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Student leadership guide

Brendon Lee Burchard

The University of Montana

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The Student Leadership Guide

By

Brendon Lee Burchard

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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The University of Montana

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Approved by:

[Signature]
Chairman, Graduate School

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

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Abstract

This project is intended to be a guide for students who are 1) interested in learning about leadership concepts from both academic and popular literature, and 2) looking for a framework to aid them in conceptualizing and practicing leadership.

Leadership in this guide is conceptualized from the principles that it is a collective and participative process, different from management, and rooted in service. Leadership is defined as the process of leaders and collaborators coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes.

A framework – called E6 – is posited to help students realize this definition. The framework is not meant to be an exhaustive, step-by-step procedure for “accomplishing” leadership. It does, however, serve as a faithful description and analysis of what I believe happens, or should happen, from the leader’s perspective in the leadership process:

1) a leader envisions a better future;
2) enlists others to help reshape and pursue the vision;
3) works to embody the principles and behavior they wish others to model;
4) helps collaborators move towards the vision and personally grow by empowering them with decision-making authority and trust;
5) evaluates the vision, the leaders’ ethics and performance, and collaborators’ progress; and
6) encourages others to sustain the journey and become wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and more likely to become leaders themselves.

Each of these concepts is explored in a separate chapter, and “Leadership Self-Check Questions” are posed at the end of each chapter to help leaders assess their progress.
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“We wait too long.”

This was going to be a magical moment filled with the personal reflection and transformation that precedes the development of character. It was rare for Aaron to talk like this, and I knew it was time for me to listen. We were walking our favorite path around the University, surrounded by the beauty of a snow-blanketed winter’s eve. Maybe it was the surreal stillness of the night. Maybe it was that our time in college was coming to an end and our friendship was about to be separated by thousands of miles. Regardless, we were in an introspective mood and talk of our legacy was the only sound in the unstirring darkness.

“What did I do in college? We did have a great time. I met and made the friends of a lifetime. But what did I really accomplish? I didn’t care or excel much in my classes, I didn’t have a job but for one year, and I didn’t even join any clubs.”

The tone in his voice was dropping to a low hum and I worried he was getting down on himself. “You don’t have to have done those things to . . .”

“I know, Brendon, just wait a minute.” He paused, turned away from me, and stared longingly into a field of powder-capped pines. “The thing is . . . I didn’t have or serve any purpose here. You don’t know how people talk about you. When you leave a room, we talk about all the things you’ve done. We talk about all the people you’ve lifted. People don’t do that with me.”

I didn’t know what to say, maybe for the first time in our friendship.
“My fear now is that I’m going to be an 80-year-old man on a rocking chair on a porch of some cabin, looking back at my life saying, ‘I wish I woulda, shoulda.’ I wanted to do a lot of things when I came here, but I just didn’t. I wanted to be strong, I wanted to be a leader. But I never got off the ground, maybe because I didn’t know how, or didn’t know I could. But now I’m leaving this university in a semester and I haven’t done the things I dreamed.” We had stopped walking and he looked towards the flickering yellow glow of the avenue leading to his house. “We just wait too long to chase our dreams as if college is an excuse to suspend life. We wait too long, Brendon, and that’s why no one will remember me.”

He didn’t say another word and walked what must have been a long journey home.

I thought for a long time about what Aaron had said and realized he was the voice of many students. I talked to him days later and he told me of the clubs he wished he had started, the work environments he wished he had improved, the leadership roles he wished he had taken. He regretted not having more purpose, not serving others, not living life, and not leaving a legacy. And, like a whisper that only beckons when needed, I remembered a quote which encapsulated Aaron’s words and feelings. It was a quote I had first read in a leadership book. And years later read in another. It was a quote from the famous playwright George Bernard Shaw and was in Steven Covey’s Principle-Centered Leadership and Bennis & Goldsmith’s Learning to Lead. I typed it, brought it to Aaron, and watched him carry it during our last semester of college as he changed his life – and left the legacy he was so close to letting slip away. The quote was from Shaw’s Man and Superman and read:
This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as I live it is my privilege — my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to thoroughly be used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no “brief candle” to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

