

# How Can We Train Leaders if We Do Not Know What Leadership Is?

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Views of leadership that focus on the traits and behaviors of the leader are commonly used to develop training programs. Although these leadership training programs have some application, they suffer from several problems. First, there is no reasonable agreement on what traits or behaviors are leadership traits or behaviors. Second, there is no way to differentiate what makes a good leader from what makes an effective manager or an effective person. And third, people who emerge from these training programs rarely become what anyone might define as good leaders. A view of leadership as a community development process is explored as an alternative to traditional leadership approaches, and its implications for training and education are discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

“If we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about *leadership*” (Burns, 1978, p. 1). Thus, Burns introduced us to his rationale for exploring a new perspective—a revolutionary new paradigm he called transforming leadership. Burns was clearly trying to imply that *leadership* is something different from *leaders*, that is, leader traits and behaviors. This intent is evident in his definition of leadership: “leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p. 425). The two keys to this definition that seem to have escaped many current writers who discuss

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transformational leadership are (1) his admonition that the nature of the goals is crucial—that is, if they are not mutual they may be independently held, but in any case they must be related and oriented toward an end value—and (2) the process is reciprocal and it happens within a context of competition and conflict.

But what have we done with the study of leadership in the years since Burns made these propositions? We have reduced it to slogans: “managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 21). We have equated it with economic success and manipulating people: “leadership is measured by success and effectiveness. A leader is successful when the person he or she is trying to influence demonstrates the desired behavior” (Forbes, 1991, p. 70). We have confused it with management: “successful leaders and managers must use power—to influence others, to monitor results, and to sanction performance” (Winter, 1991, p. 77). We have associated it with authority: “leadership has traditionally been synonymous with authority, and authority has traditionally been understood as the ability to command others, control subordinates, and make all the truly important decisions yourself” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1992, p. 129). We have become mired in an obsession with the rich and powerful, with traits, characteristics, behaviors, roles, styles, and abilities of people who by hook or by crook have obtained high positions, and we know little if anything more about *leadership*: “students of leadership will be interested in shedding light on the dominant background characteristics of the elite, their homogeneity, and behavioral patterns” (Bassiry & Dekmejian, 1993, p. 47).

Virtually every definition of leadership encountered in both scholarly and practitioner oriented writings—that is, if one is actually offered—focuses on the knowledges, skills, abilities, and traits of the leader which are presumed to be the most successful in getting followers to do what the leader wants them to do. Consider this quote by DuBrin (1990): “leaders influence people to do things through the use of power and authority” (p. 257). Even though DuBrin defined leadership as “the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group to achieve certain objectives in a given situation” (p. 255), it is clear that he was conceptualizing the “process” of leadership as a linear set of goal-oriented actions by the leader, and certainly not in the same plane as the process of conflict and competition described by Burns (1978).

At least DuBrin offered a definition. Not defining leadership seems to be an accepted practice among scholars who discuss leadership. Rost (1991) analyzed a total of 587 works that referred to leadership in their titles and found that fully 366 of them did not specify any definition of leadership. Those authors apparently assumed that everyone knows what

leadership is. It will be the contention of this article that most authors are unaware of their reliance upon a very old paradigm of leadership that is beginning to conflict with the realities of the modern world.

What follows is not as much a critique of specifically articulated theories of leadership as a criticism of the constructual framework that has been used to develop those theories. The focus shall be upon the essential construct of leadership, and upon the failure of the prevailing construct to solve the problems most leadership scholars address. Finally, a new conceptual idea will be stated, and its implications explored.

## THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF LEADERSHIP

As Kuhn (1970) observed, scientists do not begin research until they believe they have firm answers to basic metaphysical questions: What is the nature of the universe? How are its entities interconnected? What can legitimately be asked about these entities and their interrelationships? And, so forth. Social scientists must begin with beliefs about human nature, about what is wrong with people, and about how social and personal problems can be fixed. Through these beliefs, they structure and articulate the problems to be solved, and this structure will necessarily dictate the nature of the solutions. Leadership has been advocated as a solution to particular personal, social, and organizational problems. The problem is that the problems to be solved have not been well defined. Or perhaps, more accurately, they have been defined according to old and inappropriate paradigms. So, the proposed solutions just do not work when applied to the modern world.

What do practioners think leadership is? Given that scholars routinely do not define it, one might assume that there is a consistent leadership construct or myth among the general population. An informal survey of 110 managers, administrators, and professionals of various ethnic backgrounds who worked for various public and private organizations in the mid-Hudson region of New York State was conducted in various settings, none of which had any direct links to the study of leadership. They were asked to complete (in writing) the following sentence: "leadership is a(n) . . . ."

