

Meaning Making on the Edge: Insights from Communication by Heads of State in Successful vis-a-vis Failed Space Missions

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Effective communication is central to leadership, serving as a crucial tool for leaders to instil a sense of meaningfulness among the members. While existing literature explores various leader behaviors that promote this sense of meaningfulness, a comprehensive framework for understanding how leaders achieve this remains elusive. This paper extends the theory of leadership by applying the widely accepted tripartite model of meaningfulness, which comprises coherence, purpose, and significance to the leadership context and also provides useful pointers to leaders in various contexts. It also brings out the nuances in meaning making in diverse situations by analysing leadership communication following successful and failed space missions.

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Introduction

In recent years, leadership has increasingly been understood as a process of meaning-making, where leaders motivate others not through control or rewards, but by shaping beliefs, values, and interpretations to align with collective goals (Haslam, Alvesson, & Reicher, 2024). This implies that the leaders' ability to facilitate meaning-making for the members is a pivotal contributor to leadership effectiveness (Avolio et al, 2004; Carton, 2018; Podolny, Khurana, & Hill-Popper, 2004; Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Van Knippenberg, 2020). Communication lies at the heart of leadership (Uluturk, 2024). Leadership communication is relational, contextual, meaning-centered and has the potential for enabling refection and change (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014).

This paper advances the current knowledge in the domain by taking the tripartite model of meaning in life

consisting of coherence, purpose and significance (George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016) to the leadership context by exploring how leaders create meaningfulness in the members by enabling coherence, purposefulness and significance in the minds of the members. Moreover, this paper brings out the finer nuances involved meaning making by the leaders in the context of successful and failed endeavors and the differences between the two. This is especially useful as most of the extant literature on meaning making in specific contexts focuses mainly on meaning making in crisis situations (Gigliotti, 2016; Jong, 2017).

Leadership Through The Lens of Meaning

In the organizational context, leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing or eroding the sense of meaningfulness among members (Podolny, Khurana, & Hill-Popper 2004; Smircich & Morn, 1982). While the lens of meaning (Table 1) does exist in the literature, it has not been applied specifically to the leadership context. This paper seeks to bridge this gap. By fostering alignment between members' beliefs, values, and goals associated with the broader organizational mission and the current situation, leaders can enhance the sense of coherence, purposefulness, and significance.

Settings

This research capitalizes on a unique opportunity presented by India's lunar missions during the tenure of Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister. In 2019, the

mission encountered a setback at the final stage, but in 2023 it achieved resounding success. In both the cases, PM Modi addressed the scientists of ISRO. This distinctive context allows for a comparative analysis of the leader's meaning-making process when the outcome differs without significant changes in other contextual factors.

This research is supplemented with the analysis of speeches made by other heads of state in the context of successful and failed space missions. President Nixon's interaction with the first astronauts on the Moon ("Telephone Conversation With the Apollo 11 Astronauts on the Moon | The American Presidency Project," n.d.), President Regan's Speech to the nation on the Challenger Disaster ("Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger | Ronald Reagan," n.d.), President Bush's speech to the nation on the Space Shuttle "Columbia" tragedy ("Online Speech Bank: George W. Bush — Address to the Nation on the Space Shuttle 'Columbia' Tragedy," n.d.) and the remarks by President Biden in a call to congratulate the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Perseverance Team on the Successful Mars Landing (House, 2021) have been analyzed to explore how they attempted to create meaning.

Analysis

The full texts of the speeches were analyzed to identify elements corresponding to one or more of the elements

