

Assignment 3:
Personal Construct of Leading – explanatory model and
evaluation (3000 words).

Model criteria:

- Appropriate 'model' of leading with clear rationale for its components.
- Demonstration of understanding of leadership theory.
- Depth of evaluation of own leadership journey.
- Evidence of learning from lectures and materials of this unit.
- Evidence of wider reading and learning from a variety of additional sources.

LEADING THE WAY



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Declaration: "I certify that I can provide a copy of the attached assignment if required" - "I certify that the attached assignment is my own work and that all material drawn from other sources has been fully acknowledged"

Signed:

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Lexmilian de Mello'.

Dated: ...20th March 2009...

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INTRODUCTION

This assignment encompasses my critical view point and semester's work for the unit of Leadership at the Edith Cowan University. I believe I have attained a strong understanding of all fundamental leadership issues, and in turn I sought to devise the 8th level of leadership to be attained by aspiring leaders.

This essay summarizes the main traits that should be focused on for the leader of tomorrow; these include firm commitments to sustaining relationships between the leader and the subordinates by earning trust, respect and admiration through the implementation of good values and reasonable thinking.

The effective leader will seek to be transformational whilst trying to instill charisma in order to be adaptable, considerable, optimistic, resourceful, and trustworthy whilst utilizing collectivism as a mean to mediate relations.

Contemplative leader characteristics should be admired and respected because they represent epitomical human ideals. A leader should remain noble, attentive, lucid, vulnerable, and disciplined at all times.

The charisma of a leader should resonate throughout the whole organization, and it is through empathy, empowerment, and envisioning that this can be achieved.

The ideal leader should be self-aware, and apt at recognizing psychological traits from his subordinates or faults of his own. Seven main key elements for human functioning are addressed within this essay.

The leader should be polymorphous, an actor, and a chameleon that can blend in any environment as needs be. He should be able to adapt his style and persona to suit each subordinate's needs – this without being ridiculed and instead admired for. All the above points lead to the concept of the 8th level of leadership consciousness, 'The Role-Player'!

SERVANT LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

A good leadership ethic would incorporate certain aspects of 'servant-leadership' – this where supervising has less to do with directing and more of serving and helping subordinates. This can be accomplished by sustaining active listening throughout the organization and requesting that subordinates affirm their role. Trust is earned by upholding espoused values and by building and sustaining relationships whilst providing opportunities for personal growth. The leader ought to sometimes sacrifice his own achievements for others within the organization – this can lead to a 'greater good' and/or beneficial gain. The employees should be bestowed with autonomy to change and adapt to meet organizational goals.

The role of 'servant' is not easily attained, and companies may need to provide extensive training to modify behaviors whilst still being accepting to differing cultural values within the organization. It is, after all, a fact that effective communication may only take place in an honest and trusting environment – this may involve on being dependant on employees in times of crisis. By being open and straightforward an organization is able to nurture a trust relationship with employees. The ideal leader should always avoid talking negatively about parties involved, but should be stern and firm when voicing an eloquent opinion.

“Servant leadership requires supervisors to act with a moral compass striving to follow the higher road.” (Douglas, 2003)

EFFECTIVE & TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

An effective transformational leadership may be termed as 'worthy leadership'. That is, of having adequate character/merit/value whilst having the ability to guide and influence people.

Charismatic leadership (briefed on a later chapter) is one of the many forms of transformational leadership. However, charismatic leadership has the potential of creating negative outcomes whereas the earlier usually does not.

A functionalist paradigm has often been used in transformational leadership research. It should be noted though that transformational leadership is about appealing to higher values of justice and ideals. Motivation for a transformational leader can take shape, and hence stimulated, by several forms, i.e.; intellectually, inspirationally, by idealization, or through individual consideration.

Table 1: ACORT

| Five Effective Leadership Behaviors (ATROC) – (Rose, 1998) |
|---|
| <i>Adaptable</i> – leaders must be adaptable to change. |
| <i>Considerate</i> – must consider personal effect to build commitment. |
| <i>Optimistic</i> – leaders must provide a positive vision of the future. |
| <i>Resourceful</i> – leaders should provide training to prepare subordinates. |
| <i>Trustworthy</i> – must build on trust to encourage employee. |

Collectivism can be seen as an effective means to meditate relations between subordinates and the leader within an organization. The term, 'collective efficacy', as used by Walumba (2004), refers to each individual participant's assessment to collectively complete required tasks. Better understanding of collective efficacy is important, and this is why characteristics of an analytical leader are important in order to utilize situational antecedents proactively.

