiced by men except with the aim that... they prepare themselves to have many times greater enjoyment in time to come... those also who practice military science undergo this labour, not that they may never cease from fighting, but because they think that by gaining proficiency in the arts of war they will secure great wealth and happiness and honour both for themselves and for their country. But when men go through all this toil and then allow themselves to become old and feeble before they reap any fruit of their labours, they seem to me at least to be like a man who, anxious to become a good farmer, should sow and plant well but, when harvest time came, should permit his crop to fall back again to the ground ungathered.... But, fellow-soldiers, let us not make this mistake; but, conscious that from our boyhood on we have practiced what is good and honourable, let us go against the enemy...»
(I.v.7, 9-11)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

When?

**When addressed to
competent
individuals**

“Do not let the exhortations of the Assyrian trouble you in the least, Chrysantas,” Cyrus answered; “for no speech of admonition can be so fine that it will all at once make those who hear it good men if they are not good already; it would surely not make archers good if they had not had previous practice in shooting; neither could it make lancers good, nor horsemen; it cannot even make men able to endure bodily labour, unless they have been trained to it before.” (III.iii.50)

**Competency as the end-result of suitable education & training:*

“But I should be surprised, Chrysantas, if a word well spoken would help those wholly untrained in excellence (virtue) to the attainment of manly worth any more than a song well sung would help those untrained in music to high attainments in music.” (III.iii.55)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

When?

When fulfilling the vision is feasible

When the stakes are high

“If any one too often raises false expectations of good things to come, eventually he can gain no credence, even when he holds forth well-grounded hopes... faith in your own words of encouragement you must keep sacred to the utmost to serve you in the greatest crises.” (I.vi.19)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Motivational & encouraging speech

Motivational & encouraging attitude

Leader's profile

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Motivational & encouraging speech (pompousness)

“When Cyrus perceived that a panic was spreading through his army, he called together the officers of the different divisions and all others whose despondency he thought might cause injury and whose enthusiasm would be a help... And when they had come together, he addressed them...” (VI.ii.13)

““Well,” said Cyrus, “if your part is all right, never fear for the others; for with the help of the gods I will clear those flanks of enemies for you. And do not you hurl yourself upon the opposing ranks, I adjure you, until you see in flight those whom you now fear.” Cyrus indulged in such boastful speech only on the eve of battle; at other times he was never boastful at all” (VII.i.17)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

**Motivational &
encouraging attitude**

“But now, Abradatas, while you have time, by all means ride along your line of chariots and exhort your men to the charge, cheering them by your own looks and buoying them up with hopes. Furthermore, inspire them with a spirit of rivalry that you and your division may prove yourselves the best of the charioteers.” (VII.i.18)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Leader's profile

“... he (Cyrus) led out his army... of the Medes some came out because... they liked his ways ... others because they were grateful to him for freeing them, as they thought, from great impending danger, and still others because they cherished the hope that as he seemed to be a man of ability he would one day be exceedingly successful and exceedingly great besides; others wished to requite him for some service he had done for them while he was growing up in Media; many, too, owed to his kindness of heart many a favour...” (IV.ii.9-10)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Leadership by example

“But in those who did present themselves he believed that he could in no way more effectively inspire a desire for the beautiful and the good than by endeavouring, as their sovereign, to set before his subjects a perfect model of virtue in his own person.” (VIII.i.21)

“And remember this, that if in their eyes you prove yourselves courageous, you will teach not only your comrades but many others also, not by precept merely but by example, to be courageous.” (III.iii.39)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

**Motivation through
hierarchy
(top → down)**

“And when he (Cyrus) had filled them (his staff-officers) with an eager desire for immediate action, he bade them go to their own several divisions and tell their men what he had told them and try to inspire in them all a desire to begin the campaign, for he wished them all to start out in the best of spirits” (III.iii.12)

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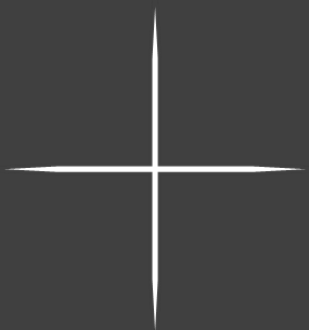
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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Mutual motivation