Table 1 Elements of the Lens of Meaning

Element	Description
Meaningfulness	Meaning of work judgments are cognitive evaluations individuals make about how meaningful they perceive their work to be (e.g., "I feel my work is meaningful") (Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). These judgments are assessed through the feelings they evoke, specifically in terms of a sense of coherence, purposefulness, and significance (George & Park 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016)
Meaning making frameworks	Meaning making frameworks consist of individuals' beliefs, values, and life goals, forming the basis for how they interpret and assign meaning to their experiences (George & Park, 2016). Meaningfulness emerges when individuals' meaning-making frameworks resonate with the context they face, allowing them to derive personal relevance and emotional alignment with their environment (Baumeister, 1991; Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006; Proulx & Inzlicht, 2012).
Coherence (C)	Coherence is the feeling that one is able to comprehend and understand the events and patterns in one's life, that things fit together and that one's life makes sense (George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016).
Purpose (P)	Purposefulness is the feeling that one's life is being directed and motivated by valued life goals (George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016).
Significance (S)	Significance is the feeling that one's existence matters and that it is of importance and value in the world (George & Park, 2016; Martela & Steger, 2016).
Beliefs (B)	Beliefs are convictions a person holds to be true about themselves, the world, and their place in it (Park, 2010)
Global Goals (G)	Global goals are high-level goals that are central to one's identity. They give direction and purpose to an individual's actions and determine lower-level goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Emmons, 2003; Karoly 1999; Klinger, 1998; Park, 2010; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987).
Values (V)	Values are principles or standards of behavior that are considered important in life. They serve as guidelines for how individuals want to live and behave (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Schwartz, 1994; 2012).

of meaningfulness (coherence, purpose, significance) and meaning-making frameworks (beliefs, values and global goals). Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 give the key themes in the above mentioned six communications by heads of state and the mapping of those themes, indicated by * symbol, to the elements of meaningfulness - Coherence (C), Purpose (P) and Significance (P), and to the elements of meaning-making frameworks – Beliefs (B), Global Goals (G) and Values (V).

Applying the Lens of Meaning

Our analysis of the leader communications in the cases of space missions, coupled with the insights from existing literature, yielded key findings on how leaders foster a sense of meaningfulness by facilitating experiences of coherence, purpose, and significance.

PM Modi enables comprehension in the case of the failed lunar mission by putting the failure in the context of the

Table 2 Themes & Their Mapping from PM Modi’s Speech After the Failure of Chandrayaan-2

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Invoking the nationalistic spirit	“Bharat Mata Ki Jai! Bharat Mata Ki Jai!Bharat Mata Ki Jai!” (both in the beginning and at the end of the speech)	*			*		
Reaffirming the identity of ISRO scientists that is not affected by the failure	“You are the people who live for Maa Bharti and for her victory” “You are exceptional professionals”	*		*	*	*	
Highlighting the contributions of ISRO scientists	“You have made an incredible contribution to national progress”“True to your nature you ventured into a place where no one had ever ventured before”	*		*		*	*
Putting the failure in the context of past successes	“It is you who have hoisted the flag of India on Mars in your very first attempt”“It was with your efforts that we created a new record by launching more than a hundred satellites simultaneously” “When ISRO has encyclopedia of successes, your flight cannot be out of trajectory just because of one or two interruptions”	*		*	*	*	
Acknowledging the effort and the impact it has already created	“We value you the effort you have been putting in and the impact it has already created for Indians and the world”	*		*			*
Highlighting partial success	“The country has rejoiced several times during this entire mission”“Our nation is feeling immense pride at this moment as the Orbiter is whirring around the Moon”	*		*		*	
Expressing empathy and confidence	“The nation and I are with you”“I am confident of you”“I have come to get inspired by you”			*			*
Reassuring continuity of the mission	“Our resolve hasn’t been destroyed it has only strengthened”“There will be opportunities in the future”		*			*	
Highlighting the national character of overcoming failures	“We are children of nectar”“There is neither any hindrance nor any disappointment for the children of nectar”	*			*		*
Putting the failure in the perspective of the nature of scientific research	“There is no failure in science; there are only experiments and efforts” “The inherent quality of science is effort, effort and effort”	*	*		*		*

Table 3 Themes & their Mapping From PM Modi's Speech After the Success of Chanrayaan-3