Transformational leaders ought to heighten follower’s collective motivation by providing rational explanations that link subordinates identities to the ‘group’ collective. A group ‘norm’ is, “the yardstick for measuring individual self-worth in relation to other out-group members” (Walumba, 2004). By focusing on similarities imbued within all members within an organization, the transformational leader can increase collective efficacy.

A common problem in effective leadership is that leaders simply lack influence. The following table illustrates the top five reasons why leaders lack influence and a simple control measure for each:

Table 2: The Influencers 'Adjusted' (McMillan and Grenny, 2008)

| The Top Five Reasons Leader's Lack Influence and Mitigation | |
|--|---|
| Reasons | Mitigation |
| 1. Leader's think its not their job. | Assume responsibility, as much as possible. |
| 2. Leaders lack competence. | Continual learning. |
| 3. Leaders confuse talking with influencing. | "Actions are stronger than words" |
| 4. Leaders believe in silver bullets. | Don't always opt for a 'quick-fix' |
| 5. Leaders try to influence everyone and fail. | Try a vast combination of influencing techniques. |

Crucial aspects in which a transformation leader must focus on include: vision, communication, attainment of trust, whilst maintaining self respect.

CONTEMPLATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

“Contemplate: v. think deeply; consider as a possibility; gaze at.” – (Krebs, 2002)

The contemplative leader strives to incorporate thoughtful practices throughout the entire organization. The motto, ‘think before you act’, exemplifies my personal thoughts on the contemplative leadership style.

Being contemplative is about exploring and embody organizational values whilst moving between cycles of action and reflection. The contemplative leader should also maintain a balance of the process of the organization with the product actually being delivered whilst striving for an organization culture that reflects a contemplative philosophy.

Mission statements should definitely not be forgotten as great tools to be used by the contemplative leader, and instead they should be used as a continual process of reflections because it is human nature to forget our true values from time to time. Slogans, jargon and catch phrases should be used alongside any strategies that will motivate employees to think within the desired boundaries. Deetz, Tracey and Simpson (2000), guides us through the art of framing and the utilization of metaphors, stories, traditions and artifacts as tools to be used in order to shape the organization and mould it into a true masterpiece.

Contemplative organizations focus on proactive reflection, and hence place appropriate emphasis in external and internal work as the company swings between cycles – this is my pertinent perspective of it.

Such organizations need to operate under a leadership style that places a high value on the process of work but whereby also creating detachment from the final out come, after all, ‘we did the best we could do’!

The contemplative leadership style, as defined by Eggert (1998), can be best described in the following table:

Table 3: The Style of Contemplative Leadership (Eggert, 1998)

| Lucid | Attentive | Vulnerable | Disciplined |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| About Suffering | To the Comprehensive | Acts Decisively | Without Habits |
| About Colleagues | Without Judgment | In Ambiguity | Without Rewards |
| About Self | To the Depths | With Detachment | With Passionate Joy |
| About Gratitude | In Multiple Dimensions | With Accountability | Towards Freedom |

As can be seen the contemplative leader is self aware and rational whilst being in tune with his emotions. Goodbye robots, hello humanity!

NOBLE TRAITS

It should be imperative that a great leader have noble traits. Good traits will allow for better contemplative thought for the leader when gazing in self reflection and silence (this may be alone or together with his subordinates in a break). Efforts to structure the work day and workplace environment are enhanced when a greater respect is given to the leader. The Ásatrú people have devised nine noble virtues that deserve thought, these are: Courage; Truth; Honor; Fidelity; Discipline; Hospitality; Industriousness; Self-reliance; and Perseverance.

It is interesting to note that no matter what culture our humane ideals of virtue usually encompass the same facets – this is called human nature.

[The word "Ásatrú" literally translates as "faith in the gods," but it is best described as the modern rebirth of the indigenous, pre-Christian faith of the Nordic/Germanic peoples. It is a polytheistic faith, meaning that it honors a pantheon of numerous gods and goddesses. Many of the names of these gods and goddesses remain part of our modern culture. One example is found in the days of the week, i.e. Wednesday is Woden's (Odin's) Day, Thursday is Thunar's (Thor's) Day, Friday is either Frigga's Day or Freya's Day (scholars debate which). Ásatrú has been recognized officially in Iceland, but also has a large following throughout Scandinavia and in America, England, Germany, and other countries. (Campbell, 2009)]

CHARISMATIC CHARACTERISTICS

Charismatic traits are VERY important for a successful leader. Charisma inspires and generates excitement amongst subordinates. The word 'charisma' originated from the Greek language meaning 'a gift' – this term has been used often in both religion and politics in order to give legitimacy to power.

The three components of charismatic leadership are:

- Empathy;
- Empowerment; and
- Envisioning.