Fifty nine respondents (54%) defined leadership as a skill or ability. Six defined it as a role or position. Thirteen (12%) defined it as an action. Another 13 offered no definition at all, that is, they wrote what leadership is about or what it relates to or what it is concerned with, but not what it is. The remaining respondents suggested that it is a responsibility, a weapon, a process, a function of management, a factor, a lifestyle, or an experience. Three suggested that it is an influencing relationship.

One might expect more consistency from students of the subject. A *post hoc* survey was conducted on the final exams of 181 undergraduate students in an organizational behavior class who responded to an item specifically asking them to define leadership. Even though the text used in the class defined leadership as an ability, only 89 students (49%) defined it that way. Students were exposed to other definitions and encouraged to think of their own, but thirty two (18%) did not define leadership directly at all. The remaining definitions fell into categories similar to the ones listed above. Although it can be argued that these were not good students in the sense that they did not assimilate the information in the text or lectures, many of them may have relied upon their general social beliefs about leadership, so statement of the construct is similar for both samples.

Rost (1991) completed a thorough analysis of the theories, origins, and uses of the word *leadership*. He concluded that the words used to define leadership are contradictory, the models are discrepant, and the content of leadership is confused with the nature of leadership. In other words, the study of leadership as an academic discipline is in shambles. Sources of this confusion must lie in an inappropriate application of basic assumptions: the use of old ideas to explain new phenomena.

Despite the apparent inconsistencies, leadership studies have not proceeded without commitment to a canon of consistency: a conceptual basis for the professional language. This canon is based in a feudal paradigm of governance and social structure (Barker, 1994). The feudal paradigm was best described by Machiavelli (1981), who was the first to study the traits and behaviors of successful and unsuccessful leaders to derive a theory of effective leadership. Briefly, the paradigm can be characterized as approximating the structure of a feudal kingdom: an image of a powerful male leader who sits atop a hierarchical structure directing and controlling the activities of subjects toward the achievement of the leader's goals. The leader's goals are normally centered about the defense of the kingdom and the acquisition of new territory through waging and winning war. Of course, in the industrial world, territory consists of market share and financial and material assets, and warfare is economic in nature.

According to Harré (1970), descriptive terms are defined and used to ensure regularity by copying or representing a particular paradigm, in this way perpetuating its influence. The influence of the feudal paradigm of leadership is so compelling, that many authors feel no need to define the term *leadership*. The feudal view of leadership has become a permanent fact upon which industrial leadership theories are supposed to be built. Differing categorical terms of leadership—e.g., transformational, transactional, and charismatic—all use the same model as a source for their meaning and application. In other words, the function of each of the terms

commonly used within the industrial paradigm leadership is to indicate a variation of the form “man at the top,” and how that form is manifested. The term *leadership*, then, is defined ostensibly while pointing to someone who occupies a high position.

The feudal paradigm in its original form can still be effectively applied to organizations that will likely maintain hierarchical structures, such as the military. However, management trends indicate that future successful organizations are not likely to have hierarchies in the traditional sense, but circular or linear structures (Dobyns & Crawford-Mason, 1991). It is possible that managers of the future will not even meet most of their employees, but merely receive their work through computer networks. If these trends materialize as commonplace, a new paradigm of leadership will necessarily emerge. How will this paradigm take shape?

Gastil (1994), in an attempt to define democratic leadership, suggested that leaders can help to develop followers’ emotional maturity and moral reasoning abilities, but then went on to admonish leaders to not become substitute parents. How does one address the emotional maturity and moral reasoning of others without becoming parental? And more broadly, if leadership is conceptualized as a theory of supervision—that is as an ability or activity that has as its goal getting others to do what the leader wants them to do (which is not the view of Gastil)—then why do leadership scholars not study parents? Perhaps the problem with the old paradigm is, as Rost and Burns have suggested, a focus upon the leader rather than upon the process of leadership. Is leadership all about an ability, or about a relationship?

Consider the word *leadership* itself. Other words that end in the suffix *-ship* can be used to denote a skill, such as in the words *statesmanship*, *seamanship*, or *craftsmanship*, or can also be used to indicate a relationship as in *partnership*, *apprenticeship*, *fellowship*, and in the word *relationship* itself. It seems we potentially have a legitimate semantic choice to use the word *leadership* either to indicate an ability or skill, or to indicate a relationship.

