Outdoor Leadership

Theory and Practice

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Outdoor Leadership Theory

Part II will provide background knowledge related to leadership theory. The goal is for you to develop a philosophical, historical, and theoretical understanding of leadership theory as a means to inform your practice as an outdoor leader.

Chapter 4, Theories of Leadership, begins with a brief history of leadership by exploring the meaning of leadership and the purpose of leadership theories. Early theories of leadership are presented as one component of this historical overview. The transformational potential of outdoor leadership is emphasized through a discussion of contemporary leadership theories.

Chapter 5, Leadership in Practice, examines the role of leadership traits and qualities as well as leadership skills and competencies. It responds to the query "Who will lead?" by exploring the role of leadership power. A number of leadership theory models are presented.

Chapter 6, Judgment and Decision Making, explores decision-making processes, decision-making models, and decision-making methods. Scenarios are presented throughout the chapter in addition to a number of activities that provide an opportunity to directly apply some of the theory that is presented.

Chapter 7, Values and Ethics, includes a discussion of ethical theories that will help you clarify your worldview and its influence on your practice. The differences between an ethic of care and an ethic of justice will be explained. The chapter concludes with a discussion of professionalism in outdoor leadership.

Chapter Concepts

- History of leadership—A brief history will help you better understand leadership theory.
- Meaning of leadership—Leadership is both intentional, aiming toward the accomplishment of particular goals and outcomes, and interactional, involving relationships between two or more individuals in a particular situation.
- Transactional leadership—Transactional leadership is task-oriented, emphasizing the role of the leader to direct the group toward accomplishing a finite goal. Early theories of leadership exemplified transactional leadership.
- Transformational leadership—Transformational leadership can be found in contemporary leadership theories that emphasize the interactional nature of leadership and its transformative potential.
- Early theories of leadership—Early theories include trait and great men theories of leadership, charismatic and heroic leadership theories, style theory of leadership, situational leadership theory, and contingency leadership theory.
- Contemporary leadership theories—Contemporary theories include feminist leadership theory, authentic leadership theory, and servant leadership theory.

The chapter concepts relate to the following core competency:

- Foundational knowledge (CC-1)—A sense of heritage and an understanding of leadership theory are part of the foundation of outdoor leadership knowledge.

Michio had been working as a ropes course instructor for 6 months. He felt he had really progressed in his ability to facilitate ropes courses during this time. Although Michio worked mostly with school groups, he had instructed a number of programs for people with disabilities and a few other adult groups. He was looking forward to the opportunity to work with a corporate group soon. It would challenge him personally and he would receive twice the pay for the same amount of work. Michio's opportunity came when a large corporation signed up for a day of low and high ropes. Michio received a brief introduction from the lead instructor, who reviewed the group's goals, and was then assigned a small group of the employees to work with on his own.

Michio decided to start with the spider's web. It was a low element that he was comfortable facilitating. Because the element involved lifting people off the ground, Michio started with a trust sequence, encouraging the group members to do trust falls on the ground and in pairs. Michio was surprised at how the group reacted. They seemed more uncomfortable touching each other than the high school students with whom he typically worked. The group members were all joking around with each other and pretend-

ing like they were not going to catch each other. Very quickly, Michio realized that he was losing control of his group, so he stopped the sequence and asked the group to gather in a circle. He checked in with the group, asking members how they felt and how they thought the activity was going. A number of people voiced their opinion that the activity was just a silly exercise and that there was no way that this was going to help them build trust. From their comments, Michio learned that their daily work environment was contentious and competitive and that one of the executives thought that participation in the ropes course would be a good first step toward improving communication. None of the people in Michio's group agreed; in fact, the only thing that they could agree on was that they did not want to be there.