Empathy involves the capacity to comprehend another's emotions, motives, and values in order to influence other's perspectives. It is characterized by respect, appreciation and mutual trust to another's ideas and feelings.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

The increasing popularity of books on charismatic/transformational leadership indicates that many managers recognize that new approaches to leadership are needed to deal with the rapid changes demanded of today's business firms.

(Behling and McFillen, 1996)

Empowerment is a process in which leads one to build confidence in one's skills so as to subsequently lead to better work quality and improvement in one's abilities. By removing the sense of powerlessness by not only delegating but by sharing power with followers aspects such as; administration, operating outcomes, and strategy at work can be improved.

The process of envisioning creates an internal identity within an organization that paints an overall picture of the desired goal to be achieved. The communication processes that lead towards a vision may be considered as one of the most important facets in charismatic leadership.

"There is sufficient knowledge concerning leadership personality to warrant the development and testing of selection procedures for identifying charismatic leadership potential" and that "charismatic leader behavior can be learned through training." (Culver, 1990)

It is through the use of charisma that high cohesiveness is fostered – this by stimulating the need among subordinates for a collective identity.

Behling et al (1996) states that existing efforts to understand charismatic/transformational leadership could be far more effective if first two problems were solved:

“**First**, both research and application would be more effective if they were guided by a clearly stated, generally accepted paradigm. Research results would have meaning outside the confines of individual conceptual frameworks and advice to managers could be presented clearly and consistently.

Second, much of what experts on charismatic/transformational leadership offer to managers are speculative or based on anecdotal evidence. The development of carefully validated, widely accepted measures of constructs would allow researchers to empirically test key contentions made about charismatic/transformational leadership.” (Behling et al, 1996)

Charismatic/transformational leadership necessities (Behling et al, 1996):

- the existence of a prophetic tradition in the society (*Bass, 1985*)
- social distance great enough to allow the leader's "magic" to remain potent (*Bass, 1985*)
- the availability of communication channels to spread the leader's message (*Burns, 1978*)
- the absence of organizational practices that restrict innovation (*Kanter, 1983*)
- and action in politics or in religion as differentiated from business (*Bass, 1985*)

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL THINKING

It is not until recent that psychologists decided to pay a greater deal of attention to optimization of positive experiences. Psychologists used to focus predominantly on how to better those negative experiences, such as; anxiety, depression, and etcetera... Outcome measures such as happiness, joy, spiritual well being, and optimism were more frequently discussed, and as a result little has been done in optimization towards a positive workplace.

The contemplative leader, albeit wiser in judgment and thought, may have a bigger role in ameliorating subordinate's psyche within the workplace – this helping towards a better culture analysis within an organization.

“Positive psychology is the out-growth of a pop psychology attempt to weave together all the available facts and relations pertaining to positive experience...to produce good moral character” (Hogan, 2008)

Psychologist's failures to think through the implications of a functional context in positive psychology have resulted in two fundamental aspects to be considered for the leader of today's psyche. These are:

- “to describe and explain positive psychological events (e.g. positive experiences, actions labeled as positive strengths of character), and
- to predict and influence positive psychological events (e.g. frequency of positive experiences, frequency of actions labeled as positive strengths of character).” (Hogan, 2008)

Functional structure is another aspect of leadership that can be observed from the psychological perspective. It is seen that in every level in the order of living things there is some degree of hierarchy. To transform a functional leadership methodical procedure into an organic one can at times seem against nature, but what has to be kept in mind is that human function is a unique variable. The operational social field can, on a behavioral level, demonstrate “massive, dynamic inter- and intra individual variability” (Hogan, 2008).

The psychologically aware leader should recognize that different people have different perspectives and values which in turn are products from their life experiences, sentiments, and conceptual views. Hogan (2008) states the following 7 main elements as being important for human functioning:

Table 4: Key Psyche (Hogan, 2008)

| Seven key elements for human functioning: |
|--|
| ▪ Intrinsic motivation (motivation); |
| ▪ A will that desires and tends toward the moral good (motivation); |
| ▪ Good problem solving skills (cognition); |
| ▪ Significantly more positive than negative affect (emotion); |
| ▪ Behaving with integrity, in consistency with one's chosen commitments (behavior); |
| ▪ A physical state that supports one's ability to behave in line with motivations and cognitions (embodied); and |
| ▪ A supportive context that supports one's action (embedded). |

It would be in the interests of a leader to warrant that his subordinates operate on a level in which their key elements are satisfied (the list above being by no means a complete set of categories). Once we can manage workplace complexity we can then fuse 'our' values, with 'our' science, and construct a truly 'proactive' model.