## LEADERSHIP AS AN ABILITY

A reading of articles in the *Leadership Quarterly* between Spring 1991 and Winter 1992 (two volumes) begins with a comparison of the “leadership” skills of recent presidents (Kellerman, 1991), continues with a taxonomy of descriptions of leader behavior culled from 65 authors (Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin, & Hein, 1991), and ends with management behavior dimensions (Lindell & Rosenqvist, 1992). With one possible exception, every article focuses on leader abilities, traits, or be-

haviors. The one exception is a laudable attempt to compare leadership with liberalism (Weaver, 1991). The only article with the words "transformational leadership" in the title portrays leadership as an option for self-transcendence (Carey, 1992). Otherwise, transformational leadership is advocated as an effective method for manipulating followers into doing what the leader wants them to do: "transformational leaders encourage charismatically-led followers to develop their skills so that they might eventually demonstrate initiative in working for the leader's goals" (Graham, 1991, p. 116). This concept is clearly not consistent with Burns' (1978) definition of transforming leadership as a relationship, but is consistent with the view of leadership as a skill or an ability.

Focus on the leader's abilities and traits serves two important social functions: hope for salvation and blame for failure. The leader has been likened to "a saviorlike essence in a world that constantly needs saving" (Rost, 1991, p. 94), and leadership to a "social delusion that allows 'followers' to escape responsibility for their own actions and inactions" (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992, p. 119). Rost contended that the popular view of leadership has its foundations in Hollywood, folkloric, and Old West images of what men do as leaders. Gemmill and Oakley viewed leadership as a myth, the major function of which is to preserve the existing social systems and structures by blaming the problems on inadequate leadership abilities and not on the systems themselves.

There is a certain value in focusing on the abilities and characteristics of leaders, particularly when developing a leadership training program for consumption. Leadership training has become an industry, pandering to the egos of corporate executives by equipping them with the secret formulas for achieving saviorhood. Not to mention that it is relatively easy to develop the seven steps of this or the ten ways of that, and to present these ways and steps very effectively. But as every trainer who has done so, and is candid, will attest, the value of these ways and steps rarely finds its way beyond the classroom. What sounds good in the training seminar may not translate well into practice. The problem of translation is based in the gap between the simplistic ways and steps, and the complexities of social and organizational processes.

The efficacy of current leadership training is doubtful because, even if the abilities, behavior, and characteristics of successful leaders could be identified, people generally cannot assimilate them without changing their personalities and world views (Rost, 1993). Fleishman et al. (1991) listed 499 dimensions of leader behavior from 65 different systems. Naturally, many dimensions were repeated. Are individuals required to manifest all these dimensions before becoming leaders? One system had 23 dimensions. Even if a trainer were sincere about training leaders to enhance their abili-

ties, and focused upon this one system, how could that be accomplished? Further, as Rost (1993) pointed out, how do the abilities of an effective leader within any of these systems differ from the abilities of an effective manager, or an effective person?

## MANAGEMENT AS AN ABILITY

When we think of the ability of leaders, we are probably thinking of the ability of leaders to *manage*. Management includes the tasks of goal setting, strategic and operational planning, providing structure, organizing and directing the activities of others, motivating others to pursue organizational goals, manipulating, and controlling outcomes and organizational systems, and making money for owners. Management can be conceptualized as a skill or set of behaviors: the ability to allocate and control resources to achieve specific, planned objectives. By this definition, everyone can be a manager. Everyone has specific personal objectives and personal resources. People are resources. So the act of setting goals and getting people to do things to achieve those goals is a function of management—often called directing.

The fundamental difference between leadership and management lies in their respective functions for organizations and for society. The function of leadership is to create change while the function of management is to create stability. Stability is created by managing routine, incremental, and continuous change by planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and effective staffing. The purpose of management is to stabilize the orientation of the organization by maintaining successful patterns of action through the development and control of standard operating procedures. Strategic or social change can be chaotic. Strategic change is often nonroutine, nonincremental, and discontinuous change which alters the structure and overall orientation of the organization or its components (Tichy, 1983). Leadership creates new patterns of action and new belief systems. Management protects stabilized patterns and beliefs. The function of management regarding change is to anticipate change and to adapt to it, but not to create it.

Management is primarily a rational activity. Rational methods are particularly good for creating and maintaining stability. The manager views the organization as a mechanistic system which can be controlled and adjusted through the acquisition and analysis of information. Inefficient or failing organizational systems are presumed to be losing energy because there is chaos somewhere in the system. To fix the problem, the manager finds a way to remove the chaos and to restore order to the system. Problem solving is therefore a rational process of defining the problem, generating and selecting alternatives, and implementing and evaluating the

solution. The system is objective, predictable, and controllable through the acquisition and analysis of information about the system and its workings. Skills training, particularly in problem solving, is very effective when focused upon the rational activities of management.

