

# Ten Principles of Quality Leadership

The most influential writers on leadership bluntly conclude that leaders do not make much of a difference on the effectiveness of their respective organizations. Their persuasive argument is based on strong evidence that the activity of leadership is both dull and mundane.<sup>1</sup>

One well-known theorist, James G. March, argues that leaders are interchangeable (assuming equal basic managerial competence); one leader makes no more significant impact on the organization than another.<sup>2</sup> He uses a light bulb metaphor: light bulbs are necessary but indistinguishable. Any light bulb manufactured to standard will do the job as well as any other.

## The Present Emphasis in Leadership

How can we account for the discouraging news that while competent leaders are necessary to ensure things will work they appear not to make much difference beyond a minimum level of satisfactory organizational performance? Part of the problem is that theory and research have emphasized too much what leaders actually do and how they behave and not enough the more symbolic aspect of leadership—the meanings they communicate to others. This shortcoming is most noticed in our almost exclusive emphasis on leadership objectives, leadership behavior, leadership outcomes, and measurable leadership effectiveness. The instrumental or tactical aspects of leadership have received attention well beyond their contribution to leadership quality. By em-

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phasizing leadership tactics, we miss the whole point of what leadership is and can be. Needed is a strategic view of leadership that emphasizes quality.

Webster's dictionary defines *strategy* as the science and art of enlisting and employing support for certain policies and purposes and for devising plans toward goals. *Tactics*, by contrast, are defined as involving actions or means of less magnitude or at a shorter distance from a base of operation than those of strategy and as small-scale actions serving a larger purpose.

## Strategic and Tactical Requirements

Quality in leadership requires that balanced attention be given to both tactics and strategy, a delicate balance that is too often tilted in favor of tactical requirements. In part, the emphasis on tactical requirements of leadership reflects the broader management culture of Western society. Such values as efficiency, specificity, rationality, measurability, and objectivity combined with beliefs that good management is tough-minded are part of this culture. Results-oriented management is the slogan; the bottom line is worshiped; and the direct, in-control manager is admired. Broadly defined, leadership is achieving objectives effectively and efficiently. Leadership theory puts the emphasis on the leader's behavior and on results. Metaphors of the battlefield are often used to remind us that one must be hard-nosed, and that the going is tough (in the trenches, on the firing line, bite the bullet, take command, winning and losing). Evaluation is quick and to the point and success is determined on the basis of short-term accomplishments. Given the cultural demands faced by

educational administrators and supervisors, no wonder the tactical requirements of leadership are emphasized. Missing from these tactical issues are holistic values of purpose, goodness, and importance. Missing also is an emphasis on long-term quality schooling.

Often attention is given to the tactical requirements because they are easy to teach and learn, specific, easily measured, can be readily packaged for workshops, and are otherwise accessible. Emphasizing the tactical, because they are accessible, reminds me of the drunk looking under the lamppost for an object lost a block away.

Strategic and tactical requirements of leadership are compared in Figure 1. For proper balance, tactical requirements should be clearly linked to and dependent upon the strategic. They represent short-term and highly focused managerial expressions that characterize day-by-day leadership activity. Separated from the strategic, they are ends in themselves devoid of the purpose and meanings needed for quality leadership and quality schooling.

Let's take as an example the important tactical skill of mastering a contingency approach to leadership, characterized by careful reading of situations and by applying the right doses of the correct mix of leadership styles. Combine this skill with a leader who has certain purposes, beliefs, and commitment to what the school is and can be and who can communicate these in a fashion that rallies others to the cause, and we achieve proper balance. One would not want to choose between the tactical and strategic in this case, but if I had to choose, I'd vote for the latter. What a leader stands for is more important than what he or she does. The meanings a leader communicates to others are more important than his or her specific leadership style.

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## The 10-P Model of Quality Leadership

*Leadership skills*—the tactical side of the quality equation—are important. *Leadership antecedents*, *leadership meanings*, and *leadership as cultural expression*—the strategic side—are important too. From leadership skills, meanings, antecedents, and culture can be extracted ten principles of quality leadership (Figure 2).