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Expressing joy, excitement, and praise	"Today, I am feeling a new kind of joy amidst you all. Perhaps one feels such joy on very rare occasions" "I wanted to salute you all, salute your hard work, salute your patience, salute your passion, salute your vitality, and salute your spirit"			*			*
Highlighting the national pride	"India is on the Moon. We have our national pride placed on the Moon" "Every Indian felt that victory as his own"			*		*	
Highlighting the global significance:	"For the first time since the beginning of human civilization, for the first time in the history of lakhs of years on the earth, man is looking at the pictures of that place with his own eyes" "This is an achievement of the entire humanity not just India's"			*		*	
Deepening the significance of the achievement	"The point where Chandrayaan-3's Moon lander has landed will now be known as 'Shiv Shakti'" "August 23rd, when India hoisted the tricolor on the Moon, India will now celebrate that day as National Space Day"		*		*	*	
Reframing the earlier failure	"Therefore, the point on the Moon where Chandrayaan 2 left its footprints will now be called 'Tiranga'" "This Tiranga point will teach us that no failure is final. If there is a strong will then success is bound to come"	*		*	*		
Connecting the success to the journey so far	"This success becomes even greater when we look at the place from where India had started its journey" "We used to be among the 'Third World' countries, standing in the 'Third Row. In this journey from 'Third Row' to 'First Row', institutions like our 'ISRO' have played a major role"	*		*			*
Highlighting the impact and contribution of ISRO	"The success of Mangalyaan, the success of Chandrayaan, the preparation for Gaganyaan has given a new mood to the young generation of the country" "Today, the space sector plays a major role in providing education, communication and health services to the remote areas of the country"		*	*		*	
Highlighting the effort	"I would like to particularly tell the countrymen about your hard work" "Chandrayaan's journey from the southern part of India to the south pole of the Moon was not an easy one" "To ensure soft landing of the Moon Lander, our scientists even created an artificial Moon in ISRO's research facility"	*	*			*	
Call to action	"I would like ISRO to organize a National Hackathon on 'Space Technology in Governance"					*	

Highlighting the vision for the future	I want the new generation to come forward to scientifically prove the astronomical formulas in the scriptures of India, to study them afresh”	*	*	*	*	
	“With this dedication towards the country, India will become a global leader in science and technology. And I can tell you with great confidence that the same spirit of innovation that we have, will make the dream of a developed India come true in 2047”	*				*

Table 4 Themes & their Mapping From PM Modi’s Speech After the Success of Chanrayaan-3

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Expressing joy, excitement, and praise	“Today, I am feeling a new kind of joy amidst you all. Perhaps one feels such joy on very rare occasions” “I wanted to salute you all, salute your hard work, salute your patience, salute your passion, salute your vitality, and salute your spirit”			*			*
Highlighting the national pride	“India is on the Moon. We have our national pride placed on the Moon” “Every Indian felt that victory as his own”			*		*	
Highlighting the global significance:	“For the first time since the beginning of human civilization, for the first time in the history of lakhs of years on the earth, man is looking at the pictures of that place with his own eyes” “This is an achievement of the entire humanity not just India’s”			*		*	
Deepening the significance of the achievement	“The point where Chandrayaan-3’s Moon lander has landed will now be known as ‘Shiv Shakti’” “August 23rd, when India hoisted the tricolor on the Moon, India will now celebrate that day as National Space Day”		*		*	*	
Reframing the earlier failure	“Therefore, the point on the Moon where Chandrayaan 2 left its footprints will now be called ‘Tiranga’” “This Tiranga point will teach us that no failure is final. If there is a strong will then success is bound to come”	*		*	*		
Connecting the success to the journey so far	“This success becomes even greater when we look at the place from where India had started its journey” “We used to be among the ‘Third World’ countries, standing in the ‘Third Row. In this journey from ‘Third Row’ to ‘First Row’, institutions like our ‘ISRO’ have played a major role”	*		*			*
Highlighting the impact and contribution	“The success of Mangalyaan, the success of Chandrayaan, the preparation for Gaganyaan has given a new mood to the young generation			*			*

of ISRO	of the country” “Today, the space sector plays a major role in providing education, communication and health services to the remote areas of the country”	*	*			*
Highlighting the effort	“I would like to particularly tell the countrymen about your hard work” Chandrayaan’s journey from the southern part of India to the south pole of the Moon was not an easy one” To ensure soft landing of the Moon Lander, our scientists even created an artificial Moon in ISRO’s research facility”	*	*			*
Call to action	“I would like ISRO to organize a National Hackathon on ‘Space Technology in Governance” I want the new generation to come forward to scientifically prove the astronomical formulas in the scriptures of India, to study them afresh”			*	*	*
Highlighting the vision for the future	“With this dedication towards the country, India will become a global leader in science and technology. And I can tell you with great confidence that the same spirit of innovation that we have, will make the dream of a developed India come true in 2047”		*			*

Table 5 Themes Their Mapping from President Nixon’s Interaction with Astronauts on the Moon