The view of leadership as management ability is the basis of the industrial paradigm of leadership. This paradigm relies upon the simplistic concept of the leader as a giver of direction and as a manipulator of will, who frames and solves specific management or social problems. Like the feudal paradigm, the industrial paradigm has its application. It defines and solves a number of problems that can result from the need for an imposed order and from the need to accomplish specific goals.

The limitations of the industrial paradigm of leadership are apparent when the goals are not specific, or when the imposition of order does not solve the problem. These limitations become more evident as social issues, structures, and problems become more complex. A recognition of the emerging need for a more appropriate paradigm is what likely led Burns (1978) to explore a view of leadership that accommodates complex social and political processes. But like all paradigm shifts, the new perspective has been slow to take hold, and is commonly interpreted by those who steadfastly cling to the old paradigm as simply an extension of their old views. For example, the concept of transformational leadership described by Bass (1990) and others still relies upon the traits and abilities of the leader to transform a lackluster organization into a profitable enterprise through the manipulation of employees' motives. This application measures leadership by performance to goals. These goals usually represent a symbolic acquisition of territory: return on investment, market share, or diversification. What if the goal is freedom, education, or social development? Success is not so simple to define and measure.

## **LEADERSHIP AS A RELATIONSHIP**

The industrial paradigm frames the construct of leadership within a dyadic supervisor/subordinate relationship (Yammarino, 1995). This concept of leadership is founded in the feudal touchstone of citizenship: one's relationship with one's king. This relationship implies several assumptions: (a) that the king deserves allegiance by virtue of rank, (b) that there is a natural, hierarchical difference in status, intelligence, and ability, (c) and that the subject's role is to serve the king's wishes. Consequently, leadership scholars tend to assume that anyone who holds a supervisory position is a leader, that supervisors necessarily have abilities and traits that set them apart from subordinates, and that moral behavior is defined by productivity.

Alternatively, leadership can be understood as a political relationship. According to Burns (1978), the common good emerges from chaotic, reciprocal interaction among people with potentially conflicting goals, values, and ideals. This interaction includes mutual influencing, bargaining, coalition building, parochial attitudes, conflict over scarce resources, and competition for limited control. Even though there may be a set of rules used to facilitate the process, it is most definitely not a controlled or a rational process. Rational problem solving approaches have little if any real effect by this view of leadership because, if for no other reason, knowledge itself is a formulation of parochial perceptions and of socially constructed reality.

An evolutionary attempt to define leadership as it may be understood in the future reflects the idea that leadership is based in interaction. Rost defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (Rost, 1993, p. 99). Rost made the point carefully that there are no “followers” in this relationship because everyone is involved in the same relationship, hence the word collaborators. Rost’s definition is augmented by four essential elements: (1) The relationship is based in multidirectional influence. (2) Multiple actors are active in the relationship, there typically is more than one leader, and the influence is inherently unequal. (3) Leaders and their collaborators intend, but do not necessarily produce, real changes in the future. (4) Leaders and their collaborators have mutual or common purposes that reflect their intended changes. This definition can be summarized in the following way: Leadership is a dynamic social and political relationship that is based in a mutual development of purposes which may never be realized. The concept of leadership as a non-supervisory relationship is characterized by the words *dynamic* and *mutual*.

## THE PROCESS OF LEADERSHIP

If leadership is conceptualized as a *dynamic* process of interaction that creates change, then the leadership roles may not be, perhaps should not be, clearly defined. Gemmill and Oakley (1992) made this point by defining leadership as “a social process . . . of dynamic collaboration, where individuals and organization members authorize themselves and others to interact in ways that experiment with new forms of intellectual and social meaning” (p. 124). These authors asserted that the presence of well-defined leaders may decrease the group’s ability to experiment. This view of leadership greatly diminishes the importance (or relevance) of the leader’s characteristics, abilities, and behaviors. Consistent with this notion is the idea that leadership is a democratic process where no one person does an

inordinate amount of leading, and every group member performs some leadership function at some point in time (Gastil, 1994). Therefore, it may be necessary to ignore, for the present, the leadership roles, behaviors, and characteristics.

To simplify, philosophically, the essence of the emerging views of leadership, it is necessary to move from the concept of leadership as a relationship to the concept of leadership as a social process that contains complex relationships. The emerging paradigm characterizes leadership as "*a process of change where the ethics of individuals are integrated into the mores of a community.*"

First, there is the issue of the process itself. In a rational/systems paradigm, a process is understood as something that can be represented by a flow chart where decisions and tasks move from point to point in a linear fashion and in predictable ways. The social process implied by the above statement is more like the emptiness of a bowl: while it is always there, it can only be defined by its container. In the case of leadership, the container is the cultural context within which the process exists. Schein (1992) stressed the importance of culture: "neither culture nor leadership, when one examines each closely, can really be understood by itself" (p. 5).

