

Leadership Development:

Training to Change

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As organizations strive to maintain relevance within their respective fields—for profit corporations, non-profit or non-governmental organizations, social groups and so on—the need for effective and impactful leadership is great. Developing such leadership is the dedicated focus of both academic and professional organizations, working to increase individual capacity for leadership across multiple fields. Within the body of literature surrounding leadership, three important areas underscore the process of leadership development: intrapersonal awareness, relational management and environmental awareness. Building modules around these themes aids in developing dynamic and responsive leaders who can not only manage their organizations but also negotiate the shifting political, economic and social landscape. As evidenced by current outcomes, leadership development curricula can be unbalanced, focusing on one area over another, or missing key points entirely. As academic research literature comes forward to influence professional development, it is clear that shifts and changes within leadership development are necessary to accommodate the changing climate for various organizations within societies.

The intrapersonal awareness necessary for successful leadership harkens to Ramsbotham's (2011) observation that inner peace is necessary to enact positive change in conflict situations, a parallel to the ever-changing working environments of most organizations. Connecting with an inner peace—the peace of self-awareness—allows for leaders to make authentic, healthy connections in an organization. Within the scope of this awareness falls multiple style inventories like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or Rath & Conchie's (2009) StrengthsFinder along with continued reflexive practice. Utilizing these tools creates the opportunity for leaders to develop the

intrapersonal awareness necessary for leading organizations and teams through daily operations and strategic vision.

Being actively engaged in utilizing the tools and processes available for cataloging individual beliefs, perceptions and values is an integral component of intrapersonal awareness. These are the building blocks of how individuals make decisions, respond to crises and relate to colleagues. Before a leader can delve into the impact of managerial decisions as outlined in Hales & Tamangani (1996), it is imperative that there be an understanding of the framework through which experiences are perceived. What is helpful within the current field of leadership development is a broad swath of tools and systems that can be used to begin the process; what authors like Shiva (2005), Ones & Dilchert (2013; 2012), Nair (1997) and Schumacher (1989) provide are additional lenses for further examination. The complex organizational systems that have developed in globalized society require additional insight that, to date has not always been a priority. As leadership development strives to maintain pace with the changing world, the intrapersonal awareness of leaders must continue to change as well.

The need for that change can be identified through reflexive practice, the constant evaluation of a leader's contributions to the organization. This evaluation can take the form of authentic reflection in various settings. As Cloke & Goldsmith (2003) outline, self-assessment is a vital tool for continued growth within an organization, particularly when focused on how inventoried characteristics impact desired performance. Additional evaluation can come from supervisors, employees and peers within the organization, all with the aim to capitalize upon the data gathered. When a leader is dedicated to improving intrapersonal awareness, development occurs.

Another facet of necessary leadership developments rests within relational management. Organizations are composed of people and their relationships: relationships to one another, to products, to services and to customers. An effective leader is able to work within the scope of the organization to maintain positive relationships and build stronger ones as a result. Cloke & Goldsmith (2003) outline multiple processes that challenge the typical relational structure within business organizations; they encourage a more tenuous balance between the organizational role and the individual in that position. This shift marks an attempt within the body of the literature to keep pace with the shifting demands of the organizational workspace. In documenting this shift, Holten & Brenner (2015) examine transformational and transactional leaders and their contributions to managing change within an organization. This is particularly illuminating when considering the relational management component of leadership development.

Transformational leaders are characterized by charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration; transactional leadership focuses on contingent reward and management by exception (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2015). While these two broad styles of leadership differ in both their approach and their outcomes, they both rely primarily upon the relational context of the working group. What Spreier, Fontaine & Malloy (2006) identify is an efficacy of blending styles to leverage relationships to increase potential outcomes that is based upon an understanding of the people involved in the equation.

Lencioni (2002) builds upon this idea with the fable, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*; readers are guided through a working group's story as they encounter the essential dysfunctions of teams: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance

of accountability and inattention to results. All of these stem from the quality of the relationships within a team. Reaching through intrapersonal awareness, a leader must express interpersonal expertise in leading and managing organizational groups. This quality of relational management must be deeply embedded within leadership development curriculum to increase the elasticity of the bonds leaders develop with their colleagues and peers.

The final focus of leadership development rests within environmental awareness. In its most global sense, a leader's awareness of the external and internal environment in relationship to their organization provides the vision necessary for progress and transformation. The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is often employed within a broad swath of organizations, but in many ways, there has been a disconnect between leaders and their awareness of these elements and their influence upon how an organization functions.

In many ways environmental awareness is a culmination of intrapersonal awareness and relational management; strength in these two areas highlights the internal environment of the organization. Cloke & Goldsmith (2003) spend time investigating this idea, built upon relational management, positing that the organizational environment should serve the strategies and tactics employed by leadership; this can run counter to previously held autocratic visions of organizational leadership. A much stronger shift toward collaborative work environments has positioned environmental awareness at a pivotal point within organizational growth and leadership development. This added awareness creates highly contextualized decision-making processes that can be of great benefit to an organization.

Awareness of the external environment in both the literal and figurative sense are important components of effective leadership; as with the previous two development areas, stronger shifts are emerging to include the physical environment, the natural environment and the global impact of that relationship. Dilchert & Ones (2012) call specifically for determining environmental impact and searching for ways to address the emergent disparity in the problem and the solution. Other works, including Nair (1997), call for environmental consideration in leadership to ensure a future for society. In any case, it is evident that an eye toward the literal interpretation of environment in leadership development is necessary.

Figuratively, environmental awareness plays an important role in determining direction within an organization; regardless of its function, organizations led with environmental awareness are employing strategic planning and development with tactical practices to support growth toward organizational goals. Bolman & Deal (2009) speak to both internal and external awareness of the environment through their four frames: understanding the structural, political, human resources and symbolic frames of one organization is only rivaled by an awareness of those frames as they are expressed in multiple organizations. Keeping an eye toward the development and utilization of these frames aids leadership development, creating context for decisions and occurrences within an organization.

Leadership development as a field and a task occurs within multiple contexts: in academia, both for profit and non-profit professional organizations and social organizations. Academic literature within the field of leadership indicates the need for leadership development to be focused on three key areas: intrapersonal awareness,

relational management and environmental awareness. Though these areas are often addressed in leadership development curricula, it appears that there is a disparity between the three areas. Some programs emphasize intrapersonal awareness, focusing entirely upon knowledge of the self and relationship to the world. Others might focus on relational management, educating current and future leaders about the qualities of human interaction and methods for controlling or inspiring human behavior. Programs that focus on environmental awareness, sample from intrapersonal awareness and relational management to focus on anticipating and mitigating the effects of imbalances in these leadership development areas. What is most important is that a broader context be established to create the desire for a balanced perspective regarding leadership development: that these areas must grow in concert for effective leadership development.

The most compelling through line illustrated in the literature surrounding leadership development (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2013; Holten & Brenner, 2015; Koester, Hellenbrand & Piper, 2008) is an attunement to change within effective leaders. Those leaders who work to manage change are consistently engaged in practices that encompass the highlighted development areas. With more focused efforts, these individuals can use their own reflexive practice for continual learning; a stronger choice might be to increase education surrounding the importance of these three areas and integrate those concepts and principles into existing leadership development programs.

Leadership development is a continuous process; much like conflict transformation, leadership is a learning and living process, with wisdom gained from experience. This does not disqualify leadership development as part of educational processes, merely requires that participants be aware, and accepting, of failure. What can

sometimes be missing is the context of how a leader might become more effective. As more research is done in leadership development, data provided gives guidance for continuing to develop programs which foster healthier, sustainable leadership habits to improve organizational function.

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