There is always a risk in reducing the subtle and complex to a handful of abbreviated and specific principles. I accept this risk in order to provide busy professionals with a useful and easily remembered framework. The risk will be reduced if we agree that the ten principles are not meant to be recited as one would a litany, but are offered to bring to one's consciousness a cognitive map of the requirements for quality in leadership. A comprehensive development of the ten quality principles with applications to school supervision will be forthcoming in other publications. In this article only brief descriptions are provided.

*Prerequisites* refer to the leadership skills needed to develop and maintain basic leadership competence. Such skills as mastering and using various contingency leadership theories, conflict management tactics, team management principles, shared decision-making models, and group processes techniques are examples of basic leadership requirements. Leadership skills are tactical in the sense that they are situationally specific, of short duration, and focused on specific objectives or outcomes. Successful leadership is not likely to be within the reach of those who are not competent in the basic leadership skills. But competence and excellence are different. To move beyond routine competence one must shift attention from the tactical to the strategic. The remaining nine quality principles are strategic in nature. They give meaning and direction to the leadership skills.

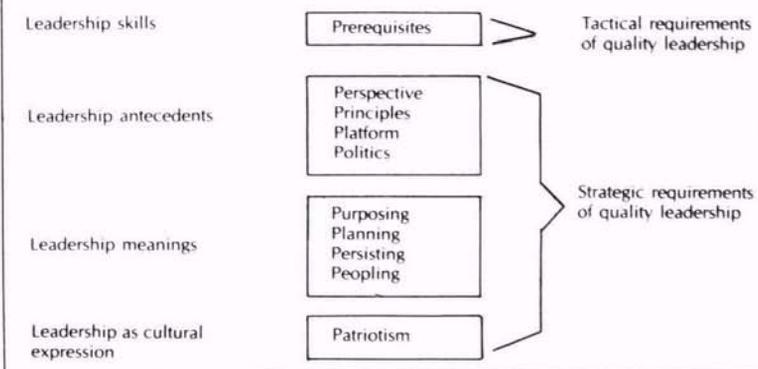
The next four quality principles are leadership antecedents in the sense that they represent conditions, feelings, assumptions, cognitive maps, and attitudes of the leader that determine his or her reality and that guide his or her leadership decisions, actions, and behavior. As antecedents vary among leaders, so does leadership quality and meaning.

*Perspective* refers to the ability of the leader to be able to differentiate between the tactical and strategic and to understand how they are related. One with

Figure 1. Strategic and Tactical Requirements of Leadership.

Strategic Requirements	Tactical Requirements
Ask, what is good in the long haul? A holistic view is important.	Ask, what should be done now to achieve objectives? An atomistic or task-specific view is important.
Develop an enduring philosophy of supervision, management, and organization to ensure consistency and to give proper purpose and meaning to events.	Develop a contingency perspective to supervision, management, and organization that permits altering arrangements to suit unique short-term circumstances.
Emphasize leadership quality that reflects and nurtures this philosophy.	Emphasize leadership styles that are carefully and skillfully matched to task requirements.
Develop an overall plan or image that provides a frame for implementing purposes.	Develop operating structures, procedures, and schedules for implementing purposes.
Decisions should be governed by purpose and philosophy.	Decisions should be governed by stated objectives.
The meaning of events to people is important. Be concerned with processes and substance.	The outputs to be achieved are important. Be concerned with structures and results.
Sensitivity to and involvement of people are key to success.	The development and articulation of sound techniques are key to success.
Quality control is a state of mind that comes from loyal and committed people who believe in what they are doing.	Quality control is a result of careful planning and organizing of the work to be done and of continuous evaluation.
Evaluation should be long-term to more adequately determine the quality of life in the school and to assess effectiveness more holistically.	Evaluation should be short-term to determine if specific objectives are being met and to enable the provision of systematic and continuous feedback.
<b>A basic corollary: Strategic requirements should never be sacrificed in favor of tactical.</b>	

Figure 2. The 10-P Model of Quality Leadership.



perspective brings a broader, patient, more long-range view to his or her leadership responsibilities which enables the sorting of trivial from important events and outcomes and the determining of worth.