The leadership process is like a river. Contained by its bed (the culture), it can be said to be flowing in one direction, yet, upon close examination, parts of it flow sideways, in circles, or even backwards relative to the overall direction. It is constantly changing in speed and strength, and even reshapes its own container. Under certain conditions, it is very unified in direction and very powerful; under other conditions it may be weak or may flow in many directions at once.

A social process, as defined above, is much broader than a social relationship. A social relationship is based in a set of role expectations that are—theoretically, if not in practice—understood by the participants in the relationship. Relationships in our society tend to be contractual things, with performance standards and evaluations. Social processes include social relationships, but they also provide for the development and definition of roles and role expectations where none may have existed, and they include ways that people have an effect upon each other apart from our usual ideas about relationships. Leadership relationships are based in role expectations, and are therefore contractual in nature. But the leadership process provides the vehicle for creating leadership relationships. For this reason, the leadership process must be conceptualized before the leadership relationships and the leadership roles.

Second, there is the concept of ethics. Ethics should not be understood as merely sets of rules, principles, or standards that are consciously applied to behavior or behavioral systems; those could be called morals (from the

Latin word for customs). An ethic, based in the Greek word for character, is a magnetic north, or more specifically, a primarily subconscious guide toward life's ultimate purpose. It is a person's general idea of life's greatest good or summum bonum which is drawn from a socially constructed reality and combined with personal moral insight and experience. Ethics are based upon a culturally derived set of basic metaphysical assumptions and values. A person's ethic serves to guide behavior only to the extent that it is an end goal or desired outcome which implies a set of values that is consistently applied to behavioral decisions. As opposed to the usual teleological philosophies, this view of ethics accounts for individual ends and for collective agreements about a community direction that are not necessarily based in theological or philosophical doctrines. An ethic is not a canon or a maxim, rather it is a spiritual definition of life. Ethics, in this vein, is consistent with Burns' (1978) notion of end values, without which, he declared, "leadership is reduced to management" (p. 389).

Ethics and their place in social behavior can be further explained by comparison to a construct of social psychology developed by Harré, Clark, and DeCarlo (1985). Moral philosophy, like leadership, cannot proceed without some model of psychology—what motivates people to behave. Common constructs of psychology tend to classify the sources of individual behavior into a two tier model. The lower tier is predominated by subconscious behavior that is potentially subject to control by the higher tier, or consciously directed behavior. Within the two tier framework, ethics are understood as the conscious and deliberate development of individual (and ultimately social) moral systems and the resulting assimilation of rules. It is normally assumed that the individual is entirely capable of consciously choosing a moral system and the extent to which that system is followed. If ethics are defined only within this framework, then leadership must necessarily be a conscious exercise in developing control. Control, by the definitions proposed here, is a function of management and not of leadership.

Harré et al. have proposed a three tier construct: (a) the lowest tier is predominated by subconscious subroutines of behavior that are used to execute plans and to govern standard operations, (b) the conscious rule systems comprise the second tier, and (c) the third tier is the subconscious influence of social or collective processes and structures of multiple and potentially varied moral orders. Within the three tier framework, an ethic can be understood as a source of behavior that originates within a socially constructed reality, where basic metaphysical assumptions, culturally specific emotions, and socially derived values serve as forceful guidelines for the creation of conscious moral systems in conjunction with personal insight and with moral experience. Mores create ethics which in turn create morals. When mores or their cultural context become incongruent with individual

ethics and are perceived to be in need of change, the ethics of a group of individuals, driven by personal insight and experience, align to motivate the group to produce desired change. That is the process defined here as leadership.

Relative to this three tier construct, leadership can be viewed as a process belonging to the third tier: largely subconscious, but profoundly compelling. The conscious control implied by the second tier, as Harré et al. have suggested, is less the strategic controller of behavior and more the middle manager, converting direction to action. Where we previously sought to explain leadership through its casual order—that is, through simple cause-effect relationships—we must now seek understanding relative to a complex, socially derived moral order of compelling, long-term behavioral structures or patterns.

When groups of people interact, there are necessarily conflicting values because people, having been affected by the social order in different ways, each have a somewhat different *summum bonum*. The process that aligns these individual ethics toward a shared *summum bonum* is leadership. Leadership is a means for individuals to explore, to understand, to modify, and to articulate their own ethics, and those of other individuals. Through leadership, people come to visualize a common *summum bonum* that in turn comes to be manifested in leadership role expectations, which in turn come to be symbolized by and attributed to the leader. Within the new paradigm, it is not the leader who creates leadership, it is leadership that creates the leader.

