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What is Leadership? (Chapter Two of Leadership Alive: Changing Leadership Practices within the Emerging 21st Century Culture)

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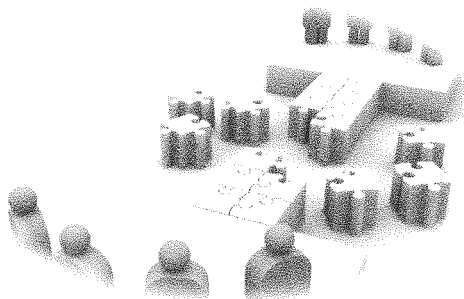
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CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

As we explore the topic of leadership effectiveness throughout this book, it's important to first explore the notion of *leadership* in a more general sense. This will allow us to build a foundation to work up from. This chapter will discuss and describe: (1) key leadership definitions, (2) history of leadership, and (3) four major leadership models surrounding effective leadership practice in the emerging 21st century culture.

Leadership Defined

How is leadership defined? That's a fair question to ask when one study on leadership concluded, after nearly 200 pages and 7,500 citations on the subject of leadership, that no clear and unequivocal understanding of

what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, effective leaders from ineffective leaders, and effective organizations from ineffective organizations is agreed upon.¹ One leadership study compiled 110 different definitions and concluded that attempts to define leadership have been confusing, varied, disorganized, idiosyncratic, muddled and, according to unconventional wisdom, quite unrewarding.²

Leadership has multiple definitions, perspectives, and characteristics. These definitions and descriptions are constantly changing and evolving.³

“The Chinese character for leader means a ‘pointing leading person.’”

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines leadership as “guiding.” Other cultural traditions offer colorful descriptions. The Chinese character for leader means a “pointing leading person.” The Hausa word *Shugaba* suggests “the one in front.”⁵ The Maori view of leadership is that of “chieftainship or trusteeship.”⁶ Other scholars define a leader as a teacher, facilitator, steward,

designer, and organizational conscience.⁷ Still others depict leadership in athletic imagery by stating how leaders are more like coaches than quarterbacks.⁸ Some go on to broaden the definition of leadership as a relationship involving multiple followers and multiple leaders who engage in shared or collaborative leadership.⁹ Still other leadership researchers over the years have defined leadership in a plethora of ways:

- The creative and directive force of morale.¹⁰
- The process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner.¹¹
- The process of a particular influence relationship between two or more persons.¹²
- The direction and coordination of the work of group members.¹³
- An interpersonal relation in which others comply because they want to, not because they have to.¹⁴

- The transformation of followers, creation of visions of the goals that may be attained, and articulation for the followers, of the ways to attain those goals.¹⁵
- The process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals.¹⁶
- Actions that focus resources to create desirable opportunities.¹⁷
- The creation of conditions for the team to be effective.¹⁸

As can be seen, there are multitudes of definitions and characterizations regarding the notion of leadership. Each explanation focuses on a particular aspect of the leadership process and helps color the leadership tapestry, emphasizing different angles from which to view and appreciate leadership.

Over the years, some researchers, in order to better understand leadership, have honed in on physical traits, such as personality, behavior of the leader, and the relationship between the leader and the followers. Others have focused on the cultural context and its effect upon the leader and the leadership process.

Leadership is a complex, interactive phenomena involving leaders, followers, and the situation. A leader is a person who, by word or personal example, markedly influences the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings.¹⁹ Effective 21st century leadership involves not only a competent leader, but a leader who understands the relationship between the followers and the unique environment within the leadership process.

Wise leaders adapt their leadership behavior to the situation and to the needs of the people involved. Some have even argued that leadership has

“Leadership is a complex, interactive phenomena involving leaders, followers, and the situation.”

nothing to do with the leader or the followers. Rather, it's more contingent upon how an organization and its unique *culture* operate as a whole.²⁰

For the purpose of this book I'll use the following definition of leadership: *Leadership is an alive, dynamic, interconnected process of influencing a person or group toward accomplishing their shared goals and mission.*

Leadership is both an art and a science. The science of leadership is reflected in approximately 8,000 studies that have been undertaken.²¹ Scholarship may not be a prerequisite for leadership effectiveness, but understanding some of the major research findings can help individuals better analyze situations using a variety of perspectives.²²

Leaders are both born and made. From the moment of birth, babies can become quite skilled at leading parents and siblings. (For example: a baby cries and the parents jump!) In some ways, we're all born leaders; that's until we were sent to school and taught to manage and to be managed.²³

“Leadership is an alive and dynamic process of influencing a person or group toward accomplishing their shared goals and mission.”

world, community, and organization.²⁴ Becoming a leader is a *choice*.

