

“Reclaiming Leadership: How Every Professional Can Lead with Royal Attitude”

By Dr. Hanan Al Mheiri, CEO & Founder, Hanan Empire

Introduction: Leadership Reimagined

Leadership today is no longer confined to the C-suite. In an era defined by disruption, digital acceleration, and human complexity, the question is no longer “*Who is the leader?*” but rather “*How can we all lead?*”

According to the **Global Leadership Forecast 2023** by DDI, only **14% of CEOs** believe they have the leadership talent to navigate future challenges (DDI, 2023). This is not just a pipeline problem. It is a mindset challenge—a call to redefine leadership as a *shared responsibility* rather than a positional privilege.

In this article, I invite professionals, CIOs, and entrepreneurs alike to embrace a new leadership paradigm—one that begins with inner command, is rooted in service, and is led with what I call a **Royal Attitude**.

From Reaction to Reign: The Crisis of Passive Leadership

The **Gallup Global Workplace Report (2022)** reveals that only **20% of adults** feel actively engaged and intentional in their daily lives (Gallup, 2022). This means the vast majority are operating in “reaction mode”—responding to deadlines, demands, and external stressors rather than leading their own time, energy, or vision.

But empires—whether business empires or personal legacies—are not built on reactivity. They are architected by individuals who rise with clarity, take ownership, and act from an anchored sense of purpose.

The Royal Attitude: A New Framework for Leadership

Leadership begins long before you manage people or budgets. It begins with how you manage your *mind*, your *momentum*, and your *mission*. I call this mindset the **Royal Attitude**—a daily decision to live, lead, and serve with intentional power.

Drawing from my work at **Hanan Empire**, I developed the **Royal L.E.A.D. Pillars**—a four-part framework for self-leadership:

Pillar	Description	Reflective Prompt
L – Legacy	Build with the end in mind. Leadership is about shaping a future worth inheriting.	What will the future version of me thank me for doing today?
E – Example	Model the mindset and behavior you want others to emulate.	Where can I be the standard I wish to see?
A – Authority	Own your power. Make clear decisions instead of outsourcing responsibility.	What choice have I been avoiding?
D – Direction	Anchor yourself in vision, not pressure.	Is my daily focus aligned with my highest priorities?



This framework is not just philosophical—it’s practical. It helps CIOs and leaders recalibrate their inner compass, especially during uncertain times.

Case Studies: Diverse Models of Leadership in Action

To bring this model to life, let’s look at real-world examples of leadership that embody these principles:

Leader	Key Trait Exhibited	Royal Attitude Lens	Source
Nelson Mandela	Forgiveness & Vision	Legacy through unity and purpose	Sampson, A. (1999). <i>Mandela</i>
Malala Yousafzai	Brave Youth Leadership	Example of speaking truth to power, despite risk	Yousafzai, M. (2013). UN Speech
Elon Musk	Visionary Innovation	Authority in betting on disruptive ideas	Vance, A. (2015). <i>Elon Musk</i>
Jacinda Ardern	Empathy & Decisiveness	Direction rooted in compassion and inclusivity	Roy, E. (2019). <i>The Guardian</i>

These figures demonstrate that leadership is not one-size-fits-all. From boardrooms to battlefields, from classrooms to crisis centers—leadership wears many robes.

Leading with Reflection: The Mirror Test

In a world driven by metrics and performance indicators, leaders often forget to pause and ask:

Do I like the person I’m becoming?

During a reflective stay at **Raffles The Palm Jumeirah**, I found myself standing before a grand mirror. It struck me that before we command teams, markets, or enterprises, we must first *command our own presence*.

Ask yourself:

- Are my decisions aligned with my values?
- Am I showing up as the kind of leader I would admire?
- Is my ambition anchored in contribution, or just competition?

True leadership begins with the courage to lead *yourself* when no one is watching.

5 Ways You Can Lead Without a Title

Whether you’re a CIO managing a digital transformation or an entry-level analyst navigating your first job, here are five powerful ways to lead immediately:

- Lead Yourself First** – Start your day with intentional self-reflection. Journal your top 3 priorities based on long-term goals.
- Take Ownership** – Instead of saying, “It’s not my responsibility,” ask, “What can I contribute here?”
- Serve Others** – Leadership is about value creation. Ask: Who can I empower, mentor, or support today?
- Communicate with Purpose** – Speak with clarity. Listen deeply. Words shape energy.
- Hold the Vision** – Don’t abandon the goal when challenges arise. Leadership means carrying the torch in the dark.



A Metaphor for Leadership: The Grand Lobby

While walking through the opulent corridors of Raffles Dubai, I was struck by this idea: *A lobby is a first impression—a tone-setter for everything that follows*. Great leaders are like great lobbies—welcoming, clear, structured, and aspirational.

Let your leadership presence be like that: a space that inspires trust, direction, and legacy before you even speak.

Final Reflection: Reclaiming the Crown

Leadership today demands more than technical expertise—it demands emotional resonance, self-command, and ethical clarity.

You don’t need a badge, a board vote, or a bestselling book to be a leader. You need the courage to embody your own truth. You need to hold your posture, your power, and your purpose like royalty.

- Lead not to be seen, but to make others feel seen.
- Build not to impress, but to impact.
- Reign not from fear, but from fierce love—for your mission, your people, and your future.

Let this be the call: Not just to lead companies—but to lead lives that leave a legacy.

Dr. Hanan Al Mheiri,
CEO & Founder,
Hanan Empire