Through influencing, compromising, and sacrificing, community members create a vision of a future good—that is, a new moral order—from their collective wants and needs. And from this collective vision are created (or modified) community mores which define behavioral standards, role expectations, and contractual commitments from which ultimate goals are pursued and realized. The shared vision is shared because it is the outgrowth of a social process and not simply the product of one individual or small group who decided upon a goal or sold an idea. The collective good is collective because it is inextricably linked with every individual's *summum bonum* and with the social reality. This is what is meant by the word *mutual*.

Leadership, by this definition, must necessarily be founded in crisis. It is crisis that acts as a catalyst for the leadership process. For this purpose, crisis can be defined as a perceived differential between what exists in the social order and what is desired by an individual that is strong enough to be motivating. Crisis is an individual perception that can be perceived in the same way by many individuals at the same time, or differently by different individuals. Crisis orients people to begin to think about change. Crisis gives people incentive to consider actions, trade-offs, and sacrifices

that they would not have considered otherwise. Communities in crisis are usually more unified toward a community objective than communities in peace time.

The collective *summum bonum* of a group of employees in an organization cannot be to increase the wealth of the owners through hard or efficient work unless they themselves *are* the owners. It might, however, include an idea about improving their quality of work life or increasing their personal satisfaction with work and creating a sense of accomplishment. Because it is largely an uncontrollable process, a leadership process that occurs within an organization that is in serious trouble may result in unpredictable outcomes. Leadership that happens spontaneously within an organization can be extremely disruptive to the management process. On the other hand, if employees pull together as a community during a time of crisis, they can work miracles even if they act in contradiction with the management of the organization. Again, if managers try to manipulate a group of employees, by whatever means, to carry out objectives that are not *mutually* created, that is an authority relationship in which power is exercised and it is not leadership.

## THE LIMITATIONS OF THE NEW PARADIGM

It should be clear that this view of leadership will make little sense to someone who “knows” that leadership is all about getting people to do what the leader wants them to do. In short, it denies many well-established social institutions: It removes responsibility for outcomes almost completely from the leader and places it upon the group. It does not justify the blame commonly placed upon leaders for failure. It does not justify high executive salaries and perks. It does not justify our expectations for elected officials. And, it does not support traditional approaches to leadership training.

It should be equally as clear that the above statement of the emerging paradigm in no way begins to approach a theory of leadership. Rather, it provides for examination of beliefs and assumptions behind leadership theories and of the framework within which they have been developed. In fact, the reluctance of leadership scholars to accept the new paradigm can be largely attributed to its incompatibility with the concept of science itself.

The industrial paradigm of leadership has been created and maintained as an application of science, the specific goal of which has been to perpetuate important feudal institutions. So, positivistic leadership theories are presumed to incorporate the Cartesian deductive system, and the development of those theories has been predicated on several assumptions common to science.

First, leadership is usually treated as a Platonic form—that is, the whole has been broken down to its basic elements for study. These elements have been assumed to be traits and characteristics of the leader and situational events. The assumption that the whole is represented by its elements is appropriate for some studies: for example, a molecular study of granite. But breaking down a music composition into its notes and measures cannot possibly lead to an adequate theory about the experience of hearing it. It may be equally unreasonable to assume that leadership can be understood by isolating its components. Leadership, like music, has experiential qualities that defy deductive analysis.

Second, leadership is normally studied with the specific goal of determining cause–effect relationships. This approach is based upon the belief that causality is found in a regularity of sequence. But there can be no evidence that given sequences of events are not merely accidental, particularly when they occur in complex milieus like organizations and societies. The industrial paradigm of leadership depends upon the assumption of the existence of cause–effect relationships. The failure to establish firmly any of these relationships does support the view that they do not exist. The emerging paradigm of leadership is the result of an effort to facilitate a broad comprehension of the whole, which is completely inconsistent with deductive methods.

Third, the focus upon cause–effect relationships is expected to lead to some level of predictability and control, which many believe is the most important goal of science. Industrial leadership studies have developed under the same optimism as earthquake studies, that prediction and control of outcomes is ultimately possible even though the parameters are highly complex and potentially unknowable. The emerging paradigm has focused upon broad explanations of processes that deemphasize prediction as a central theme.

As suggested before, the term *leadership* has been defined ostensibly by pointing to a person occupying a high or authoritative position. The emerging paradigm is ostensibly defined by pointing to group processes. If sorting out an individual's characteristics for study is difficult, how much more difficulty is added by the group's complexities? The implications of the emerging paradigm for the empirical approach are mind boggling. The new paradigm may ultimately prove to be unapproachable by the Cartesian theory of explanation, which for many deductivists is reason enough to reject it altogether. Then again, the current empirical approach is not working regardless of its propensity for research. Aspects of individual behavior are readily measurable, and so have become the locus of leadership studies. But there have been no consistent results that have led to anything like a solid theory of leadership.

