



Becoming an Effective Leader for Life: A Book Review

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Abstract: *Successful leaders don't rest on their laurels because leadership is not a title on a business card. Leadership is a living process and life means growth (Blanchard, 2012). The paper embodies a critical analysis of the book by Cashman (2017) which is meant to exemplify novel paradigms for Generation (z) leaders and beyond. This epic work invites leaders to become innovative and inventive in their practices and to dare to debunk the ideology of boxed leadership practiced in previous epochs. Its journey motif is reflective of the metamorphosing path that each leader must take as they seek to grow, develop and master the expectations of what it means to be an effective leader. Chapter one acts as a mirror which invites the leader to examine and acknowledge one's own belief systems and ideologies while seeking to lead others. The thrust of chapter two challenges the leader to create stories which inspire the hearts and minds of those they lead to be spurred into action. Chapter three represents the plot in the story motif of chapter two. In chapter three, the leader must set goals, and develop a blueprint which delineates how these goals or actions will be set into motion towards a successful outcome or resolution. Chapter four illuminates the value of building and leading a team through collaboration; while chapter five propels the leader to embrace change in meeting the demands of altering world contexts. In chapter six the author implores leaders to practice a positive and healthy lifestyle which influence greater resilience and energy among those they lead. Being Mastery, in chapter seven, displays the symbiotic relationship between leadership and presence. The leader acts out the vision and mission of the organization and becomes the litmus by which the organizations' success is gauged. Finally, in chapter eight, the author compels the cycle of growth and maturity in the leader by encouraging, coaching and mentoring in order that they can become more efficient in their practice and generate efficacy in those they lead. This work is expected to guide future leaders in developing greater self-awareness in order to be equipped in rising to the challenges facing 21st century leaders in a multicultural world.*

Keywords: Leadership, Servant leadership, effective leadership, Courage, Agility, Self-change, Innovative

Reviewed Book Source: Cashman, K. (2017, p.1-247). *Leading from the inside out: Becoming a leader for life*. (3rd) Edition. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Introduction

Despite the proliferation of leadership texts over the years, it cannot be said that the field of leadership is saturated. Each scholarly publication provides an opportunity to view the various facets of leadership from new perspectives. The literature by Cashman (2017) on *Leadership from the inside out: Becoming a leader for life*, is an international bestseller, standing like a giant on the platform of leadership literature that is sought by neophytes

and experienced leaders alike. In explaining the purpose of the publication, the author welcomes readers to "a provocative, inspiring and challenging leadership journey, maintaining it is a courageous journey of authenticity, self-awareness and being purpose-driven from the inside out" (p.20). Is this publication a journey worth exploring? The answer lies in taking more than a cursory glance at the cover and the 273 pages of the text. This paper aims at summarizing the work while providing strengths and weaknesses in an analytic manner based on the perspectives of the reviewers. An examination of, structure, style and content of the book and the recommendations for future practitioners will also be included.

The author, in responding to the needs of leaders wanting a holistic, integrated view of leadership presents an integrated package of eight chapters which he labels 'mastery pathways to our growth and development. He posits that, "these mastery pathways are not stages of development in a sequential or hierarchical order; they are an ongoing interrelated growth process in which each mastery area reinforces the others" (p.33). The three-page-long explanation, providing a rationale for the new edition, together with the page detailing, "How to use the book", are important components of the structure of the text as they serve to solidify explanation in earlier pages.

On assessing the format of this text, the authors of this article noted that a table of contents exist, but what was inescapable were the "Notes" section towards the end of the book, related leadership quotes which are strategically placed throughout the chapters on almost every page, as well as the Reflection activities and Leadership Growth Plan template at the end of each chapter. Unlike other texts, the notes are additional explanations of points in each chapter and are categorized according to chapters. It was observed that the quotes on each page served to enhance the content of each chapter, as seen in chapter three. For Example, *Purpose Mastery*, "Man can face any 'what' if he has a big enough 'why' (p.99). The Reflection pages allow readers to reflect on the chapters' content and respond to given questions and statements. Each Leadership Growth Plan Template allows readers to focus on their commitment to making adjustments in their leadership life.