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Highlighting the national pride in the achievement	“I just can’t tell you how proud we all are of what you have done””For every American this has to be the proudest day of our lives”			*		*	
Highlighting the global significance of the achievement	“For one priceless moment in the whole history of man all the people on this earth are truly one - one in their pride in what you have done and one in our prayers that you will return safely to earth.”			*		*	
Highlighting the impact of the achievement	“Because of what you have done the heavens have become a part of man’s world, and as you talk to us from the Sea of Tranquility, it inspires us to redouble our efforts to bring peace and tranquility to earth”		*		*		

Table 6 Themes & Their Mappings from President Regan’s Speech After Challenger Disaster

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Expressing sadness	“We mourn seven heroes””We mourn their loss as a nation together”			*			*

Highlighting the inherent dangers involved in space travel	“I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It’s all part of the process of exploration and discovery””It’s all part of taking a chance and expanding man’s horizon”	*			*		
Highlighting the competence of the crew	“Your loved ones were daring and brave, and they had that special grace, that special spirit that says, ‘Give me a challenge and I’ll meet it with joy.’””They, the members of the Challenger crew, were pioneers”	*		*	*		*
Acknowledging the impact on families	“For the families of the seven, we cannot bear, as you do, the full impact of this tragedy””But we feel the loss, and we’re thinking about you so very much”			*			*
Reaffirming the pioneer status of USA in space exploration	“We’re still pioneers”		*		*		
Commitment to continue exploration	“The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we’ll continue to follow them”	*	*		*		
Honoring the memory of the crew	“The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives””We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them”				*		*
Reference to the divine	“...and ‘slipped the surly bonds of earth’ to ‘touch the face of God”	*			*		

Table 7 Themes & Their Mapping from President Bush’s Speech After the Space Shuttle Columbia Tragedy

Themes	Quotes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Acknowledging the sacrifice made by the crew	“These men and women assumed great risk in the service to all humanity””These astronauts knew the dangers, and they faced them willingly, knowing they had a high and noble purpose in life”	*		*	*		*
Highlighting the inherent dangers of space travel	“In an age when space flight has come to seem almost routine, it is easy to overlook the dangers of travel by rocket, and the difficulties of navigating the fierce outer atmosphere of the Earth”	*		*			
Expressing empathy with and gratitude to the families of the astronauts	“All Americans today are thinking, as well, of the families of these men and women who have been given this sudden shock and grief””You’re not alone. Our entire nation grieves with you”			*			*
Affirming the commitment to continue the pursuit	“The cause in which they died will continue””Our journey into space will go on”	*	*		*	*	

nature of the scientific process and in the context of past successes. He also appeals to the deeply held beliefs of the space scientists as competent professionals and the nature of the national character to overcome failures. Similarly, the Presidents of United States of America emphasizes the inherent dangers in space travel and appeals to the deeply held belief in the divine.

Finding 1: Leaders enable the feeling of coherence by putting the event in perspective and by highlighting the factors that remain unchanged despite the event. PM Modi and the Presidents of United States of America enable a sense of purpose by emphasizing the impact of the work the space scientists are doing on the nation and the lives of its citizens. They also highlight the long-term vision, reassures them on the continuity of the efforts towards the vision and gives specific calls for action towards the purpose.

Finding 2: Leaders enable the feeling of purposefulness by highlighting the ultimate purpose of the mission and the impact of the mission. by providing reassurances on the continuity of efforts toward the purpose and by outlining the future vision. PM Modi expresses personal joy and national pride in the achievement and highlights the capabilities and efforts of the space scientists.

Similarly, PM Modi and the Presidents of United States of America expresses personal and national solidarity with the space scientists in the case of failures highlight the global significance of the achievement.

Finding 3: Leaders enable significance by highlighting the national and global importance of the achievement, contribution of the team towards the achievement, the effort put in by team and the pride generated by the achievement

Comparing Leader’s Communication

Comparative analysis of the patterns emerging in the case of leaders’ speeches interactions after significant failures (Tables 2, 5 & 6) with those after significant successes (Tables 3, 4 &7) along with the comparative analysis of the aggregate patterns (the summation of the number of times coherence, purpose, significance, values, beliefs and goals mentioned in the corresponding tables) in the case of successes (Table 8), and failures (Table 9) throws up some interesting insights.