Life-affirming leaders cultivate and nourish creativity, service, generosity, and a concern for humanity. They build people up rather than tear them down. They're a new kind of leader with an ear to hear and an eye to see the conditions of the emerging generation in which they live.²⁵ Leadership is both rational and emotional. It's highly complex because the general

public differs in their thoughts and feelings, hopes and dreams, needs and fears, goals and ambitions, and strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership is not limited to a particular role or title, but is rooted in relationships which attempt to influence others and ultimately create positive change.²⁶ Leadership is about going somewhere. Leadership is always dependent on the context, but the context is established by the relationships we value.²⁷

Harry S. Truman believed a leader was a person who had the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do, and like it. Dwight D. Eisenhower offered a list of qualities high-impact leaders should embody. He believed that vision, integrity, courage, understanding, power of articulation, and profundity of character were the marks of effective leadership.²⁸

Robert Clinton, in his book *The Making of a Leader*, defined leadership and the role of a leader as “one who influences a specific group of people to move in a God-given direction.”³⁰ Ronald Heifetz, who directed the Leadership Education Project at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, said about leadership: “The role of leadership is to help people face reality, to mobilize them to make change...exercising leadership generates resistance and pain. Leaders of the future must have the stomach for conflict and uncertainty--among their people and within themselves.”³¹ Leadership may embody multiple forms and definitions, but all are likely to *guide* through action, influence, or relationship.³²

“Leadership is always dependent on the context, but the context is established by the relationships we value.”

History of Leadership

Winston Churchill said, “The further you look back into your past, the further you can see the future.” In order to accurately portray the future

of leadership within a changing culture, let's look back to the beginning of where leadership first surfaces on to the landscape of human history.³³

The origins of leadership are as old as humanity itself. Because leadership is about people within a specific context, leadership is one of the world's oldest preoccupations. People throughout history have always been fascinated with the myths about heroes and leaders. The subject of leadership has been in the spotlight of psychological, scientific, philosophical, and social conversations and debates throughout the annals of time.³⁴

In some ways, the study of history is actually about the study of leaders. Even today, most societies can trace their roots to the myths and traditions

involving great leaders who emerged from their ancient culture and communities. Civilizations were in large part shaped by their leaders.³⁵

“In some ways, the study of history is actually about the study of leaders.”

Sprinkled throughout history are the legends and sagas of leaders: the good, the bad and the ugly! The first recorded leadership writings and hieroglyphics date back approximately 5,000 years. Some of the first leaders who made

their way into the chronicles of written literature were the kings, priests, chiefs, and prophets of the Old and New Testaments, the Upanishads, the Greek and Latin classics, and even the Icelandic legends.³⁶

Throughout the ages, numerous philosophers and thinkers directed words of advice and guidance to the leaders within their societies in regard to their roles, rights, and responsibilities. Chinese classics from the sixth century contain words of guidance to emerging leaders. Confucius challenged the leaders of his time to live moral and upright lives and to devise a society which rewarded right, ethical, and noble behavior. Taoism emphasized that leaders should train up their followers in such a way as to work the leader out of a job.³⁷

The Greeks were inspired by the heroes in Homer's *Iliad* as well as the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Ancient biblical literature contained a myriad of stories and writings on leadership. Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, Esther, David, Solomon, and of course, Jesus, all modeled principles of servant leadership.³⁸

One of the most famous (some would say infamous) figures on leadership was Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a diplomat from the city-republic of Florence. Machiavelli was a sharp-witted observer of leaders and followers from a perspective which was colored by the specific global mores and culture of his time. He wrote a book called *The Prince* in which he offered advice and insights to the reality of human nature, the use of power, the role of influence, and the responsibility of leadership (I don't agree with many things Machiavelli said although I do find them intriguing and provocative). *The Prince* was a precursor to the study of politics and the use of power.³⁹

“Servant Leadership models are grounded in the notion that leaders are first servants.”