What the leader stands for and believes in about schooling, the place of education in society, how schools should be organized and operated, and how people should be treated are the guiding *principles* that give integrity and meaning to leadership. Leaders stand for certain ideals and principles that become cornerstones of their very being.

In a recent *Wall Street Journal*-Gallup poll, for example, integrity was considered most important by chief executives of 282 of the nation's largest firms in describing characteristics of subordinates considered most important for advancement. The number one failing of weak managers, by contrast, was limited point of view. Integrity suggests that the leader values something important and is able to communicate this value to others.

*Platform* refers to the articulation of one's principles into an operational framework. Platforms are governing in

the sense that they represent criteria and an implicit standard from which decisions are made. A teaching platform governs the decisions a teacher makes about teaching and provides a set of ideals that make teaching decisions sensible to that person. Educational and management platforms, so essential to quality leadership, operate in much the same fashion.

*Politics* is the final leadership antecedent to be considered. At its simplest level, leadership can be defined as the ability of an individual to influence another individual or group in a fashion that helps to achieve certain desired goals. Power is an essential ingredient in the leadership act. Power, defined simply, is the ability to act to produce an effect. Power and leadership go hand in hand. Indeed in schools, political behavior is a key ingredient in successful leadership. Public schools, like other arenas of public administration, are political organizations characterized by multiple interest groups, unclear and competing goals, diffuse sources of power, and ambiguous lines of authority. Unlike the simple business or owner-operated store, the educational administrator or supervisor typically cannot exercise direct authority to obtain compliance or cooperation from others. Often, groups to be influenced are outside of the school itself, or are outside of the administrator's or supervisor's legal authority. Typically, the school administrator must obtain voluntary cooperation, support, and good will from others to get things done. Sensitivity to *politics* and knowledge that the leader is typically dependent upon the good wishes and voluntary compliance of others if he or she is to be effective in the long haul is a necessary leadership antecedent.

Key to quality in leadership and quality in schooling is that teachers and others find their work interesting, satisfying, and meaningful. Meaning suggests as well that they believe in what they are doing and appreciate its importance to the school, society, and to themselves. Leadership meanings can be summed in four additional quality principles: *purposing*, *planning*, *persisting*, and *peopling*.

*Purposing* breathes life and meaning into the day by day activities of people at work in schools. It helps people to interpret their contributions, their successes and failures, their efforts and energies in light of the school's purposes. Through this process, seemingly

ordinary events become meaningful with subsequent motivational benefits to the school. In addition, *purposing* is the means by which leaders bring to the forefront of school activity the leadership antecedents of principle and platform. It represents as well the rallying point for bringing together all human resources into a common cause.<sup>3</sup>

*Planning* is the articulation of purpose into concrete and long-term operational programs. Planning sketches out the major structures and design to be implemented, the major steps to be taken, and the major milestones to be achieved. The time frame is long range and planning as a strategic requirement of leadership should not be confused with such tactical requirements as management by objectives, the specification of short-term outcomes or results, or various scheduling devices such as Gantt or PERT. Despite the usefulness of such tactics in the short-range, they can mislead if they are not part of a more long-range plan.

*Persisting* refers to the attention leaders give to important principles, issues, goals, and outcomes. Symbolically how an administrator uses time is a form of administrative attention that communicates meanings to others in the school. It is assumed by most that an administrator gives attention to the events and activities he or she values. As others learn the value of an activity to the leader, they are also likely to give it attention. Administrative attention, then, is a form of modeling for others who work in the school. Through administrative attention, the leader contributes to the tone and climate of the school and communicates to others the goals and activities that should enjoy high priority.

An elementary school principal might, for example, espouse an educational platform that suggests a deep commitment to building a strong educational program sensitive to individual needs of students, taught by a happy committed faculty, and supported by his or her school community. But this platform is likely to be ignored if most of the principal's time is spent on the trivial many activities associated with routine administrative maintenance. Observers will learn that "running a smooth ship" is the goal of real value to the principal and school.