A strong component of the book's style is the use of the metaphor of a journey. He invites readers to join him on a journey through the section called, *"Beginning of Journey"*. On those pages, readers are prepared for the content, looking at such areas as "What is leadership"? "What does *Mastery of Leadership* mean"? In a similar manner as one prepares for a fishing trip. The metaphor is sustained as a parting shot in, *"The Journey Continues."* This is included at the end of the last chapter.

In addition to the conversational tone throughout the text, a unique style is also enveloped in the title which comes with an intriguing ring and has the potential to leave readers questioning and conjuring up images on how leading from the inside out can be possible. The author addresses the potential

questioning, arguing that, "As we lead others and ourselves through tough times, we need to draw on the strength of our character, as well as begin with self-leadership" (p.31).

Personal Mastery: *Leading with Courage, Authenticity and Awareness*

Chapter one elucidates on further opening of the searchlight, details of the content in full view, allowing the authors of this article to examine each chapter through the lens of strengths and weaknesses. In discussing the chapter, it was noted that eleven subheadings are provided for the exploration of topics such as "Breaking free of Self-limiting patterns," "Integrating all of life's Experiences into a meaningful context," "Authenticity and Courage" and "Exploring Beliefs."

Cashman invites readers to commit to the path of Personal Mastery, 'a growth towards wholeness', by attending to the following eight principles: taking total responsibility, clarifying one's conscious beliefs, developing awareness of character and coping, practicing Personal Mastery with others, listening to others, finding a coach, avoiding confusing self-delusion with self-awareness, and being agile (p.63). Understanding and appreciating one's strengths and being flexible and adaptable are considered essential in this process.

STORY MASTERY: *Leading with Inspiration*

Chapter two indicates that Story Mastery requires a continual process of acquiring, collecting, refining, and expressing narratives that move one and others to greater aspirations. In doing so, he tells us to consider six practices as we work on this transformative skill: (1) *Dig Deep*: Like an archaeologist exploring our personal and professional past, we need to excavate and discover our most formative, impactful, value-creating stories. (2) *Create a Collection of Stories*: An important leadership development practice is to begin to archive one's stories that correlate with one's most deeply held beliefs, values and leadership principles. (3) *Practice Your Stories*: Write your stories down. Practice them aloud. Feel the emotional impact as you share them. (4) *Find the Stories around You*: Start to notice when a story moves you. Do not let the inspiration pass without a moment of reflection. (5) *Remember Relevance*: Always keep in mind that the stories are for the purpose of inspiring others. *Stories are the language of leadership: authentic and courageous influence that creates an enduring value.* (6) *Observe and*

Learn from the Vulnerability in Great Stories: Our vulnerability is usually not so easy to confront or share. “When we can point out the places we have stumbled along the way, we demonstrate legs made strong by the stress of authentic living” (p.67).

As we begin to master the new vocabulary of leadership activation, the author admonishes us to keep these Four Principles of Story Mastery in mind: 1. *Know Your Story:* Your most potent, energizing and engaging stories reside in your life story. We should dedicate ourselves to knowing our story, understanding the ups and downs that formed us and creating a masterpiece of living and leading. 2. *Practice Stories:* When learning a language, knowing the vocabulary and grammar is not enough. We have to practice it aloud and speak it at every opportunity. 3. *Find the Intersection of Authenticity and Relevance:* At this sweet spot, we—the storyteller—and our listeners experience the lessons, emotions, and connectivity energy all at the same time. 4. *Find Purpose:* Invest the time to discover the deeper themes of our life stories by asking ourselves: *What are the key learnings? What values do I know for sure? What gifts do I seem to bring in most situations? What are the gifts that others have inspired in me?* (p. 72).

PURPOSE MASTERY: Leading On-Purpose

Chapter Three starts off by indicating that purpose powers performance elevates leaders and teams to move from short-term success to long-term significance (p.75). By so doing, it engages and energizes workforces, customers, vendors, distributors, communities and stakeholders around a common mission, something bigger than products and larger than profit.

The question is “Why is it so important that we exist?” In answering this question, we courageously face *who we are* and *how we are* in the world. The author cites the example of Unilever which takes the purpose-driven lever and seeks to serve 100 percent. This is accomplished because their core values are much more than aspirational concepts where their purpose statement is more than a slogan. Based on the observation of CEO’s, there are times when they struggle to live it, but the constant struggle to serve is a worthy aspiration; because, as purpose driven leaders, they remind themselves repeatedly that purpose is not perfection, but the pursuit of service-fueled value.