Michio tried not to show how panicked he felt. He was uncertain how to proceed. Should he just walk them through the paces and continue with the planned sequence or should he stop the group and try and address their needs? How could he address their needs? Michio looked around to see if any of the other facilitators were nearby so that he could quickly check in with someone else about what to do, but no one was around. Michio decided that the best course of

action was to not proceed with his original plan. From past experience, Michio knew that there was transformative potential in the work that he was doing but that this type of learning would only occur if the participants were open to it. If he kept going with the ropes course, the group might achieve the intended purpose of the day in one sense, but ignoring the group's concern would mean that Michio was being inattentive to the real needs of the group.

Michio found a shady spot for the group and encouraged everyone to have a seat. He then queried the group as to how they felt about the day, how they felt about their work environment, and what steps they could take to improve communication. Michio sat and listened. He took notes and asked questions of the group. He reminded them that they should respond to each other in a supportive way.

The group finished the day and thanked Michio for his attentiveness. When the larger group came together for a final debriefing at the end of the day, the other groups shared stories of the activities they had done. Michio's group shared their story, telling the larger group about what they discovered about themselves, making suggestions for how to improve communication and workplace performance. It was clear to the other groups that while they experienced many fun activities over the course of the day, Michio's group had a truly transformational experience that would extend far past the day's activities.

James MacGregor Burns, regarded as both a political scientist and as a major social philosopher, has had an enormous influence on the field of leadership. In his seminal book, simply titled *Leadership* (1978), Burns maintains that leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth. He goes on to say that while people often know far too much about certain leaders, people know far too little about leadership itself. Think about this statement for a moment. When you think of the word *leadership*, what comes to mind? More than likely your thoughts do not turn to the actual theory of leadership: the definitions, leadership models, history of leadership, and theoretical concepts. Rather, your thoughts may turn to a particular experience that you have had or a person whom you regard as a leader.

That said, it can be argued that true comprehension of a concept only comes when a person knows and understands how and why something is the way that it is. In other words, having a particular person in mind whom you know to be a great leader is insufficient to understanding leadership. The development of knowledge and understanding begins with examining underlying thoughts, ideas, and theories about what makes something work. Understanding what makes a particular person a great leader therefore begins with the study of leadership theory.

In the field of outdoor leadership, there is widespread agreement that something may be known experientially. You may read about and develop a theoretical understanding of how to construct an ideal top-rope setup for a rock climb. But until you have actually gained some hands-on experience in setting up climbs, your comprehension of how to construct the setup is quite limited. Likewise, imagine if you were in a position where you lacked a theoretical understanding of redundancy and equalization and you were faced with a group of eager beginner climbers, trusting you to set up safe top-rope climbs, and you were forced to rely solely on intuition and common sense. True comprehension of any subject is enhanced by combining thoughts, ideas, and theories and using them to inform meaningful practice.

This chapter will introduce leadership models and theories in an attempt to provide a foundation of leadership knowledge. The focus of this chapter will be an overview of general leadership theory, including the history of leadership, the meaning of leadership, early theories of leadership, and contemporary theories of leadership. The chapter that follows will connect these general theories to outdoor leadership theory and will build on this effort to introduce theory as a means to inform practice.

History of Leadership

For at least two millennia, many philosophers grappled with the problems of the rulers versus the ruled. The Chinese classics written as early as 6th century b.c.e. are filled with advice to the country's leaders. Confucius urged leaders to set a moral example while Taoism emphasized that a leader's success was equivalent to his efforts (Bass 1990).

Long before modern sociology, Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle analyzed the influences of upbringing, social and economic institutions, and

When you think of the terms *leader* and *leadership*, what comes to mind? Do you think of certain individuals? Who are they? What qualities make them a leader?

Leadership theory informs leadership practice.

responses of followers on leadership and rulers. Plato (360 b.c.e.) developed the first typology of political leaders. In *The Republic*, he regards the ideal leader as one who rules with order and reason and is virtuous. Aristotle (350 b.c.e.) was disturbed by the lack of virtue among leaders and pointed to the need to educate youth for such leadership. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli (1513) contends that a leader's main objective is to maintain authority and power, and leaders may need to resort to deceit, threat, and violence to achieve this end. However, Burns notes, "Long before Gandhi, religious thinkers were preaching nonviolence" (1978, p. 2).