In the cases of successes (Table 8), the least emphasis is placed on creating coherence and the most emphasis is

Table 8 Mapping Summary of the Patterns in Meaning-making in the Case of Successes

Context	Number of themes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Success of Chandrayaan-3	11	4	4	6	4	6	3
First astronauts on the Moon	3	0	1	2	1	2	0
Success of Mars rover	6	1	2	4	2	4	2
Overall	20	5	7	12	7	12	5

Table 9 Mapping Summary of the Patterns in Meaning-making in the Case of Failures

Context	Number of themes	C	P	S	B	G	V
Failure of Chandrayaan-2	10	8	2	6	5	5	5
Challenger disaster	8	4	2	4	5	0	4
Space shuttle Columbia disaster	5	4	1	3	3	1	1
Overall	23	16	5	13	13	6	10

placed on highlighting significance (5 mappings overall as opposed to 12 mappings). Similarly, in the case of successes the element of meaning-making framework that is most often tapped into by the leaders is global goals (12 mappings for goals as compared to 7 mappings to beliefs and 5 mappings to the values).

Finding 4: In the case of successes, coherence (comprehension) gets readily established in the minds of the members and hence the leaders don't need to focus much on engendering the same in the minds of the members.

Finding 5: In the case of successes, leaders tend to focus on highlighting the significance and impact of those successes. This also enables the members to feel that they and their efforts matter.

Finding 6: In the case of successes, leaders emphasize the linkage of the achievement to the global goals to enhance the feeling of meaningfulness among the members.

In the case of failures (Table 9), the highest emphasis is placed on re-establishing coherence (16 mappings). Similarly, in the case of elements of meaning-making frameworks beliefs (13 mappings) and values (10 mappings) are tapped into by the leaders as opposed to

goals (6 mappings). This is a pattern that is clearly different from that in the case of successes.

PM Modi, in his speech after the failure of Chandrayaan-2 focused on putting the failure in the context (of past successes of ISRO, of the nature of the scientific process, of the nature of space exploration etc.). He stressed the identity of the scientists as highly competent professionals which is not negated by the current failure. He also highlighted the national character of converting failures to successes. Similarly, President Regan and President Bush also emphasize the inherent risks of space travel. Also, President Regan highlights the competence of the crew and President Bush emphasizes the sacrifices made by the crew.

Finding 7: In the case of failures, the leaders need to focus on enabling the members to experience coherence again.

Finding 8: Leaders enable coherence by putting the event in perspective and by highlighting the factors that remain unchanged despite the event.

Finding 9: In the case of successes, leaders tap into the deeply held beliefs and values of the members to enhance the sense of meaningfulness

In the case of failures, the emphasis on re-establishing coherence (16 mappings) is followed by the emphasis on significance (13 mappings). The analysis of the three speeches in the cases of the failures show that the significance highlighted here is in terms of the significance of the previous achievements and contributions made by the team and the sacrifice and hard work done by the team. For example, PM Modi, in his speech after the failure of Chandrayaan-2 highlighted the past successes of ISRO, the impact of those past successes and the partial success of the Chandrayaan-2 mission. All the three speeches also express empathy and confidence.

Finding 10: In the case of failures, leaders need to reassure the members of their continued significance (mattering).

Finding 11: In the case of failures, leaders enable reestablishment of significance by highlighting past successes (and successful aspects of the current event), contributions and demonstrated competence. They also do this by expressing empathy and solidarity with the members.

Finding 12: In the case of failures, leaders enhance the feeling of purposefulness in the members by reaffirming the importance of the purpose and the continuity of the endeavor. Leaders appeal to the deeply held beliefs and values of the members to help them to find their anchors. For example, PM Modi, in his speech after the failure of Chandrayaan-2, highlighted the nature of the Indian civilization to rise from failure

to victory, appealed to their identity as exceptional professionals and connected with their belief in the nature of the scientific process. Leaders can evoke a stronger emotion to temporarily shift the mind of the members from the negative emotions associated with the failure so that they are more receptive to their message or narrative. For example, PM Modi, invoked the nationalist spirit at the beginning of the speech after the failure of Chandrayaan-2 by using the slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai!' three times. In the case of the speech after the success this is done only at the end of the speech. Also, both President Regan and President Bush made a reference to the divine in their addresses to the nation after the Challenger and Columbia disasters.

Finding 13: When the failure situation involves violation of a higher-level value (like preciousness of human life) the focus of the meaning-making efforts of the leaders shifts to provide more attention to addressing the strong emotions that arise from this violation.