Fourth, the assumption of constancy is applied to studies of a person as leader. For example, if a leader is honest at the time of measurement, then it has been assumed that the trait of honesty is present when successful leadership is occurring. But this assumption has two problems: first, individual traits are not necessarily consistent over time and through varying conditions, and second, how does one know when successful leadership is actually occurring? Rost (1991) addressed this problem by trying to define the circumstances of the occurrence of leadership.

Accepting the new paradigm does not necessarily require discarding the old. There are many problems for which the old paradigm may be appropriate: military campaigns, business competition, and orchestral conduct. But, some modern problems will need a new frame for definition and solutions that are more effective than the current approaches: problems of crime, of drug abuse, of education, of economic globalization, and so forth.

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership training that emphasizes a set of definable and learnable skills and abilities can only be defended if leadership and management are defined in the same way. This is the view of leadership as excellent management or, as some would put it, as a function of management. It is this view of leadership that Burns (1978) found entirely inadequate, that Rost (1991) criticized as overly rationalistic, goal-oriented, utilitarian, and materialistic in character, and that Gemmill and Oakley (1992) have convincingly debunked as a social myth, the function of which is to preserve existing organizational and social structures by shifting the responsibility for change to messiahs when no change is actually intended by those in power.

If leadership training does not focus upon skills and abilities, what should it focus upon? Klenke (1993) illustrated the conflict between the humanities disciplinary view of leadership that does not base arguments on collected data and the social science view that does. This conflict reduces clarity between what can be called management development and leadership education, or between being a doer and being a thinker. Klenke recommended solving this issue by avoiding the bipolar, dualistic thinking created by academic parochial perceptions, by giving the student "the freedom to pursue the ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the study of leadership as an art and a science" (p. 119), by emphasizing context, and by learning about leadership as a process. Klenke suggested that leaders are developed through increased understanding of the moral obligations of leadership and acceptance of the responsibilities to serve one's community and society. Wren (1994) acknowledged the role of citizenship as a function

of leadership by asserting that leadership education is increasingly important to this country “to produce citizens capable of confronting and resolving the complex problems which will face tomorrow’s society” (p. 74). Wren felt strongly that the study of leadership should be based in the multidisciplinary approach of the liberal arts.

Where the feudal paradigm conceived of citizenship as subjugation to the king, the emerging paradigm adopts a perspective of citizenship more akin to Athenian democracy. Leadership education, therefore, must be centered on the role of all leadership participants as active shapers of their world. The questions of life addressed through literature, the cycles of successes and failures of human endeavors explored by history, the discipline of mathematics, the analytical methods of philosophy, the exchange of ideas facilitated through rhetoric, and the influence of cognition, perception, and interaction defined by psychology all provide the bricks and mortar for building an appropriate construct of leadership. What is missing is the foundation.

The modern liberal disciplines are infused with three essential problems that potentially interfere with the development of that foundation. First, empiricism and experimentation have replaced thinking and understanding as the basis of education (Harré, et al., 1985; Hutchins, 1936). Scientism has imposed a reductionistic tendency to categorize and analyze things to the point of meaninglessness. In addition, scientism imposes the need for discipline related jargon that hinders, if not prevents, communication among the disciplines and integration of their constructs. Scientism also promotes the a priori assumption of cause-effect relationships, an assumption being questioned even in nuclear physics (Capra, 1983). The need to rationalize has clearly overwhelmed the need to interpret.

The second problem with liberal studies in the twentieth century is the tendency for colleges and universities to view their curricula as professional training (Hutchins, 1936). When faced with the expectations of students, their parents, employers, and society in general, teachers feel pressure to make liberal studies “relative.” That is, they focus upon tricks of the trade, or specific knowledge one might need as an employee. Under this condition, an advance in the field of study is often evaluated relative to its utility or application to productivity.

The third, and potentially worst problem, is that many academic disciplines may be built upon a fragmented, discontinuous, and misinterpreted set of theoretical propositions (MacIntyre, 1984). MacIntyre has suggested that philosophically-based disciplines are founded in fragments of a conceptual scheme consisting of bits and pieces of language and theory that survived the censorship and intellectual restructuring conducted by the Christian Church in the Middle Ages. The revival of these studies, during

the Renaissance, pulled the fragments of knowledge and language together into a set of practices. So philosophers have been arguing over the relative merits of theories, the full meaning and context of which have been long forgotten. Adherence to these theory fragments have taken on a ritualistic character where the players conform to the canons of consistency and coherence, but the contexts needed to make sense of all this have been lost. As a result, the language of philosophy which is being used to argue opposing notions of truth is in a grave state of disorder, undetectable by analytical, phenomenological, or existential philosophy.