Despite this rich history, leadership as a concept has dissolved into discrete and impractical meanings over time. Studies have turned up over 130 definitions of the word *leadership* (Burns 1978). Numerous types of leaders have been identified, including the autocrat, cooperator, elder statesman, eager beaver, pontifical type, muddled person, loyal staff person, philosopher, business expert, benevolent despot, child protector, laissez-faire type, community-minded person, cynic, optimist, and democrat. There is, however, no school of leadership—intellectual, theoretical, practical, or otherwise. Some critics argue that the effects of leadership are in the eye of the beholder.

That said, the study of leadership does serve a number of purposes. As noted, the study of leadership theory informs leadership practice. Businesses require a higher level of leadership than ever before. Leadership is a critical factor in military successes, and on the political front, leadership style of world leaders contributes to legislation, policy, and programs. Academics, religious officials, parents, CEOs, heads of schools, executive directors, and heads of any number of organizations demonstrate the importance of leadership. We either lead or are being led in almost every interaction that we have.

Meaning of Leadership

With over 130 definitions, there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define it. Bass tells us, "Although the Oxford English Dictionary noted the appearance of the word 'leader' in the English language as early as the year 1300, the word 'leadership' did not appear until the first half of the nineteenth century in writings about the political influence and control of British Parliament. And the word did not appear in most other modern languages until recent times" (1990, p. 11).

Early definitions of leadership focused on the phenomena of group change and process. Leadership was interpreted as having a one-way effect whereby the leader influenced the group. More recent definitions recognize that leadership is a process of influence. These definitions also emphasize the interactive nature of leaders and followers. Leaders influence groups but are simultaneously influenced by the needs and wishes of the group members.

Leadership is comprised of two primary elements. First, leadership is intentional, aiming

toward the accomplishment of particular goals and outcomes. Second, leadership is interactional, involving relationships between two or more individuals in a particular situation.

Whether leadership is an act or a behavior, a form of persuasion, an exercise of power, an exercise of influence, an interaction, or an end result, what matters most is that the definitions and meanings of leadership are examined consciously and critically in working toward a broad understanding of leadership theory and practice. As Bass (1990) suggests, "The search for the one and only proper and true definition of leadership seems to be fruitless, since the appropriate choice of definition should depend on the methodological and substantive aspects of leadership in which one is interested" (p. 18). To gain an understanding of this, leadership needs to be regarded through a wide lens that offers some insight into how we see and interpret it.

Leadership also needs to be understood historically. **Hegemony** suggests that as a culture develops, systems of meanings and values are actively created by both groups and individuals (Henderson and Bialeschki 1991). Hegemony explains how dominant meanings and interests, which are inherited from past tradition, explain our present condition and provide an understanding of certain assumptions taken for granted about what makes a good leader, what leadership qualities are valuable, and how we define leadership. An understanding of the role of hegemony contributes to an understanding of some of the limitations of the early theories of leadership. It also helps explain some of the barriers to contemporary leadership and offers a means for critiquing the way that leadership has been viewed in society.

The ideal then in understanding leadership theory and practice is to critically reflect on the historical underpinnings of leadership: how it was defined, who held power, and what traits were considered dominant. As leaders, the challenge is to build upon this knowledge in the development of new paradigms.

Purpose of Leadership Theories

Nothing is supposed to be as practical as a good theory: "Theories of leadership attempt to explain the factors involved either in the emergence of leadership or in the nature of leadership and its consequences" (Bass 1990, p. 37). Toward that end, the focus of leadership training and practical preparation must be grounded in theory and in the concepts, ideals, and conclusions that have been researched and used by leaders across a variety of settings. This section on leadership theory will introduce both early and contemporary theories of leadership. It will highlight the difference between transactional and transformational leadership, noting that many of the early theories of leadership were predominantly transactional in nature, while the contemporary theories focused more on the transformational nature of leadership.