The author purposes that for the organization to thrive, there are three big realities that have to be

clarified and placed in a meaningful relationship by the leader:

The Big What Question (Vision): *What is possible for us to become?* The Big How Question (Strategy): *How will we get there?* The Big Why Question (Purpose): *Why is it important that we exist in the world?* (p.79)

The author articulates that we often deal with these three realities in the wrong sequence where we largely over-focus on the What and the How and under-focus on the Why. The most strategic place to begin is *Purpose*: The Big Why. Here, we focus on being, envisioning a future, employing collective efforts and resources. Furthermore, Cashman adds that we catalyze our courage and authentic influence to create enduring value. When we focus on the Why, we clear the way for others to do so as well, and that takes courage (p.79).

Interpersonal Mastery: Leading through Synergy and Service

Chapter four argues that results competencies plus interpersonal competencies equal top leadership performance (p.102). There are two principal streams of leadership development. One is extremely hard-driving and forceful, with a strong sense of personal power. This characterizes an “I” leader who gets results. However, to bring products to the next level, this heroic type needs to become more collaborative and relational (p.102). We have learned that the other leadership approach is more interpersonally connected and is about collaboration, synergy, and a sense of “We”. This power-of-connection can be so strong that the individual cannot put forth enough power-of-voice (“I”) when required. These kinds of leaders need to become more forceful and courageous in expressing their authentic influence (p.102).

Chapter Four further looked at the “intimate connection of personal mastery and interpersonal mastery” (p.111). The author opined that what people want is an inside-out/outside-in balance. Practicing leadership at the highest-level means being equally vigilant about both the “I” and the “We.” He identified the following steps: (1) knowing yourself authentically, (2) Listening authentically, (3) Influencing authentically, maintaining integrity (maintaining total congruence between who you are and what you do), (4) Appreciating authentically, avoiding the trap of doing too much and appreciating too little, (5) Sharing stories authentically, crafting authentic stories to bring

one's values to life and to build deeper emotional connections with others and (6) Serving authentically (pp.117-122).

Change Mastery: *Leading with Agility*

Chapter Five explores change mastery leading with agility. The author of this article has learned that people operate under the illusion that life remains constant; in reality, their lives are an endless flow of change (p.126). Thus, they have no choice but to master the ability to adapt and learn. Through Learning with Agility, which is Change Mastery, people can learn, adapt, and apply in continually changing conditions which are critical (pp. 127-128).

The author maintains that until people learn to live their lives in the flow of the present, they can never really deal with change effectively. At the most fundamental level of life, there is only the present moment. Thus, when individuals worry about keeping things as they were in the past and avoiding the new, unknown future, they limit their ability to influence success in the present (p.132). The most effective leaders can straddle an essential paradox: They can sustain a sharp, localized focus in the present and, at the same time, can maintain a broad, visionary context (p.134).

The author of this article has learned that change is usually seen as something happening "out there," where all significant change begins with self-change (p.137). This inside-out perspective allows people to see change as an internal dynamic—an internal learning and development process. Based on this inside-out approach, the author has codified seven Change Mastery Shifts that can increase the chances of success: (1) from problem focus to opportunity focus whereby effective leaders tend to perceive the opportunities inherent in change and to innovate accordingly, (2) from short-term to long-term focus, (3) from circumstance focus to purpose focus whereby effective leaders maintain a clear sense of purpose, value, and meaning, which allows them to rise above immediate circumstances, (4) from control focus to agility focus whereby effective leaders understand that control yields a certain degree of short-term results, while agility, flexibility, and innovation sustain results over the long term, (5) from self-focus to service focus, (6) from expertise focus to listening focus whereby effective leaders stay open and practice authentic listening in order to stay connected with others and to consider multiple, innovative solutions, (7) from doubt focus to trust focus whereby effective leaders are secure

in themselves; their self-awareness and self-trust are bigger than the circumstances of change (p.141).