THE POLYMORPHOUS LEADER

It is my personal belief that for a leader to be TRULLY great he has to be polymorphous, forever adapting, chameleon like... The greatest of all leaders would have to be extremely worldly knowledgeable and capable of changing his personality when confronted with different individuals and when confronted in mass he/she has to demonstrate an articulate, formal, but yet friendly stature. This may seem like schizoid madness to some, but it is the very truth that some individuals out there already have learnt this approach to life – that is, adaptation to a regular ever changing environment.

It is seen that character is revealed in the ethical and moral choices that are made. To act with character is to show virtue, and the problem arises that when someone's character changes than so is his virtue.

There are several ways a leader can adapt to suit one's subordinates character when confrontation arises. Attentiveness to their mannerisms, eye movements, posture, and dress sense are just some of many key attributes. It should be noted, an error in judgment could cost a lot, but great humor is always a good escape from an awkward near schizoid situation. A relationship has to be first established in order to ascertain a way that will be best for show, and once ascertained it should be implemented without hesitation (first impressions last).

“Leadership is a phenomenon involving a leader, a follower, and the relationship between the two” – Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) believed that character helped explain a person's past actions and could predict future behavior but with a polymorphous leader a person's past actions can never be predicted, and instead it is created to the eyes of the beholder.

Sarros, Cooper, and Hartican (2006) found that self-assessed character is multifaceted and varies across specific demographics (gender, age, level of

seniority, years as an executive), and is subject to some degree of social desirability bias. These findings are important on a number of cases.

ADAPTATION

Adaptation can be a circular loop utilizing feedback from outputs so that the leader continuously changes his/her mannerisms, acts, and behavior so as to meet political objectives. It indeed may become a challenge to handle if subordinates adapt their personalities constantly also, this would lead towards an environment that would be very difficult to predict, and indeed it is the leader's role to make sure that his subordinates develop themselves by aligning to the organization's goal in a predictable manner. Some would say that this would defeat the whole concept of a transformational workplace, but in an ideal world, leaders know best, and they are the ones that should know best on how to utilize their human resources for prosperous personal and subordinate growth.

There is much pro-activeness in adaptability of persona (it being on the superficial level), and indeed it is through the social/communicative tools of manipulation that an organization can hope to strive forward – and at the end of the day at least the leader will be able to say, 'at least I gave it my 100%!'

The role of the leader is seen as continuously responsive and receptive to inner and outer pressures which may require a 'map' framework of all his immediate subordinates in order to act as a constantly available reminder to the situational variety. This process should lead towards evolution of the leader to the 8th level of leadership, 'the role-player'.

Table 5: Expansion from Barret Values Centre, 2009.

| The EIGHT Levels of Leadership Consciousness |
|---|
| Level 1: The Crisis Director/Accountant |
| Level 2: The Relationship Manager/ Communicator |
| Level 3: The Manager/Organizer |
| Level 4: The Facilitator/Influencer |
| Level 5: The Integrator/Inspirer |
| Level 6: Mentor/Partner |
| Level 7: Wisdom/Visionary |
| Level 8: The Role-Player |

Tension is seen as an inherent feature for the 'role-player' but not an essential one. In order to embrace this complex adaptive system it is necessary that the individual be spontaneous whilst complete, a quick thinker with a sensible mind. Tension may in fact provide a 'go' for the system, and may make the task of elaboration on personae all the more fulfilling in the end. There is no 'law of social inertia', what motivates the leader in this instance is his/her desire to be well liked by all whilst proactively helping them. Sometimes the greater good can only be achieved through a drastic evil start. By being pushy, demanding, and authoritative to some individuals the leader may encourage self growth towards his subordinate – the tricky part is to avoid being spotted by a fellow co-worker who has perceived you a different way.

Remember, the polymorphous leader is about adapting, camouflaging, and playing a tactical and strategic game within the workplace. It is only by these means that a true visionary can captivate an audience that pertains to a zone outside his locus of control.

THE BEST LEADER IS AN ACTOR

“The Actor Should Evince an Original Main Persona”

We can learn a lot of the 8th level of leadership from examining actors. Every human being has his distinct persona, and what comprises your persona may be dependant on your looks, your self-esteem, or maybe the very mask you adorn every day when you go to work. In the words of Richard Dyer in his book *Stars*, “that condensation of attitudes and values which is the star's image”, represents the word ‘persona’. Every persona is like a mask, that is, just a form of acting, so why should we not bring our great acting skills to the workplace if it is to be used proactively?

As a leader, there should be no room for a caveat within the organization, and you should be well prepared before even trying to pull such a stunt (LVL 8 leadership) lest you expect unpredictable and unforeseeable consequences.