Early Leadership Theories

The earliest literature on leadership is concerned predominantly with theoretical concerns. Early leadership theories were based on hierarchic models from industrial organizations. In this context, leaders oversaw production and employees and were expected to maintain efficiency and discipline. Leaders gave orders and workers were expected to follow them. There was little opportunity within these hierarchical leadership models for workers to think creatively or to have ideas for improving their methods or work. The leaders of these groups were expected to be highly authoritarian and the workers were expected to be passive and obedient.

Most early theories define leadership according to either traits or styles. Trait theories assume that certain physical and psychological characteristics

Leadership style is contingent on the learning environment.

predispose some people to leadership. Charismatic and heroic leaders often exemplify these characteristics. Style theories assume that particular kinds of behavior underlie leadership ability. Superimposed on these leadership theories are the dimensions of situational dependence and contingency. Situational theory takes into account the leader, the followers, and the situation while contingency theory posits that a leader is motivated from either a task orientation or a relationship orientation. These categories (trait, charismatic, style, situational, and contingency) classify the five broad categories of early leadership theory.

Trait and Great Men Leadership Theories

According to the **trait theory of leadership**, leaders are born, not made: "If the leader is endowed with superior qualities that differentiate him from his followers, it should be possible to identify these qualities" (Bass 1990, p. 38). This assumption forms the basic premise of the trait theory of leadership. Trait theory describes a leader as one who exhibits a certain set of physical, intellectual, and interpersonal characteristics. This traditional leader would show good posture, be attractive, speak firmly, act confidently, be task oriented, and be assertive. These so-called great men were leaders who were endowed with superior qualities from birth.

The **great men theory of leadership** explains leadership by focusing on the greatness of actual leaders. According to this theory, certain men were predestined to be leaders based on factors such as birth order, family background, education, and upbringing. Leadership was predominantly a monopoly of the aristocracy. It was historically understood that the world was shaped by the leadership of great men, including Moses, Winston Churchill, Thomas Jefferson, and Lenin (Bass 1990). This theory assumes that these leaders make history and that the causes of real,

intended social change can be traced back to the purpose and decisions of the most visible actors on the political stage (Burns 1978). It was highly unusual for a female to be considered a leader. In some cultures, however, such as in certain Native American traditions, women were accepted as tribal leaders. In fitting with this theory, these women were tribal chiefs as a result of the characteristics they exhibited, their family lineage, and their training (Jordan 1996).

Until the 1940s, most research about leaders and leadership focused on the traits of leadership in individuals. Leaders were seen as possessing certain attributes that did not belong to nonleaders. Eventually this pure trait theory fell into disfavor, concluding that each individual and each situation had to be considered to better understand both leaders and leadership (Stogdill 1948).

Charismatic and Heroic Leadership Theories

According to **charismatic leadership theory**, charismatic leaders have played a significant role politically, economically, and socially throughout history. A consideration of the influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., Adolf Hitler, or any number of actors, musicians, and politicians helps to illustrate the influence of charismatic leaders. Charismatic leaders do not merely inspire; they generate unusually passionate reactions in their followers: "Charismatic leaders often emerge in times of crises as prospective saviors who, by their magical endowments, will fulfill the unmet emotional needs of their completely trusting, overly dependent, and submissive followers" (Bass 1990, p. 184). Some variance in the charismatic phenomenon is due to the leader and the specific charismatic leadership qualities that the leader possesses; however, the situation, the interaction of the individual with the followers, and the historical moment also play a role.

Burns (1978) prefers to speak about the heroic leader and suggests that "heroic leadership is not

Imagine yourself on a 30-day wilderness trip with an autocratic leader. What kind of behavior would you expect this leader to exhibit? What would the experience be like from a participant's perspective? What would the group experience and learning be like? Under what conditions would this style of leadership be most appropriate?

simply a quality or entity possessed by someone; it is a type of relationship between leaders and led" (p. 244). The result of these efforts is that dormant followers become active, motivating others while furthering the purpose and mission of the leader. According to Bass, "If successful, charismatic leaders bring about radical transformations in their groups, organizations, and societies" (1990, p. 184).