Resilience Mastery: *Leading with Energy*

Chapter six is based on resilience Mastery in leading with Energy. The author articulates eight pathways for leadership growth and development. These pathways evolve by exploring narratives, observation, and the analysis of numerous case studies findings of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of major organizations. Chapter six further explores resilience and leading with energy and its importance in leadership development. The writer also examines time management versus energy leadership, the role of healthy living and how it affects the dynamic process of building resilience.

Having conducted surveys with CEOs, the findings showed that 92 percent of the CEOs selected resilience mastery as most challenging personally. That is, balancing work and home life was rarely achieved. It was also observed that the fitness of a CEO influenced perceptions of their energy levels, self-discipline, and competencies. Therefore, some type of energy building, fitness, and lifestyle support routines are necessary to support the development of resilience. The author further postulates that moving from time management to energy leadership is evidenced in four characteristics of leaders. The characteristics observed are optimism and engagement; mobility; adaptability to loss for learning and living are essential ingredients to becoming resilient.

The author argues that this must be a dynamic process and its nature relies on rest and activities that enhance the following ten principles. Foster your energy versus managing time; Learning to exercise with ease; Deal with damaging habits; Avoid taking yourself so serious; Develop mind and body awareness; Manage stress more effectively; Nurture your close relationships; Take real vacations, and Integrate more reflections into your life (pp.158-164). These guidelines provide the toolkit for resilience in leadership growth and development.

Being Mastery: *Leading with Presence*

The seventh chapter explores the personal voyage of a leader getting things done. *Being mastery: Leading with Presence* explores the personal voyage of a leader getting things done, techniques of involving yourself, and the principles of being. *Being*, articulates who we are, and the impact one have on others. The author argues that the journey

of *Being* is about reflecting on one's own life, searching for something more, how one resolves life challenges by going deeper levels into self, while considering learning to mediate, and continue to integrate reflections in one's life journey. By reflecting on these principles, one can develop his or her leadership growth plan. One's growth plan will bring the power of presence into the leadership and into one's life.

Coaching Mastery: Leading by Developing Self and Others

Finally, chapter Eight allows readers to take the real leadership adventure, helping themselves and others grow beyond their boundaries. Through global research, it was determined that most people rate "coaching and developing others" among the top three most important leadership competencies. For coaching to have a lasting transformative impact, the following three interrelated foundations need to be constructed: 1. *building awareness* 2. *building commitment* 3. *building practice*. Awareness is the first step on the path of coaching and development. Building Awareness is the process of bringing new information into the field of view. It may include keeping one's attention on a newly clarified talent brought into focus. It may also involve the more painful process of acknowledging that a behavior is unintentionally self-defeating or affecting others in a life-damaging way. Building commitment begins with comprehending the consequences of our actions. When we have a deep, emotional connection to the impact of behavior, our life can change permanently. Once we clearly perceive and emotionally experience both the upside and downside of behavior, meaningful commitment to transformation begins. Building Practice is the process of consistently engaging in new behaviors to enrich our lives. It is the application phase of growth. Practice makes potentialities possible.

The writer's view is that coaching may be the most important of all leadership skills, because helping to foster the growth around us gives sustainability to our leadership and perpetuates optimal, ongoing creation. Coaching is the art of drawing forth the potential onto the canvas of high performance. The author states, it is the gentle yet firm hand of leadership guiding the way like a caring friend, helping the "coachee" set a positive course. Furthermore, he states that when a leader sets the highest example of personal and professional behavior and then enlists others to take that path as

well, this is when the calling of a leader is best honored. To accomplish both of these tasks, nothing is more vital than coaching. Effective coaching serves a dual role. It contributes to everyone's growth and fulfillment and it maximizes the effectiveness and success of the group. Coaching helps us step back to see more of the whole situation, as well as the dynamics between the two. According to Robert Hargrove as cited in Cashman (2017), most coaching today fits within one of the following four categories: 1. Expert Coaching: building skills, competencies, and knowledge, 2. Pattern Coaching: revealing old patterns and building new patterns of behavior, 3. Transformative Coaching: fostering a fundamental shift in point of view, beliefs, values, identity, and purpose, and 4. Integrative Coaching: blending the depth of personal (inside out) work with the complexity of external (outside in) dynamics around team, organizational, marketplace, and societal needs.