*Peopling* recognizes that little can be accomplished by the leader without the good wishes of others. More than mere compliance from others is necessary if excellence is sought. Instead, the leader

seeks to fine tune and match more closely the goals, objectives, and desires of people with those of the organization. Growth and development of the human organization enjoy equal status, as a tactical objective, with increased school outputs. Indeed, lower levels of school achievement might well be appropriate in the short-term, if human values would otherwise be endangered. When considered in the long-term, an undisputed link exists between the satisfaction and development of the human organization and increased organizational performance, both in quantity and quality. Peopling is a key strategic requirement of quality leadership. Accepting short-term gains that compromise the quality of life in schools which people enjoy simply does not make strategic sense.

When leadership skills, antecedents, and meanings are successfully put into practice we come to see leadership as less a behavioral style or management technique and more as cultural expression. Here, a set of norms, beliefs, and principles emerge to which organizational members give allegiance. These represent a strong bond that brings people together to work on behalf of the school. Indeed a culture emerges that details what is important and provides guidelines that govern behavior. The quality principle of *patriotism* is key to viewing leadership as cultural expression. In highly effective organizations workers share a set of common beliefs, and reach a set of common agreements that govern what will be done, and how it will be done. Members express loyalty or patriotism to this way of life.<sup>4</sup> Organizational patriots are committed to purposes, they work hard, believe in what they are doing, feel a sense of excitement for the organization and its work, and find their own contributions to the organization meaningful if not inspirational.

### Human Resources Theory

The ten principles together suggest a climate and commitment to work that goes well beyond mere competence and satisfactory performance. Excellence cannot be born from mere competence; it results from the more intangible human qualities summed by the ten principles. The principles are offered as a new and more integrated way to view the quality requirements of leadership, but they are as old as organized thinking on leadership and excellence. They are validated, for example, in the writings of the human resources theorists (Bennis,

Maslow, McGregor, Arygris, and Likert, for example) who have long expressed these views, though perhaps not as a systematic whole.

The recent research of Peter Vaill, which seeks to identify leadership characteristics associated with high performing systems, corroborates many of the quality leadership principles as well.<sup>5</sup> He defines high performing systems as those that perform excellently against a known external standard; perform excellently against what is assumed to be their potential level of performance; perform excellently relative to where they were at some earlier point in time; are judged qualitatively by informed observers to be doing substantially better than other comparable systems; do whatever they do with significantly fewer resources than is assumed are needed; are perceived as exemplars of the way to do whatever they do; and are perceived to fulfill at a high level the ideals of the culture within which they exist. From his research Vaill identifies three common characteristics of the leaders of all the high performing systems he studied:

1. Leaders of high performing systems put in extraordinary amounts of time. They work hard. They demonstrate that they care. Their consciousness is dominated by the issues and events in the system of which they are a part.

2. Leaders of high performing systems have very strong feelings about the attainment of the system's purposes. They care deeply about the system. This includes its structure and conduct, its history, and its future security. They care deeply about the people in the system. They want the system to be successful. They want the system to make a respected contribution to society. They want the system to contribute to the quality of life of people who are involved in it. Their feelings are evidenced in the way they talk about the system and in the way in which they behave in the system.

3. Leaders of high performing systems focus on key issues and variables. They understand the concept "management of attention" and recognize the importance of modeling organizational purposes and values. They focus on what is important and are able to rally others to this purpose.

Vaill believes that it is this Time-Feeling-Focus, when brought together in the lifestyle of the leader, that results in a qualitative difference between com-

petence and excellence in leadership. He points out that leadership or management style, described in its instrumental sense (cold-warm, task-relationship, democratic-autocratic), is not the determining factor in a high performing system though style may be more important in low or average performing systems. He concludes from his research that leaders who strive for excellence should "Seek constantly to do what is right and what is needed in the system (Focus). Do it *all out* in terms of your energy (Time). Put your whole psyche into it (Feeling)."<sup>6</sup> These factors provide constant purposing to the system and in high performing systems, to iterate a basic axiom of this article, *what the leader stands for and communicates to others is more important than how he or she behaves given any particular set of circumstances.*

### The Japanese Experience

Increasingly, American management theorists look to Japanese management for insights that might be incorporated into our way of doing things. The Japanese management success is already a modern legend and Japanese economic productivity and quality standards are admired and envied throughout the world. What is their secret? Have they developed superior management tactics and techniques? Can their secrets be discovered and borrowed? When novices embark on this journey to study, learn, and emulate the secrets of successful Japanese management they soon find that such popular techniques as Quality Control Circles and the *ringi* system of decision making are important but not particularly key.