At the dawn of the 20th century, leaders were often held in a superior status within society. Countless leaders attained their leadership positions as a result of family inheritance, social and economic status, or charismatic traits and abilities. As time progressed, theories of leadership evolved as the science of leadership began to emerge as a newfangled social phenomena.⁴⁰ Today, there are multiple leadership theories, philosophies, and perspectives that surround conversations about leadership. I'd like to highlight four important leadership models that serve as a framework for this book and a foundation for the discussion around leadership fruitfulness. Those models are: (1) Servant Leadership, (2) Situational Leadership, (3) Leadership and the New Science, and (4) Christian Leadership.

Servant Leadership

Although the Servant Leadership model is sourced and grounded in biblical literature from thousands of years ago, Robert Greenleaf formally coined the notion of Servant Leadership theory in the 1970s after a successful career in the communications business. His writing on the subject of Servant Leadership has gained wide acceptance within the leadership community. The principles contained in the Servant Leadership model

“Servant Leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader.”

are grounded in the notion that leaders are first servants. Respected leadership is about putting the needs, goals, and priorities of the followers and constituents first. Servant leaders espouse a leadership paradigm that seeks to develop a serving heart rather than a self-serving heart.⁴¹

Servant Leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to first serve. Then, conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. Servant leaders are different from leaders who are preoccupied about being the leader and exercising power. The servant leader strives to always keep other people and their hopes and concerns in the forefront of their thoughts, motivations, and actions.

Servant Leadership can be cultivated in the life of the leader and the organization by simply building an action plan around the question, “Do those served grow as human beings, employees, or constituents? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and likely to become servants themselves?”⁴²

Before leaders focus on fixing the organization, they should focus their attention on serving the people within the organization. People are an organization’s greatest asset and are at the core of true organizational effec-

tiveness.⁴³ Servant Leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant Leadership promotes the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, and the providing of leadership for the good of those led. It focuses on the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization, and those served by the organization.⁴⁴

Servant Leadership is an oriented around the concept of *stewardship*, granted to men and women, who are first servants to their families, communities, and organizations. The desire to lead others surfaces out of a motivation to first *serve* others.⁴⁵

In some circles, Servant Leadership is looked at as a weak style of leadership, often because traditional Western leaders have been portrayed as, strong, mysterious, aloof, wise, and all-powerful.⁴⁶ If the Servant Leadership model is implemented, then all men and women who are touched by its effort grow taller, and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous, and more disposed to serve.⁴⁷

Scads of studies around the notion of Servant Leadership, have found that men and women who ascribe to this perspective demonstrate higher degrees of integrity, respect, trustworthiness, and care for others. These leaders focus on bringing out the best in others and are committed to other people’s personal and professional growth.⁴⁸

Another national research group studied school principals who had implemented Servant Leadership principles within their organizations. The study concluded that principals who applied this leadership theory created a culture similar to that of a secure and functional family. It’s the relationship between each person that strengthens the whole. The intrinsic

“Servant Leadership first begins as a perspective and way of viewing the world and people.”

desire to invest oneself is influenced by persuasion, due to the personal submission to a purpose and the leadership that facilitates it.⁴⁹

Servant Leadership starts from within a person; it's more than just different skills-sets. Servant Leadership first begins as a perspective and way of viewing the world and humanity. It's a *leadership lens* of sorts. Servant leaders view their actions and make their decisions using the lens of being a servant to others.⁵⁰ This leadership model involves putting other people and ethical priorities ahead of short-term organizational or personal self-interest.⁵¹ Life-affirming leaders are leaders who are first motivated by service to others. Biblical literature supports this notion, as well:

“The greatest among you should be like the one who serves (Luke 22:25).”

The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the one who serves (Luke 22:25 NASB).

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant (Philippians 2:3-7).