Style Theory of Leadership

Leadership styles are the ways in which leaders express their influence. The historical interpretation of the style theory identifies particular kinds of behavior that underlie leadership ability. According to this theory, a number of factors determine leadership style. These factors are determined predominantly through an individual's personality.

The three main categories of leadership styles are autocratic, democratic, and abdicratic (Bass 1990). An **autocratic or authoritarian leader** is highly directive and does not allow input from group members. The leader rarely reveals reasons behind decision making or actions and believes that participants should do as they are told. Using this style, a leader may in fact make all the decisions for the group. Early models of leadership emphasized the need for a leader to maintain firm control of the group at all times, expressing this through a highly autocratic approach.

A **democratic leadership style** emphasizes the need for group members to be involved in decision making. The group may vote on decisions or may base decisions on the majority opinion. An **abdicratic or laissez-faire leadership style** allows the group to operate on its own. The leader provides information when asked but otherwise stays out of the group process. The leadership style that a person chooses to express will depend on that person's orientation to the task and relationship. Certain situations will require a leadership style that may be more process-directed (relationship and means) or more product-directed (task and ends).

Most of the early research on leadership styles compared pure examples of each style. However, you are unlikely to find a purely democratic or purely autocratic leader in real-world groups. A more modern interpretation of the style theory of leadership will be presented in chapter 5.

Situational Leadership Theory

Situational theories are models of leadership that take into account the leader, the followers, and the situation and explain leadership as based on the time, place, and circumstance (Bass 1990).

The leadership situation and the group influence decision making.

Situational leadership theory accounts for two ideals: 1) any situation plays a large part in determining leadership qualities and the leader for that situation, and 2) the leadership qualities of an individual are themselves the product of a previous leadership situation that have molded the individual.

In contrast to the great men and trait theories, situational leadership theories suggest that 95% of human progress is unconnected to great individuals. Rather, great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., appeared at a critical historical moment of socially valued causes, devoted themselves to those causes, and both contributed to those causes and profited greatly from the work of many others (Spiller 1929; Carson 2003). Thus, according to the situational theory, leaders emerged and developed as a result of social, cultural, and economic conditions.

Contingency Leadership Theory

Contingency leadership theory explains leadership in terms of an individual's style of leadership and the response of the group. Fiedler (1967) suggests that a leader is motivated from either a task orientation or a relationship orientation. Different leaders prefer to focus on either the job to be done or the people in the group. The contingency theory is based on the premise that leadership depends on the appropriateness of the leader's style to the task. Three factors—the relationship between the leader and the group, the task structure, and the power of the leader—all contribute to a leader's influence. Group effectiveness will depend on leadership style and the degree to which the group situation is favorable by providing the leader with influence over group members.

Consideration of these five broad categories of leadership (trait, charismatic, style, situational, and contingency) provides a foundation on which to build an understanding of contemporary leadership theory. It is important to avoid fully rejecting one theory and supplanting it with a new theory. Rather, all theories need to be considered in developing contemporary models. As James (1880) states, great individuals need help—their leadership qualities need to fit the situation. Likewise, Stogdill (1948) concludes that leaders' traits bear some relevance to success as a leader and there are certain leadership qualities that a leader must possess, regardless of the situation.

Transactional Versus Transformational Leadership

The early leadership theories presented thus far have focused on the transactional nature of leadership. For Burns (1978), the transactional leader approaches followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another. These transactions comprise

A balance of both technical and interpersonal skills are integral to outdoor leadership.

the bulk of the relationship between leaders and followers and typify the early theories of leadership. **Transactional leadership** applies to leaders who are task oriented and able to direct their groups in specific ways to accomplish finite goals. Transactional leaders work to gain their group's compliance through various approaches: offering rewards, threatening punishment, appealing to group members' sense of altruism, or appealing to followers' rational judgment. Transactional leaders have little involvement with the group. They intervene in the group process only when the group is getting off track. Bass (1990) notes, "Most experimental research, unfortunately, has focused on transactional leadership, whereas the real movers and shakers of the world are transformational leaders" (p. 23).