There is a great deal of difference between searching and choosing one’s main persona to implement in the workplace – the former is proactive. By main persona, let’s re-clarify... When a leader is accosted by a group of people he may feel inclined to ‘act’ a certain way, however, if he is unfamiliar with any of the individuals he should then resort to his back up persona which should address, and align with, the main cultural values of the organization.

Leader-actors have a purpose, and this purpose is to explore humanity, this including himself and characters outside from all walks of life. ‘Great’ leaders should laugh, weep, kill, and suffer each at its own most appropriate moment of which will give him leverage towards a transformational change.

The difference between a stage actor and an actor-leader is that a stage actor must sustain continuity over several hours, whereas the leader actor may have to sustain his comportment for months, years, and mayhap even decades.

“When it comes to greatness the criteria should be quantity of quality.” – (McGilligan, 2006).

THE LEADER-ACTOR JUSTIFIED

Adaptation is crucial, Charles Darwin said, "It's not the strongest of the species, nor the most intelligent, that survive; it's the one most responsive to change."

Actor-leaders don't just tell employees they're doing a good job. They use phrases such as these seven to show that they really care about employees:

- "You've made my day because of...."
- "One of the things I enjoy most about you is"
- "I'm impressed with"
- "You can be proud of yourself for...."
- "You are doing an excellent job with...."
- "I was impressed with the way you handled the ... situation."
- "You have really made a difference in this project/team by" (Rose, 2002)

Every day leaders (non & pro actors) are on stage when they arrive at work. They must believe in what they do and say and be factual. Subordinates will be quick to spot the leader-actor if he hasn't developed the life experiences, alongside the hardships that come from it. The leader is supposed to be an example, a role model, but the problem is each individual has a different idea of a role model and it is up to this leader to provide this individual with what he needs – put on a show!

**“Acting lessons also teach people how to avoid distracting mannerisms, how to deliver lines clearly and how to read audiences properly” –
Owsen, Kruze, and Woodworth (1999)**

Acting classes may be excellent practice for a leader, but that is just going to an extreme. The best leader-actors are not born, but they are made through natural processes that occur during the individual's life – serendipity you could say!

Once you understand body movements, facial expressions, gestures, and the use of a tone of voice you can make or break a presentation – and when the show is over, you can take a bow as you are congratulated because in the end, and only you (the leader) know it, it was because of you that it was possible and they didn't even know it!

“If you sometimes act more equal, you can connect and develop that charisma.” (Owsen et al, 1999)

CONCLUSION

We can briefly conclude our findings to the turn-table model. In our illustration the servant role may serve as to adjust our speed of acceptance as well as initiate the proceedings in leading by doing it so harmoniously. Adaptation may be made possible by making all sound/voices heard by adjusting the settings. In this model the 'actor' characteristic in the leader is the moving crank that motivates charisma to play a final role on level-8 leadership, the role-player. Overall, we can see a contemplative design that surely takes our breath away as we realize everything fitted together to be effective and transformational.



“It is only when we can perceive the orchestra for its individual components that we may then be able to appreciate the full symphony.” – Lexmilian de Mello

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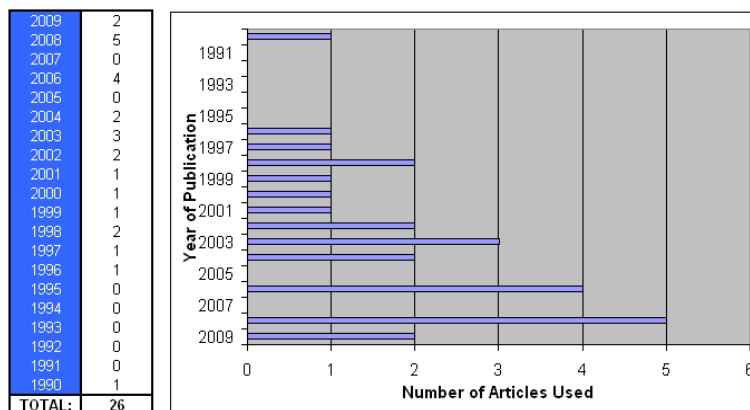
APPENDIX



Figure 1: Organizational Mandala of the Center for Mindful Medicine, Healthcare, and Society - University of Massachusetts, Worcester, USA

JUSTIFICATION

The following entails a list of the references used for my assignment. As can be seen the vast majority has been from the years of 2003 onwards.



I utilized older articles because I believed they were pertinent to facets of today and nothing in the contrary to those publications was newly founded since. I believe that my selection of articles warrant the integrity of my essay.