Vertical (top ↔ down)



Horizontal (same level)

“... the peers marched on cheerily, well-disciplined, looking toward one another, calling by name to comrades beside them and behind them, and often saying: “On, friends,” “On, brave fellows;” thus they encouraged one another to the charge. And those behind, hearing them, in their turn cheered the front line to lead them bravely on. So Cyrus’s army was filled with enthusiasm, ambition, strength, courage, exhortation, self-control, obedience; and this, I think, is the most formidable thing an enemy has to face.” (III.iii.59)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Personalization

“... they remarked to one another what a good memory Cyrus had and how he called every one by name as he assigned them their places and gave them their instructions. Now Cyrus made a study of this... the general should be so foolish as not to know the names of the officers under him; and yet he must employ them... whenever he wishes to inspire courage or fear. And whenever Cyrus wished to honour any one, it seemed to him proper to address him by name... it seemed to him that those who were conscious of being personally known to their general exerted themselves more to be seen doing something good and were more ready to abstain from doing anything bad.” (V.iii.46-48)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Inclusion & equal opportunities

“If I were you,” said Cyrus, “I should as quickly as possible have armour made for all the Persians who are coming here (the commoners) just like that of the so-called peers who are coming from our country... “they (the commoners) are to have arms like ours (the peers); but to steel their hearts is our task; for it is not the whole duty of an officer to show himself valiant, but he must also take care that his men be as valiant as possible.”... “Now, however... you (the commoners) are permitted, if you wish, to receive arms like ours, to face the same danger as we, and, if any fair success crowns our enterprise, to be counted worthy of an equal share with us... “In this armour, then, how could any one of us have the advantage over another except in courage? And this it is proper for you to cherish in your hearts no less than we.”... And when the Persians heard it... they were all enrolled and all took up the arms.” (II.i.9-19)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Noble competition

“Cyrus... provided not only for that which his allies had agreed upon but he also inspired his friends to rivalry among themselves... And, as a means of accomplishing this... rewarded those who were in each particular most efficient... and the whole camp was in the best of spirits.” (VI.ii.4-6)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

**Re-evaluation of
pessimistic
information
(debiasing - nudging)**

“When Cyrus perceived that a panic was spreading through his army, he called together the officers of the different divisions and all others whose despondency he thought might cause injury and whose enthusiasm would be a help... And when they had come together, he addressed them as follows: “... when you see that we are mustered in much larger numbers than we had when we defeated them and that we are now, thank heaven, much better equipped than we were then—it is strange that when you see this you are not filled with courage!... If any one reported to you that this was the condition of things among the enemy, what would you, who are now so frightened, have done... However, if there are any to whom the situation over there—such as it is—seems formidable, while our own condition seems contemptible, I say, men, that we ought to send them over to the enemy, for they would be much more useful to us over there than in our ranks.””
(VI.ii.13-14, 19-20)