Servant leaders are servants who become leaders for the purpose of serving, rather than being first leaders who choose to give service. A leader is one who thinks, speaks, and acts as if personally accountable to all who may be affected by his or her thoughts, words, and deeds.⁵²

Situational Leadership

Situational Leadership is a leadership process that's contingent upon the *follower's* abilities and attitudes. Situational Leadership is the work of Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. This perspective emphasizes the importance of a follower's readiness to engage in a leadership task or assignment as a crucial element in determining which leadership style the leader should utilize. The Situational Leadership model determines leadership success and effectiveness in relationship to how well the leader *assesses* the follower's ability to respond to a task or assignment (emotionally, motivationally, and skill-level wise). A leader who experiences great success in one scenario may be less than effective in another, because of-ten implementation of a specific leadership style depends on other variables *outside* of a leader's control. A situational leader understands that the *follower* determines the appropriate actions of the leader.⁵³

“A situational leader understands that the *follower* determines the appropriate actions of the leader.”

The uniqueness of this leadership perspective is that the focus is placed on the *follower's behavior* and on the leader's assessment of the follower's readiness and ability to respond to a task, rather than on traits or attributes of the leader. A key ingredient of Situational Leadership is the flexibility and adaptability of the leader. The leader's job is to accommodate the follower by appropriately diagnosing his readiness level (the follower's competence, confidence, and willingness to take on a specific task or assignment). Once this is accomplished, strategic decisions can be made on how to select a *style of leadership* that will best serve the interest of the follower which will ultimately best serve the interest of the organization.⁵⁴ Situational Leadership suggests there are four main leadership styles from which a leader can choose (S1, S2, S3 and S4):

1. Leader-made decision
2. Leader-made decision with dialogue and/or explanation
3. Leader-and follower-made decision, or follower made decision with encouragement from leader
4. Follower-made decision

Again, each one of these leadership styles corresponds with how competent and willing the *follower is* in regards to the specific task or assignment under consideration by the leader. The more competent and willing a follower is, the more hands-off a leader becomes. There are three questions that a situational leader uses to assess each follower. They are:

1. What is the readiness level (acquired skill-sets, job competence, and attitude level) a follower exhibits in performing a specific task, function or objective ?
2. How much direction and coaching should the leader give to the follower?
3. What is the amount of emotional support a leader should provide to the follower?⁵⁵

Leadership and the New Science

Leadership and the New Science (LNS) is a leadership model which looks at how new discoveries in quantum physics, chaos theory, and living systems challenge our standard ways of thinking about leadership, organizations, problem-solving, and change. In the early 1990s Margaret Wheatley introduced this ground-breaking paradigm. Today, many leaders believe that reliance on centuries-old models of 17th century Newtonian science and perceptions of the universe, coupled with mechanistic models of leadership and organization, stand in the way of innovative 21st century leadership.

Leadership and the New Science is an interconnected, complex process that's not a rigid, linear model. It's a leadership model that leans more toward an organic and Systems Thinking orientation rather than a mechanical and closed-systems point of view.⁵⁶ This leadership perspective views the world as a dynamic, intertwined, and *holistic whole*, rather than a collection of individual machine-like parts.

It's a contemporary approach to understanding the world of organization, leadership, and change. It avoids quick-fix mentalities and "silver bullet" solutions.

Organizations can be led in organic ways, just as complex systems in nature (biological and ecosystems) manage themselves. Nature itself can provide powerful models for creating a new perspective from which greater organizational leadership and effectiveness can emerge.⁵⁷

“Nature itself can provide powerful models for creating a new perspective from which greater organizational leadership and effectiveness can emerge.”

Old Testament Examples Mentors

This perspective is consistent with biblical teaching. Old Testament literature uses various biological processes and different ecosystems as examples that serve as abstract and intangible *mentors* of sorts to human beings. These mentors instruct through their life systems. Their wisdom is transferable to us. For example, these scriptures are found in just a few chapters of the book of Proverbs. They compare and contrast different living systems and their organic processes to the world of human behavior and leadership.

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest (Proverbs 6:6-8).

- Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give (Proverbs 25:14).
- As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable (Proverbs 25:3).
- As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks (Proverbs 25:23).
- Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land (Proverbs 25:25).
- Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked (Proverbs 25:26).
- Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, honor is not fitting for a fool (Proverbs 26:1).
- Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest (Proverbs 26:2).
- As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly (Proverbs 26:11).
- Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down (Proverbs 26:20).
- Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home (Proverbs 27:8).
- As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man (Proverbs 27:19).
- When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in (Proverbs 27:25).
- The lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field (Proverbs 27:26).
- A ruler who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves no crops (Proverbs 28:3).
- Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people (Proverbs 28:15).

- Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; coney are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces. "There are three things that are stately in their stride, four that move with stately bearing: a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing; a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king with his army around him (Proverbs 30:24-31).

New Testament Pattern

As you can see, we're surrounded by mentors and teachers of life and leadership from entities outside of the human race. This perspective is a shared value both within the Hebrew worldview and the worldview of scores of Native American cultures that value and integrate harmony and learning from a multiplicity of avenues. Of course, learning and gleaning insights from these various *non-human mentors* is one thing; elevating those mentors to a place of worship and giving them a god-like status is a completely different dynamic. I'm emphasizing the value of learning and gleaning, not worship. This differentiation is what the apostle Paul was attempting to explain to the Christians in ancient Rome. He was setting the Creator above the creation (living systems).

“We are surrounded by mentors and examples of life and leadership from entities outside of the human race.”

For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being

understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles...They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-who is forever praised. Amen (Romans 1:20-25).

Understanding and appreciating Leadership and the New Science equips leaders with an entirely different perspective on how they can navigate the waters of change in a culture filled with crosscurrents. Rather than isolating and focusing on an *individual* part of the organization, leaders should instead focus on looking at the *whole* of an organization by starting with its identity, culture, and web of relationships that network everything together.⁵⁸

According to Gestalt psychology, "The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It's more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing up is a meaningless procedure, whereas

the whole-part relationship is meaningful."⁵⁹ As LNS paves the way for leaders to appreciate and consider the complexity and interconnectedness of the world, those in Christian traditions appreciate and value this conversation and perspective as well. If all things are created and designed by God, then their protean variety is preceded by an

“The world reduced to its smallest point always ends up being about relationships.”

immanent unity. It's through wisdom that God fuses together the community of created beings, who exist with one another and for one another in relationship.⁶⁰

The Quantum World

Quantum physics has revealed that the universe is far more multifaceted than a simple collection of physical components that interact according to predictable laws. Rather, there's a constant fluidity of movement (varying forms, fields of gravity, and magnetism creating constant interplay) which make attempts at identifying fixed, individual structures completely unrealistic, and much too simple.⁶¹

There are no independent entities anywhere at the quantum level. The world reduced to its smallest point always ends up being about *relationships*. Force quantum physicists into a corner and ask them to define the *single* component responsible for creating the universe, and if you can get them to respond to that question, they'll respond back in a language of relationships. Everything begins and ends with *relationships*. Even humanity was designed and created out of relationship. Lots of Christians believe human beings were created or should I say, co-created by God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Then God said, "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, in *Our* likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26 italics mine).

Webs of Relationships

Leadership, an amorphous phenomenon that has intrigued us since people began organizing, is being examined now for its relational aspects. Few, if any, theorists ignore the complexity of relationships and how they contribute to a leader's effectiveness.⁶² Leadership and organizations are

“Organizations naturally want to self-create, self-express, self-renew, and self-organize.”

best understood as *webs of relationships* rather than singular, stand-alone components. Organizations aren't machines. Simply altering the physical structure of organizations will not solve problems or make organizations more adaptable.

Control and order are two different things. Order can exist without control when one views organizations as a kind of *living organism*. Organizations naturally want to self-create, self-express, self-renew, and self-organize. When life-affirming leaders serve as *process* champions and stimulate an organizational culture of trust, joint participation, shared vision, and continuous learning, these organizations and teams naturally and cre-

atively adapt to changing times.⁶³ The more *open* a system or organization is to fresh information and knowledge, the higher the possibilities for creative adaptations and expressions. This free-flow of information actually serves as a catalytic agent that creates intelligent change.

“Life looks for order, but sometimes uses messes to get there.”