In summarizing this chapter, building awareness requires openness to help those we are coaching in sorting out their own current reality and beginning to chart their own future approaches. In Building Commitment, we must help people envision the positive and negative outcomes if they continue on their current path. Without Practice, there is no transformation. Practice breathes life into our new awareness and commitment.

Summary and Discussion

Having summarized the chapters of Cashman (2017), the reviewers have outlined the following strengths of the work that illuminates further the writer's brilliance in presenting the leadership journey.

For chapter one, all the sub-headings that were listed on the content page were adequately accounted for and were highlighted in capital letters on their respective pages. The use of cases or stories of leaders to support the explanation of the content and reference to at least four research studies were evident. Moderate use of rhetorical questions such as, "How many of us have a "soldier" confronting us with life's tough questions, pushing us to pause, to examine, and to develop ourselves more thoroughly?", has the potential to place readers in a reflective mode as they navigate the pages. The break in between the various sub-headings for focus on the reflection pages is quite helpful for readers.

In chapter two, several stories are told about individuals who have led by inspiration. There are inspiring stories about Shaquille O'Neal, a professional basketball player, who has been elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the FIBA Hall of Fame, as well as CEOs and top leaders from around the world. Then there is the childhood reality story of Joanne, an executive client, who endured the later years of the Cultural Revolution in China who entered college, studies medicine, and later was accepted into a fellowship program at Johns Hopkins University of the School of Medicine.

In chapter three, the author gives examples of purpose-driven leaders. Among them is Marijn Dekkers, now former Chairman of the board of Unilever, who created a significant, enduring value during his tenure as CEO of Bayer. Under his leadership, he brought vitality and relevance to Bayer's purpose, to their culture, to their leadership growth, and to their market value. Then, there is the story of David Lubetzky, founder and CEO of KIND Snacks. Lubetzky, the son of Holocaust survivor, grew up hearing stories of his father's survival in Dachau concentration camp during World War II. In embodying the KIND brand and purpose, while nurturing its profitability and success, Cashman concludes that purpose-driven leadership fulfills the Big Why question and gives all stakeholders a worthy, compelling reason to be engaged.

Chapter four is very well structured, there are numerous strengths the first of which is evident when Cashman provides a plethora of current and historical world events to engage the reader to illustrate and apply concepts. These applications enhance the link from theory to practice and show what he is trying to promote about interpersonal mastery. Secondly, there are reflections, placed throughout the chapter. It appears that Cashman, wants the reader to begin practicing interpersonal mastery and leading through synergy and service along the journey. The author has also included exercises and questions to deepen our understanding.

Additionally, chapter five like other chapters has some activities useful reflection and application sections. Practicing administrators will appreciate Cashman's brevity and ability to move past philosophical hair-splitting in applying ethical principles to real contemporary issues. As one develops these Change Mastery Shifts, it helps keep the following leading-with-agility principles in mind:

Remain open to the learning hidden in changing circumstances, practice present-moment awareness, integrate immediate focus and broad awareness, trust yourself. Develop resiliency through mental-emotional stretching, remember that all significant change begins with self-change, practice the Change Mastery Shifts and take the leap.

For chapter six, Cashman, having conducted surveys with CEOs, the findings showed that 92 percent of the CEOs selected resilience mastery as most challenging personally; that is, balancing work and home life was rarely achieved. It was also observed that the fitness of a CEO influenced perceptions of their energy levels, self-discipline, and competencies. Therefore, some types of energy building, fitness, and lifestyle support routines are necessary to support the development of resilience. The author further postulates that moving from time management to energy leadership is evidenced in some characteristics of leaders: optimism and engagement; mobility and adaptability to loss for learning and living are essential ingredients to become resilient.

In chapter seven, the author argues that this must be a dynamic process and its nature relies on rest and activities that enhance the following ten principles: Be on-purpose, but be aware; Foster your energy versus managing time; Learning to exercise with ease; Deal with damaging habits; Avoid taking yourself so serious; Develop mind and body awareness; Manage stress more effectively; Nurture your close relationships; Take real vacations, and Integrate more reflections into your life. These guidelines provide the toolkit for resilience in leadership growth and development.

With reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the author explained self-actualization as the ultimate goal of self and the essence of being. Also, by connecting with one's inner self through meditation and understanding one's inner potentials, one will deepen his or her self-confidence and leaders can benefit from mastery. One's inner calm will attract others. One will be better equipped to manage change and develop a deeper drive for success. One will increase his or her ability to refresh oneself and solve difficult problems. Being will enable the leader to achieve balance in his or her daily life.

