



Co-leadership

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Hi everyone,

I'm Cristina, I'm 33 years old, I'm a small farmer and a politician: I dream of transforming my super industrialized region, often based on excess (of concrete, development, selfishness, consumption, abuse, exploitation of resources and people as well), into a land where people can continue to live because manage to be a healthy eco-system, where relationships are more important than the individual. Be they between humans and non-humans.

I am "Lucky" to practice co-leadership in one of the areas, Politics, in which actually the people often prove to be deeply self-centered and anxious to defend their own vision, thought and project from others, rather than to share it.

Of course this is driven by the desire to have one's name recognized and remembered, seeking votes to be reelected, but... I have experienced how, although it seems the only way to resist electoral pitfalls, it is not at all.

I want to tell you 2 examples of coleadership that I experienced in sharing my desire to turn a vision into reality with 2 "factions "of my political action: citizens and fellow politicians.

1. My land is polluted. Air water and soil are often compromised, some irreversibly, and I live precisely in a land where the second largest aquifer in Europe is rendered unusable by pollution of some eternal chemicals that we are not able to destroy, but we accumulate in our blood and organs, compromising the health of those who ingest or absorb them, especially children and pregnant women.

That is why I have been working with citizens for 8 years, setting goals with them and building strategies to propose in the regional council where I work, responsible for health safety and environmental prevention.

Often, however, I have not found support from my colleagues; they are Calmed down by their superiors, first saying that the substances are not harmful and that we were exaggerating the risks, then when the science proved us right, saying that they had done everything possible.

However, they had left food quality protection, pollution prevention and preventive health action behind and without solutions.

While I was proposing actions on all 3 of these aspects, I managed to get a common line found on the prevention of pregnant women's and children's health, sharing leadership with mothers,



scientists and active citizens with whom I defined 4 proposals for action, and succeeded in turning the announced negative vote of 41 of my fellow regional councilors into a positive vote!

They wanted to reject our proposals because they said they had already done enough. I tried not only to make them understand the situation and make them think about how damaging it would be to their political credibility to say no to protecting children and mothers....

But at the same time, I knew that the only way to get them to be passionate and follow the issue closely would be to stimulate empathy with assertive dialogue, turning numbers into experiences and making them feel directly affected.

A step that I often made, sometimes for nothing ... but a necessary step to help politicians, often imprisoned in the whirlpools of power and party, to practice putting themselves in each other's shoes and doing our good, not just their own.

And that time it worked. They should have voted NO as they said. Instead, they approved all 4 of my proposals, with a mediation on an economic point, but welcomed by me and the active citizens to support that new collaboration that had been searched for years and that we are now trying to move to practice.

2. I am a chronic sufferer of migraine, one of the most disabling and most prevalent conditions in the world, especially in women, but also one of the most underreported diseases in the world.

I have achieved an extraordinary goal this year: I have always started from co leadership with citizens, in this case other chronically seriously ill people like me and neurological doctors, defining a prevention project to make sure that others can avoid getting as bad as me, thanks to doctors who are trained from the first call for help, starting from the first underestimated headaches.

The proposal was almost approved because it was considered interesting and useful, but ... a colleague of mine objected: she did not want the project to be approved in my name. She did not want it to be my success and, rather, was ready to drop the whole thing.

So after a moment of anger at the injustice I felt we were all being subjected to, I started thinking of a strategy with my coworkers and friends:

1. I could unveil her game and get her in the newspapers, denigrating her
2. I could generate co-leadership, sharing the project with her as well.

I chose the latter, not lightly: giving credit to a person who tried to demolish everything without committing to generating alternative proposals is not really my idea of political meritocracy 😊

I proposed it to her. She did not accept. And that's when it all fell apart for me. I was about to see our vision fail.



I began to dialogue with other colleagues, those less concerned about taking away my visibility and political success because they were from other provinces or other networks: they shared our idea and surprisingly began to subscribe to it.

All 41 councilors present, majority and minority, supported the proposal.

Now it is being implemented. And I am really happy because this experience has reinforced collaboration with many of my colleagues:

Through this action they have had confirmation that I am not working for me, but to turn into reality the projects, priorities and visions I believe in, even at the cost of giving up personal victory.