Leadership and the New Science encourages leaders to embrace chaos and complexity as friendly forces. Although chaos often begins enshrouded in mystery and confusion, it ultimately transforms itself into creative and recognizable patterns and processes of order. Life looks for order, but sometimes uses messes to get there.⁶⁴ One only has to look in the first chapter of Genesis to see how God himself used chaos, disarray, and darkness as a seed bed and launching pad for the creation of light, order, and a manifold of self-creating life forms.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless, void and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day (Genesis 1:1-5 selected).

As leaders adhere to this new (though some might say old) science or knowledge of leadership, greater capacity and exponential energy often arise with surprise like a submarine emerging from the depths of the dark sea. As leaders choose to welcome instability, complexity, chaos, and turbulence and participate in the flow with integrity, they'll discover rich and meaningful ways to live, love, learn, lead, and work in the 21st century culture.⁶⁵

“Human beings are valuable and created in the image of God.”

People are Valuable

This philosophy of leadership also colors how leaders view and treat their fellow human beings. People matter because they matter to God. And because they matter to God, they should matter to us. This leadership perspective spills over into how we view humanity because leadership is ultimately about people.

All human beings should be valued and honored. People aren't just a means to an end; they're the end. Human beings aren't “things” to be manipulated, labeled, boxed, bought, and sold. Rather, human beings are valuable, created in the image of God, limitless until limited, whether by self or by others.⁶⁶ For leaders to be effective, they must look upon humanity with renewed eyes. Dee Hock said, “The most abundant, the least expensive, and the most constantly abused resource in the world is human ingenuity.”⁶⁷ Life-affirming leaders nourish and evoke the best in the people they lead. These leaders demonstrate a new science of leadership (the word “science” actually means a system of knowledge) because they:

- Know they can't lead alone
- Have more faith in people than they do in themselves
- Recognize human diversity as a gift, and the human spirit as a blessing and treasure to open
- Act on the fact that people support what they create
- Solve unsolvable problems by bringing new voices into the room
- Use learning as the fundamental process for resiliency, change, and growth
- Offer purposeful work as the necessary condition for people to engage fully⁶⁸

Margaret Wheatley said:

Over the years, our ideas of leadership have supported this metaphoric myth (about commanding and controlling people). We act as if people were machines, redesigning their jobs as we would prepare an engineering diagram, expecting them to per-

“Effective leadership cultivates generosity and solicits contribution.”

form to specifications with machine-like obedience. But there's good news: leaders who have opened to participation and self-organization have witnessed the inherent desire; people have to contribute. The commitment and energy resident in their organizations takes leaders by surprise.

But, by trusting people, they've unleashed startlingly high levels of productivity and creativity.⁶⁹

Leaders As Hosts

Leadership should be more about becoming a host than a hero. Leaders should strive to be as congenial and welcoming to people whom they

work with as they would if they were guests at a party. We should think of the leader as a conveyor of people.⁷⁰ Wheatley went on to say:

We can't do that if we don't have a fundamental and unshakable faith in people. You can't turn over power to people who you don't trust. So what I think I'm learning from September 11th is that it's possible that people really are motivated by altruism, not by profit, and that when our hearts open to each other, we become wonderful.⁷¹

People and organizations desire leaders who will usher in paradigms of collective learning, personal empowerment, and winning as a *team* rather than as individuals. They want the leader to take on the role of a servant and a coach rather than that of a mythical, outdated action-figure of yesteryear.⁷² Leaders ought to check their sense of self-importance. The real heroism of leadership involves having the guts to face reality-and assisting the people around you to face reality.⁷³

Life-affirming leadership cultivates generosity and solicits contribution. It's always about serving other people and helping others succeed. It's about developing other leaders and being a releaser of other people's aspirations.⁷⁴

This new kind of leadership is fully alive and life-empowering. It's about bringing the best out of other people and aligning vision and goals as a team. Fully alive leadership is about tapping into the collective and organic synergy found within human beings when they commit and unite their energies around a shared dream and plan.⁷⁵ This New Science of Leadership, however, will take a new kind of leader who will roll up her sleeves, get involved and be willing to become a *catalytic agent* for the good of the group.⁷⁶

Christian Leadership

To conclude this discussion on leadership models, it's important to mention that Christian leadership approaches the topic of leadership from an organic, holistic, and spiritual paradigm as well. It encompasses pieces from all three leadership models: Situational Leadership, Servant Leadership, and the New Science of Leadership.