Finally, in chapter eight, the author demonstrates through descriptive language how vital coaching

mastery is to the development of self and others. His use of descriptors aids the reader in simulating the content, thus creating a lived experience. The author employs the storytelling motif to help the reader to follow the narrative ardently from its setting to its resolution. Inherent in the narrative is the grounded literature of coaching mastery and its effectiveness from beginning to end, if used appropriately, in leadership spaces. It is also commendable that through quotations, Cashman (2017) includes the thinking of inspirational leaders to solidify his major arguments on the key tenets of coaching mastery. The writer mirrors well the power of reflective practice. The reader after interfacing with a specific skill or step in the process of coaching is brought to reflect on one's own learning. The reader is also invited to think deeply and critically about the information in a processed and cyclical manner. Reflective practice is key to behavior change in the teaching and learning sphere.

In providing a balanced view of *Leadership from the inside out: Becoming a leader for life*, a few weaknesses were detected, and these must be shared. The sidebar quotes found in each chapter would have been better served if they were placed under the sub-headings to avoid a merging with the body paragraph. Additionally, locating the thesis statement for some chapters and the topic sentence for some subheadings were not as painless as it should have been. Thesis statements and topic sentences serve as directions for readers; giving a quick overview of content but unfortunately these were missing.

In chapter two, under the heading "*Not all stories are created equal*", the author posited that "some stories work, and some backfire" (Cashman 2017, p. 51). Stories that backfired and actions that were taken to correct them were not found.

The author mainly interviewed the Chairmen of Boards, senior executives, and CEOs of corporations in trying to get his points across. He could have interviewed more highly effective leaders at various levels in organizations. Leaders especially at the lower levels could benefit from his insight and become Chairmen of Boards, senior executives, and CEOs of corporations in the future.

Chapter four appeared to be extremely lengthy, a feature which could discourage readers from reading the content. It would have been better to make some modifications, to entice readers to the chapter.

Through a careful examination of chapter five, It was revealed that the author did not give an overview of the contents of the chapter; and did not provide a conclusion for what was said in the chapter. The author used stories to get his point across but did not do any other research to support his thinking. Also, in chapter five, the author mentions being comfortable with seemingly contradictory situations, feelings, and actions. This may be considered a weakness as we can adapt to a situation, we find ourselves in but we will never be comfortable with bad situations.

An interesting point which must be raised as it relates to chapter six is the research methods of enquiry approach used by the researcher. This was not outlined. Nonetheless, the author relied on his observations and survey findings to support his arguments regarding developing resilience in leaders. Whereas the guidelines may be especially useful for leadership growth and development, the methods of the inquiry, the reliability and validity of the case study and surveys would increase the confidence of the reader regarding the findings.

The author identifies Maslow's hierarchy of needs as the underpinning philosophy for developing and being a leader. In an attempt to connect with the reader, the writer utilizes the language that to some may appear too familiar. This was evident in chapter eight. The tone of the language and also some words used could border on being offensive to some readers, especially those from different cultural contexts. In addition, the use of the conversational style of writing has made too casual a serious and far-reaching leadership narrative.

Conclusion

In *Leadership from the inside out: Becoming a leader for life*, Cashman (2017) articulates some inspiring and engaging coaching techniques for aspiring leadership growth and development. The eight pathways to leadership mastery postulated by the author derived from research of successful leadership competencies provide practical steps for personal, team and organizational leadership. This thought provoking and self-assessment journey towards effective leadership offers a roadmap for continuous personal growth for those who aspire to become leaders.

Recommendations

This work should be recommended for all leaders both incumbent and novice. It should be used to encourage the practice of coaching for self-growth

and for the continuous development of individuals within their organizations. The work can also be used: (1) to inform policy makers in providing a platform where leaders can put into practice the skills of coaching as a means of improving both the individual and the sector, (2) in teachers' colleges and universities for students majoring in Educational Leadership, (3) for seminar presentations on core concepts for leadership, and (4) as a manual for individuals who wish to pursue career paths in

leadership as well as leaders at different levels in small, medium, and large organizations.

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