By 1960, the dominant paradigm for the study of leadership had evolved from research on the traits and situations that affect leadership to something more dynamic (Bass 1990). This shift in focus coincided with research on transformational leadership. Burns (1978) suggests that while the transactional leader works within the framework of self-interests, the transformational leader moves to change the framework. Contemporary theories began to consider the affective, intellectual, and action traits of the individual as well as the specific conditions under which the individual operates. Leadership was now seen as contingent on traits and situations involving an exchange between the leader and the led.

The transformational leader asks followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group. Transformational leaders must consider the need to develop themselves, the circumstances of the leadership situation, and their followers, transcending the needs of any given moment in time and considering what is important for the present and in the future. The transformational leader must also seek to satisfy the followers' higher needs by engaging the "full person" of the follower. In this sense, transformational leadership results in a mutual interchange between leaders and followers.

Transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that most people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader. Transformational leaders have a strong sense of mission and an ability to attract a loyal and committed following (Harris and Sherblom 2002). For an example, think back to the opening vignette. If Michio had opted to stick with his original plan and complete his preplanned ropes course sequence, he would have most likely done so to fulfill the preassigned task. His leadership would have reflected the transactional nature of his relationship with the ropes course participants. Because Michio chose to deviate from the prescribed task, opting to focus more on the group's needs and their relationship with one another, Michio was able to offer participants a transformational experience, one that most likely had a greater effect. Transformational leaders have the ability to lead their group from "what is" to "what is describable" to "what ought to be" (Rosenthal and Buchholz 1995).

Transformational leaders produce leadership behaviors that fulfill four main functions. These are sometimes referred to as the four Is (Bass 1990):

- Idealized leadership provides vision and a sense of mission, instills pride, and helps gain trust and respect.
- Inspirational motivation communicates high expectations and expresses important purposes in simple ways.
- Intellectual stimulation promotes intelligence and careful problem solving.
- Individualized consideration gives personal attention, treats people individually, and both coaches and advises.

The discussion that follows will consider early research on transactional leadership and trait theory as seminal to an understanding of contemporary theory. The main emphasis will be on the potential of transformational leadership.

Contemporary Leadership Theories

Today, leadership appears to be more art than science. Contemporary leadership theorists seek to identify different types of leadership and relate them to the practical demands of society. Harris and Sherblom (2002) maintain that it is useful to describe the traits and behaviors that effective leaders share. Although leadership has been broadly researched, no one theory fully explains the subject. For this reason, several perspectives of leadership theory and styles taken together can contribute to a knowledge of leadership practice and in turn, may help respond to Burns' (1978) concern that people understand far too little about leadership. There are too many contemporary leadership theories to fit into this small space, so we will briefly introduce three: feminist, authentic, and servant theories.

Feminist Leadership Theory

In numerous studies of mixed-sex groups, males tend to emerge as leaders more often than females (Aries 1976). Additionally, leadership traditionally is associated with stereotypical male traits and behaviors, such as hierarchy, dominance, competition, authoritarianism, and task orientation, and it is associated less often with stereotypic female values and qualities, such as harmony, concern for people, unity and spirituality, caring, and relationship orientation (Henderson and Bialeschki 1991).

Influential women have been classified in a number of ways throughout the course of history, and many of these descriptions have been unflattering. Stereotypes of women leaders include the earth mother who brings home-baked cookies to meetings and keeps the communal bottle of aspirin in her desk, the mother figure who provides solace and comfort, the sex object who fails to establish herself as professional, and the iron maiden who tries too hard to establish herself as a professional.

It was believed that the 1990s would be the decade of women in leadership because more women would be entering the workforce and because the authoritarian socialization of males would not be as effective in the workplace of the future. However, research suggests that despite the increase in the number of women in leadership roles, merely employing more women does not suffice if women continue to remain powerless within organizations and if a more **feminist model of outdoor leadership** does not receive recognition.