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul used the metaphor of the human body to describe the relationship between healthy organizational church life and the leadership process. He highlighted the importance of diversity, interdependence, inter-connectedness, servant-hood, and healthy relationships as key elements of effective organizational life. Biblical literature asserts that an effective Christian leader is responsible to help engineer and facilitate this process.⁷⁷

“Christian leaders serve other people out of a response of first loving God.”

But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper work-

ing of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Christian leadership doesn't come as a result of theological training or a seminary degree, even though education is critically important. It's more than good and moral behavior. Rather, Christian leadership begins by first developing the attitudes, inner motivations, and identity of loving Christian servant-hood as modeled by Jesus Christ. Biblical literature reveals that Christian leaders serve other people out of a response of first loving God.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27).

This response is birthed and tethered to a personal, ongoing relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ. It was Jesus Himself who said that a Christian leader's long-term fruitfulness and lasting legacy were contingent upon the cultivating of an authentic and genuine relationship with God, by faith, through the person of Jesus Christ.

I AM the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5).

Jesus Christ was the single greatest servant-leader of all time. When it came to leadership principles, Jesus demonstrated He was the authority on the subject. And not just because of what He said, but because of how He lived. Jesus knew that the notion of leader as “loving servant of all” wouldn't appeal to many people. Securing one's own comfort is a much more common mission; but “servant” is a requirement for those who want to function as a fruitful leader in today's world.⁷⁸

Christian leadership moves beyond ethical and humanitarian leadership and embraces the biblical teachings of Jesus Christ and incorporates them into a leadership ethos. It blends natural and spiritual qualities. For example, natural qualities of leadership include, but aren't limited to: self-confidence, ambition, enjoyment of taking com-

“The Apostle Paul used the metaphor of the human body to describe the relationship between healthy organizational church life and the leadership process.”

mand, personal reward, and independence. Spiritual qualities of leadership include, but are not limited to: having confidence in God, knowing God, seeking God's will, delighting in obedience to God, and loving God and others.⁷⁹

The Holy Spirit

Lastly, one of the defining marks of Christian leadership versus other models of leadership is the role of the Holy Spirit. Christian leaders acknowledge and rely upon, not only human leadership tools and skill-sets, but on Divine intervention, biblical and prophetic guidance, and supernatural assistance. In most business books on leadership, there's always a chapter or so on integrity, and that's good. But for the Christian leader, this

“Cultivating a relationship with the Holy Spirit is vital, because Christian leadership is also a spiritual pursuit.”

is more than about integrity. It's about understanding, and then acting upon that understanding, that God, through the Holy Spirit, is the bedrock upon which leadership is built.

The Holy Spirit is central to all a leader is and does. Cultivating a relationship with the Holy Spirit is vital, because Christian leadership is also a spiritual pursuit. In essence, it's one big game of Follow-The-Leader. God's leading and we're following. And as He leads us, the Holy Spirit will show us things to do. Although simple and child-like, it's nevertheless foundational to genuine and authentic Christian leadership.

Summary

This newly emerging culture is upon us. This change in Western culture requires a new breed of leader to emerge. There are many usable definitions concerning leadership. Leadership may appear in many forms, come from many theories, and be derived from many sources, but all are likely to guide through actions, influence, or service.⁸⁰ The new emerging leader of the 21st century will understand the relationship between the four principle leadership models: (1) Servant Leadership, (2) Situational Leadership, (3) Leadership and the New Science, and (4) Christian Leadership.

“Christian leadership is one big game of Follow-The-leader. God is leading and we are following.”

In Chapter Three, I will introduce and explore the cultural shift that is surfacing within the United States and for that matter, Western Society abroad. I'll discuss its effect upon leadership perceptions and development and will introduce three major themes of cultural change. We're in need of a leadership with perspective and that perspective is colored by the prismatic tapestry of our evolving culture. So let's turn the page to explore and collect some new colors of understanding as we venture into the future of the 21st century.

Chapter Notes

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