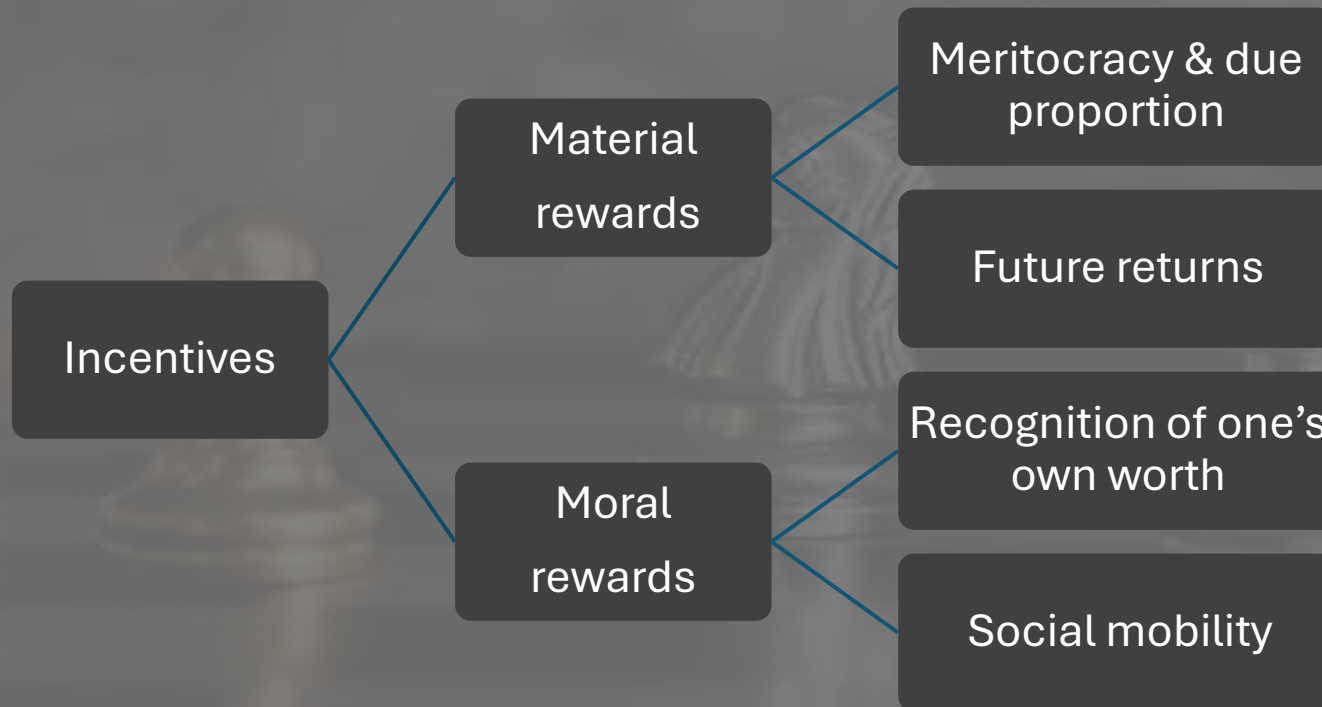
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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Material rewards:
Meritocracy & due
proportion

“... I do not believe that anything in the world is more unfair than for the bad and good to be awarded equal shares.” (II.ii.18)

“... it is mean to oppose a proposition that the one who suffers the most and does the most for the state should also receive the highest rewards.” (II.ii.20)

“And many others from both orders rose to speak in favour of the measure. They decided that each one should receive rewards according to his deserts, and that Cyrus should be the judge. Thus, then, the matter was satisfactorily settled.” (II.iii.16)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Material rewards:
Future returns

“I suppose that you understand, men, that... plunder, fame, freedom, power—all these are now held up as prizes for the victors... Whoever, therefore, cares for himself, let him fight with me” (VII.i.13)



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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Moral rewards:
Recognition of one's
own worth
(Honor)

“And remind them also that this day will prove what each one is worth.” (III.iii.37)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader

How?

Moral rewards:
Social mobility
(possibility of
advancement)

“Fellow-citizens of Persia, you were born and bred upon the same soil as we; the bodies you have are no whit inferior to ours, and it is not likely that you have hearts in the least less brave than our own. In spite of this, in our own country you did not enjoy equal privileges with us... Now, however... you are permitted, if you wish, to receive arms like ours, to face the same danger as we, and, if any fair success crowns our enterprise, to be counted worthy of an equal share with us... if you were not quite our equals in the use of these arms, there is nothing surprising about that; for you had not the leisure to practise with them that we had... You see your arms; whosoever will, let him take them and have his name enrolled with the captain in the same companies with us. But whosoever is satisfied to be in the position of a mercenary, let him remain in the armour of the hired soldiery.” (II.i.15-18)

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Cyrus, the Inspirational Leader



"Success should always call for showing greater **Kindness, Generosity and Justice**; only people lost in the darkness treat it as an occasion for greater greed."

- **Cyrus the Great**

*Thank you
for your attention!*

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