Contemporary models of **feminist leadership** theory have focused on specific aspects of organizational structure change (Henderson 1996). Within such models, attention is paid to both process and product and traditional notions of power are reconsidered, allowing all people to experience the same potential for success. All persons additionally have the same potential to become leaders. A feminist transformative perspective of leadership would regard communication as upward, downward, and lateral. According to Henderson, "The content of that communication would be oriented toward advice, counsel, and collective decision making" (p. 114). Control and safety of the group would be the responsibility of all members of the group. This approach to leadership, which addresses the psychological structures of leadership, is supported by Noddings (1984), who suggests that leaders must develop an ethic of care that supersedes, and in essence transcends, gender differences.

Authentic Leadership Theory

At its deepest level and in consideration of contemporary leadership theories, leadership is authentic self-expression that creates value and meaning. Leadership is then expressed in direct, purposeful action. Terry (1993) has developed a model of leadership (**authentic leadership theory**) that is grounded in this notion of authenticity. He maintains that authenticity is a fundamental condition of being human, and truly authentic leadership is impossible to reach because one can never find absolute truth. Rather, a leader has to explore all perspectives and, in so doing, come as close as possible to authenticity.

Terry has built a foundation for developing authentic leadership based on the principles of dwelling, freedom, justice, participation, love, and responsibility. Dwelling is the process of "showing up" and being present and respecting the diversity of people. Freedom involves the ability to make choices and participate in the social conversation. Justice is based on a principle of fairness that ensures equality, equity, and adequacy among group members. Participation involves taking action. Love is the recognition that people

Learning Activity 4.5

What are ways for you to nurture the development of a more feminist model of leadership? For example, imagine that you are leading a group of high school students on a backpacking trip through the Catskill Mountains in New York. A pattern begins to develop early on during the trip. The two most physically able boys in the group start passing the slower group members simply because they are faster. Your group is 2 hours into the hike when you realize that all of the boys have somehow ended up in the front half of the group and all of the girls have ended up in the back half of the group and the distance between the two groups is growing.

Ask yourself the following questions: Is this okay? Why or why not? If you were to approach this scenario from a feminist perspective, what might you do to bring this incident to the attention of the group? How might you problem solve with the group to try to rectify the situation?

are in relationship to one another. Responsibility impels people to recognize who they are and what they are doing.

Leadership is the courage to call forth authentic action in oneself and others, to increase dwelling, freedom, justice, participation, love, and responsibility. Leaders must live and impel others to live according to these authentic principles. It is through living out these principles that leaders can model an authentic and ethical engagement with the world. This model of leadership has transformative potential for both followers and leaders.

Servant Leadership Theory

Greenleaf (1977) maintains that *serve* and *lead* are words that are overused and are too often associated with negative connotations. He poses the question of whether the ideas of servant and leader can be "fused in one real person, in all levels of status or calling" (p. 7). Greenleaf's *Servant Leadership* (1977) grew out of his interest in Herman Hesse's book, *Journey to the East* (1956). The story tells the tale of a band of men on a mythical journey. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the group as a servant, doing menial chores. Leo also sustains the group through his spirit and his song and all goes well with the journey until Leo disappears. After some years of wandering, the narrator finds Leo, who is actually the titular head of the order that sponsored the journey, a guiding spirit, and a great and noble leader.