Managers use quality control circles for sharing responsibilities with workers for locating and solving problems that interfere with organizational creativity, productivity, and job satisfaction. More than 100,000 such circles are registered in Japan and perhaps more than 1,000,000 others exist.<sup>7</sup> Quality control circles typically consist of two to ten employees who meet regularly to examine work-related issues. They decide specific issues to study, launch action research projects aimed at solving problems or resolving issues, and make suggestions to management. Their suggestions are taken quite seriously with typically better performance results and, more important, better commitment from workers. In a sense, the quality control circle makes every employee a



manager<sup>8</sup> with resulting motivational effects that come from this increased vested interest in the enterprise.

The *ringi* system refers to an elaborate decision-making network requiring approval of new ideas from sources throughout the organization. It is characterized by the circulation of plans, proposals, or papers (*ringisho*) to various individuals at various levels in the organization and the affixing of stamps or seals indicating their approval of the plan. Following Kazuo Noda<sup>9</sup> the system is described as follows: Plans are typically drafted by individuals low in the organization and sponsored by middle-level management. (One subtle reason for this procedure beyond seeking input from lower levels is that newer



members of the organization are socialized into the organizational culture as modifications are suggested to their plans by those at other levels.) Plans are circulated and changed until they fit the organizational culture. In this way, new ideas are presented to those at other levels and superiors give feedback to those lower in the organization. Final plans are usually a compromise between traditional organizational expectations and new ideas proposed by those lower in the organization.

Before the *ringisho* is forwarded to upper levels it receives careful and lengthy horizontal consideration. Seals and stamps affixed to the *ringisho* symbolize consensus at this level. Finally the *ringisho* is sent forward for approval

at upper levels. The *ringisho* moves slowly up the line with modifications occurring along the way. Finally the chief executive approves the *ringisho* by affixing a final seal. Advocates of the *ringi* system point out that though consensus builds slowly, once a decision is made support is strong and widespread. Americans, by contrast, typically make quick decisions but subsequently have difficulty implementing the decision because of support and commitment problems.

Quality control circles and the *ringi* system are good ideas worth emulating here, but the Japanese success story is not due to better tactical or technical skills as much as to a better view of what is important in management and a better appreciation of the human element. The Japanese believe in and are better at articulating all of the ten quality leadership principles, not just the prerequisites. This observation is firmly and convincingly documented in two new books on the topic: William Ouchi's *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* and Richard T. Pascale and Anthony G. Athos's *The Art of Japanese Management*.<sup>10</sup>

Theory Z is primarily the articulation of the basic values of McGregor's Theory Y to the organizational level. Unlike Theory Y, which detailed a set of management assumptions that guide managerial action, Theory Z speaks to a culture, a way of life that exists at the organizational level. Its building blocks are trust and loyalty to the organization, a commitment to one's job, and a sense of dedication that stems from an organizational philosophy that gives direction to organizational actions and provides meanings to organizational members.

Similarly, Pascale and Athos derive a theory of management that emphasizes heavily the cultural aspect of leadership and organization. They propose a framework comprised of seven dimensions: three "hard" (strategy, structure, and system) and four "soft" (staff, style, skills, and subordinate goals). The hard dimensions, emphasized heavily in American management theory and practice, refer to the basic organizational, leadership, and management skills and techniques with which we are all familiar. They are the tactical requirements of leadership and constitute *prerequisite* leadership principles. By contrast, the soft dimensions are more cultural and humanistic and more like the remaining nine quality principles presented in this article. These authors

note that the soft dimensions share *equal status* with the hard in Japanese management and in a number of successful American firms as well.

Both books derive their theories of excellence from studying successful Japanese and American firms. Though irreconcilable cultural differences exist between the Japanese and American ways, the American firms studied had more in common with their Japanese counterparts than with less successful American firms.