Finding 14: When the failure situation involves violation of a higher-level value, the leaders tend to bring in deeply held beliefs like the belief in the divine, the nobility of the scientific pursuit or the nationalistic spirit to respond to the same.

Comments made by the US Presidents in both the cases of successes highlighted the significance of the achievement and leveraged the same to motivate the members for the pursuit of the larger mission. It is consistent with the pattern observed in the speech of PM Modi after the suc-

cess of Chandrayaan-3. This is evidenced by the fact that PM Modi, in his speech after the success of Chandrayaan-3, highlights the significance of the success for India and for the humanity.

Finding 15: In the case of successes, leaders tend to focus on highlighting the significance of the achievement at multiple levels like national, global, immediate, long-term etc. PM Modi, in his speech after the success of Chandrayaan-3, gave calls for action to ISRO scientists and to the youth of India highlighting the vision/goals for the future.

Finding 16: Success generates positive energy and emotions. In the case of success, the leader leverages the success and its significance to reinforce the purpose and set more ambitious goals/to work towards the long-term vision. PM Modi, in his speech after the success of Chandrayaan-3, declared the day of the success as national space day and used a name like 'shivshkati' for the landing point of Chandrayaan-3.

Finding 17: Leaders can make the memory of the success long-lasting by institutionalizing it and connecting it to the belief systems PM Modi, in his speech after the success of Chandrayaan-3, named the impact point of Chandrayaan-2 as 'tiranga point' and positioned it as a step towards the eventual success.

Finding 18: When a failure is followed by a success, leaders can leverage the success to reframe the failure.

Discussion

This paper applies the tripartite framework of meaningfulness consisting of coherence, purpose and significance and the meaning-making framework consisting of beliefs, global goals and values in the context of leadership to provide a comprehensive understanding on how leaders craft the sense of meaningfulness in the members.

Implications for Theory & Practice

With the definition of leadership increasingly gravitating towards a meaning oriented one (Haslam, Alvesson, & Reicher, 2024), this constitutes a valuable addition to leadership theory. Furthermore, this paper explored meaning making by the leaders in the case of successes and failures and brought out the nuances of the approaches the leaders take for engendering the sense of meaningfulness in the members in both the contexts. This highlights the need for leadership theories to incorporate a more nuanced understanding of how leaders can facilitate the construction of meaning for their members in extreme circumstances.

By demonstrating the ways in which leaders can enable members to experience a sense of meaningfulness in both their successes and their failures, this research provides important pointers to leaders in various contexts. For example, by re-establishing coherence in the minds of the members after a failure, the leaders can avoid disorientation and disenchantment. Similarly, leaders can highlight the greater significance of the successes

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and leverage the positive energy generated to motivate the members to pursue more ambitious goals. Again, to provide a sense of continuity of the narrative, leaders can highlight aspects that remain valid in both successes and failures like the effort, nobility of the purpose, deeply held values etc. Another interesting possibility that this paper highlights for the leaders is the opportunity to reframe an earlier failure after a subsequent success.

Limitations & Future Research

This paper bases most of its inferences on the analysis of six communications by heads of states in the context of space missions. The limited sample size can impact the generalizability of the conclusions. While some aspects of the contexts are consistent, there could be other factors that might influence the patterns in the speeches like the personality and agenda of the leader, history of the group, national and cultural differences, the profile of the members and what the success or failure means to the members.

Another important opportunity is to explore the relationship between the leaders' own meaning making process and the meaning making that they facilitate in the members. A longitudinal study can explore the extent to which the feeling of meaningfulness created lasts over

a period of time and how the leaders attempt to enable the maintenance of the created meaning. This research focused only on one form of communication after successes and failures. Future research can focus on other forms of communication, especially written ones like memos, e-mail and announcements.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how leaders engender the sense of meaningfulness in members, particularly in the context of successes and failures. By applying the tripartite conceptualization of meaningfulness and the meaning making framework in the context of leadership, this study sheds light on the nuanced ways in which leaders facilitate meaning making.

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This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the work of leadership in both triumphant and adverse contexts. Success and failures are important crucible experiences for both the leaders and the members and by facilitating meaning making in both the situations, leaders can positively impact organization effectiveness and employee engagement. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for leaders and researchers, underscoring the need for leaders to be adept at creating meaningfulness in diverse situations.

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