This story confirmed for Greenleaf that the great leader is a servant first. One who acts as a servant first is always searching, listening, and not only
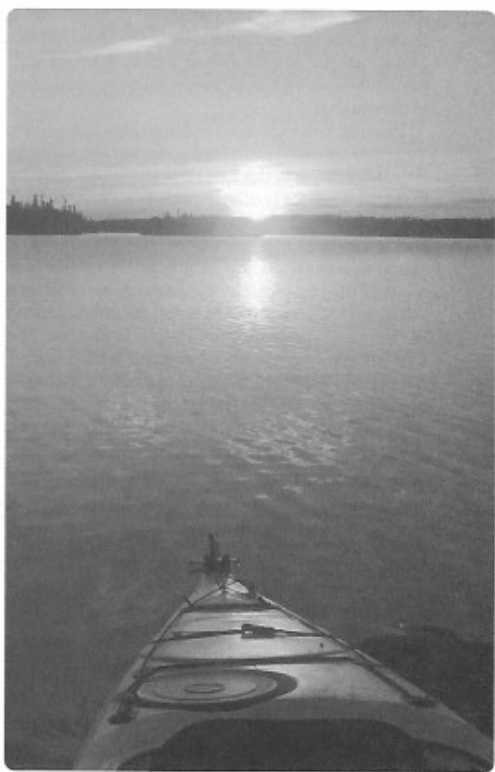
A good spot for base camp? Servant leaders put the group's needs first.

believing but expecting that there is hope for the future. In a number of studies on leadership in countries outside of North America, this notion of being of service to others is one of the most important aspects of leadership (Bass 1975). The practice of **servant leadership theory** manifests itself in an ethic of care whereby the leader, who is a servant first, ensures that other people's greatest needs are being met.

Greenleaf argues that perhaps one of the current dilemmas is that far too many people presume to lead but do not see any more clearly than their followers how to lead, in what direction to direct their leadership, and toward what purpose. A leader needs inspiration, needs to provide ideas and structure, and needs to take the risk of failure along with the chance of success. The servant leader needs to say, "I will go; follow me," while knowing that the path is uncertain. Along the way, the leader understands the needs of the group, listens, withdraws at times, is aware and perceptive, shows acceptance and empathy, and is persuasive.

Imagine yourself on an exciting new adventure. You have been asked to lead a sea-kayaking trip to Baja, Mexico. It is the first time that the company that you work for is offering this trip. You are feeling physically fit from a summer of guiding trips and are keen to explore a new area. You meet the group in San Diego and immediately realize that many of the trip participants have chosen Baja as a relaxing vacation destination and are not interested in the same type of extended trip that you are. The first night's camp is on a beautiful island only 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) from the mainland. A couple of individuals within the group are so enamored with the spot that they propose to use the site as a base camp and begin to convince the other group members to stay. You are extremely disappointed to hear this because this does not fulfill your own desires. You are presented with two options. You can try to convince people of the value of spending the trip exploring more of the area or you can approach your leadership role from the perspective of servant first, authentically listening and then leading in such a way that the group's needs are met. Approaching your role of leader from an ethic of care and seeing value in being of service to others offers great transformational potential for both you and your trip participants.

There are many other contemporary theories of leadership, including collaborative, community, and educational theories and theories of followership, to name a few. The study of leadership theory can only enhance our understanding and knowledge of leadership, leaders, and the led. The potential for individual transformation, alongside the potential for systemic transformational change, can be better understood as more contemporary theories of leadership are studied.

Summary

It is important to develop a theoretical understanding of leadership in order to engage in meaningful leadership. This chapter has introduced a variety of possibilities to help you begin to understand and more clearly define leadership. Leadership has been described from a historical perspective, and trait, charismatic, style, situational, and contingency leadership theories have been discussed. The distinction between transactional and transformational leadership has been identified, and a number of significant contemporary leadership theories have been presented, including feminist,

Professional-Development Portfolio Activity

Write a 2-page essay describing your personal philosophy of leadership. What is leadership? How should it be used? What are some of the ways to lead? Knowing some of your personal strengths and limitations, which leadership style or theory is a good fit for you? In what ways do you need to develop yourself as a leader?

authentic, and servant leadership. Perhaps most importantly, it has been noted that none of the theories, ideals, or situations should be wholly disregarded and supplanted with new and unique information. Rather, a historical understanding of leadership theory alongside an understanding of contemporary leadership theory will guide future leaders to a broader understanding of leadership.

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