It is interesting that though much of the success of Japanese management is cultural, history tells us that modern concepts of management were introduced into Japan by Americans shortly after World War II. Indeed, Joseph Juran, an American management theorist, is often regarded as the father of Japanese quality control techniques.<sup>11</sup> Juran was a consultant to Japanese management in 1954. One of the pioneers in the Japanese quality control circle movement was W. E. Deming, whose involvement dates back to 1949. Today the "Deming" prize recognizes outstanding contributions of Japanese quality control circles.<sup>12</sup>

#### Our Tacit Understanding of Excellence

The Japanese evidence is impressive but we do not have to look to successful Japanese management to corroborate or validate the 10-P Model of quality leadership. Enough evidence in its favor exists here in the United States and indeed the best proof of the ten principles rests in our own experiences and intuitions. Take a moment to recall in your life experiences that one group, team, unit, or organization of which you were a member that, when compared with all others from your personal experience, was the most high performing. You might recall a childhood or high school gang, or perhaps your experiences as a family member, or as a member of some social group or fraternity. Perhaps your attention will focus more on the world of work and you might recall a job you had, either recent or past, that included membership in a particularly high performing group. Whatever the case, recall how the system operated. How did you feel about membership in the group? What made you work so hard? What accounted for your enthusiasm? Why did you enjoy being associated with the group? What was the system trying to accomplish? How loyal were you and why? How meaningful was your membership and why? Chances are

pretty good that your analysis of this system highlights many of the quality leadership "Ps" proposed here.

Repeat this exercise, this time limiting yourselves to schools and work groups within schools with which you are familiar even though you may not have been a member. Recall the one most effective, most excellent, most high performing from among all your experiences with schools and school groups. Describe the system, what it valued, and how it worked. Take the time to sketch out some ideas on a sheet of paper. Again, compare your analysis with the quality leadership "Ps." You should find a remarkable resemblance between the two.

Debates over such issues as skills versus meanings or tactics versus strategy can be misleading. The issues of concern should be balance and integration. It is clear that presently, in educational administration and supervision, the leadership emphasis tilts too much in the direction of leadership skills and the prerequisite management techniques they suggest.

The function of such skills is not to stand alone or even to be "added in" but to be integrated into a larger focus. This integration is suggested in the fol-

lowing quality leadership equation:

$$QL = LS (LA + LM + LCE)$$

Notice that quality leadership (QL) results from the compounding effects of leadership skills (LS) interacting with leadership antecedents (LA), meanings (LM), and cultural expression (LCE). In sum, the 10-P Model of quality leadership is offered as an interdependent and interlocking network. Though conveniently sorted into four categories of skills, antecedents, meanings, and cultural expression, the art of leadership is celebrated in their integration in practice. ■

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> James G. March, "How We Talk and How We Act: Administrative Theory and Administrative Life," Seventh David D. Henry Lecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, September 25, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Vaill defines *purposing* as "that continuous stream of actions by an organization's formal leadership which has the effect of inducing clarity, consensus, and commitment regarding the organization's basic purpose." Peter B. Vaill, "The Purposing of High Performing Systems," paper presented at the conference on "Administrative Leadership: New Perspectives on Theory and

Practice," University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, July 1981, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> See for example the section "Toward a Theory of Organizational Patriotism" in *The New School Executive*, second edition. By Thomas J. Sergiovanni and Fred D. Carver. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 237-241.

<sup>5</sup> Vaill, "The Purposing of High Performing Systems."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> William Ouchi, *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1981), p. 262.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, Scott Myers, *Every Employee a Manager* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

<sup>9</sup> Kazuo Noda, *Nihon no juyaku* (Big Business Executives in Japan) (Tokyo: Diamond Press, 1960), pp. 115-117 as described in William Brown, "Japanese Management: The Cultural Background," *Momenta Nipponica* 21 (1966): 47-60.

<sup>10</sup> William Ouchi, *Theory Z*, and Richard T. Pascale and Anthony G. Athos, *The Art of Japanese Management* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Norihiko Nakayama, "Using Japanese Quality Control and Productivity Techniques in U.S. Industry," seminar sponsored by the American Management Association and Technology Transfer Institute, New York City, December 19, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Ouchi, *Theory Z*, p. 264.

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