Although liberal studies can provide a framework for leadership studies, as disciplines in and of themselves they may not provide the support needed for exploring the relationships between socially constructed reality and social processes. Perhaps what is needed is a model of education that is consistent with the emerging paradigm of leadership. Relative to the three tier model of social psychology developed by Harré et al. (1985), the totality of education can be allocated to three integrated components: training, development, and education. The first tier of subconscious subroutines is clearly enhanced through training. For example, hitting a golf ball is a subroutine. Although the activity begins with conscious and deliberate movements, through training (and practice) it becomes more effective as it becomes a subconscious motion initiated by a conscious switch.

Skills training is an activity that converts a capability to an ability through the structuring and practice of a set of behaviors. For the view of leadership as a process, the only training worthwhile would focus upon those behaviors needed to “manage” the outputs of the process: namely, the changed or developed social structures, roles, and role expectations. A leadership process as defined above cannot be managed. Training could also possibly be used to help minimize the destructive potential of the inherent conflict among the participants in the process by developing political skills such as communicating, coalition building, compromising, and negotiating.

The second tier is enhanced through development of conscious control. Development is an analysis and integration of the intellectual and the emotional capabilities of an individual which result in self-motivation, self-direction, and self-identity. The purpose of development is to increase self-efficacy by providing students with both an understanding of themselves and a conventional base from which to explore new or conflicting ideas or experiences: in other words, they learn to “manage” themselves. Leadership development would require the exploration and development of personal values that will be needed to facilitate participation in the process. Development should have as its goal the self-control needed for the individual to adapt and integrate personal wants and needs to those of the group.

Education relative to the third tier, then, is a cognitive exploration of social patterns and moral orders that produces an integration of conceptual knowledge, ideals, insight, experiences, and sources of behavior. The purpose of education is “to connect man with man, to connect the present with the past, and to advance the thinking of the race” (Hutchins, 1936, p. 71)—to create the basis from which collective decisions are made about the future.

If leadership is understood as a process of integrating individual ethics into community mores, then leadership education must concentrate (1) on existing organizational or social structures and systems and how they have developed, (2) on the metaphysical assumptions that individuals hold regarding the purpose of life, the nature of the world, and human nature that both unite us as communities and divide us as individuals, (3) on the values inherent in the prevailing moral order, (4) on how those values have developed, (5) on the implications of those values for choices of action, and (6) on the ways in which we can reflect upon our similarities and differences and order our wants and needs to produce change.

Managerial training may focus upon the skills needed to solve problems, to motivate people, and to manage organizations to accomplish goals. The aim of this type of training is to give managers ready tools to be used to minimize uncertainty and to avoid blame for uncontrollable outcomes. This form of training can be highly rational, formula oriented, and mechanistic.

Executive or managerial development must focus upon the personal traits and characteristics needed to cope with the demands of the managerial role. The aim of development is to prepare the manager physically and mentally for organizational politics, unreasonable expectations, incompatible co-workers and subordinates, and conflicting requirements for action. Development is somewhat less rationally oriented than training. It requires reflective insight and interpretation as well as the development of specific personal characteristics. Development can be based upon complex sets of cause-effect relationships and their integration with specific skills.

Leadership education must be divorced from expectations of pragmatic application, even though it will eventually be applied. Education must view rational methods and cause-effect relationships as partial truth from which broader understanding and integration may proceed. The aim of education is to bring basic assumptions, assimilated values, and predominant behavioral patterns into conscious awareness, and to understand their influences on decision making and human behavior. Education must be understood as more comprehensive and less goal-oriented than training or development. Leadership education is little more or less than self-awareness in the

Socratic tradition, where cause-effect relationships give way to the integration and synthesis of nonlinear phenomena.

If we limit ourselves to rational or scientific approaches to understanding leadership that presume cause-effect relationships, then we will exclude much of the experience of leadership. People tend to experience leadership as exhilarating and inspirational (Burns, 1978). Although we commonly assume that experience is created by the leader, under different conditions that same leader may not be able to recreate that same experience. Our response to that failure has been to look to the situational variables, which we never seem to be able to pin down. Despite occasional statistically significant results, empirical methods rarely account for enough variance to make them predictive. Desiring control and having control are two different things. There is clearly a need to conceptualize leadership in a different way, and come to a more common understanding of what it is, if for no other reason than to cope with it.

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