A new beginning through Leadership

In The Student’s Leadership Guide you will find a new beginning, much like Aaron did. You will be exposed to ideals of leadership which can help you serve a purpose, serve others, and develop yourself. Leadership is not the only way to accomplish these things, but leadership roles provide us with the opportunity to do so. Many of us want to change — we want to change ourselves, our friends, our communities, and our world. Unfortunately, though, many of us never lead those changes. We create figurative prisons in our own minds that prevent us from taking leadership roles to affect the changes we want. Prisons built by the suspicions that we are alone, have no power, lack capabilities, are not deserving or worthy, and that others are preventing us from succeeding. We then fall into the traditional roles of helpless, unconnected members of society, rather than filling the innovative roles as architects of our age.

I believe we fail to become architects (leaders) of the future for two reasons. First, is the old demon of fear. We can view fear as the acronym FEAR — fear of failure, embarrassment, anxiety, and rejection. Second, and certainly stemming from the first, we
fail because we lack the twin forces of ambition and initiative, the essential traits of leaders.¹

When we fail to become leaders because of fear and lack of ambition and initiative, we succumb to the “Jonah Complex.” The famed psychologist Dr. Abraham Maslow used the complex “to describe a documented psychological group of symptoms found in people who run away from their real calling in life.”² The Jonah Complex can be within each of us. Every time we feel compelled to act, but do not out of fear; every time we want to voice our opinion, but are gagged by our own tongue – these are times when we fail to face our callings, and worse yet, fail to impact our world for the better.

Life has a funny way of defeating this complex, though. I guarantee you’ll find yourself in a crisis situation, or on the apex of change, or just in one of those situations where everyone is looking to you for answers. And, if you listen close enough, you will hear, amid the questions and uncertainty, the gentle stirring of the leader inside of you.

And the leader is there. No contemporary leadership theorist believes that leadership lies within only a select few. It resides in all of us, and will be drawn up from our deepest beings in order to help others.

Leadership is first a journey inward. Like in Oz, everything you want to be, you already are. Sometimes it just takes a little adventure to discover yourself. Leadership is that adventure. This guide is as much a personal development guide as it is a leadership guide. In a sense, leadership is achieving a higher sense of self through helping others do exactly the same.
Why we need leaders now

Without an understanding of leadership, students are unable to become effective agents of positive change in their own lives, in the organizations they work in, and in the greater community.

We face an amazing time of technological innovation and constant societal change. Leaders will be needed to help navigate these turbulent waters and guide us to higher grounds. Robert Greenleaf, advocate of “servant leadership,” noted:

The urgent problems of our day – the disposition to venture into immoral and senseless wars, destruction of the environment, poverty, alienation, discrimination, overpopulation – exist because of human failures, individual failures, one-person-at-a-time, one-action-at-a-time failures. It will be leaders, one-by-one, whose actions, one-action-at-a-time, will help society address its urgent problems. Many of these problems come from dominant cultural values and beliefs. So many of us are still marching to the calls of “achieve, look good, don’t fail, make money, become powerful, be the champion, crush the competitors.” Possibly because of this, noted psychologist James Hillman commented, “Character died in the twentieth century.” Indeed, our societal value on individualism has eroded our character as a nation. Our intense focus on serving ourselves, rather than the common good of others, may be the most urgent problem of our day.

There is a slow, steady shift away from such self-serving ideals though. The individualistic calls are being suppressed by the whispers of those singing higher ideals of “contribute, grow by trying, embrace and serve others, be a supporter, give others the
stage." Suddenly, we are hearing the chants of "significance" rise above the chants of "success."

We have made headway and accomplished great feats in the last century. At no other time in history, though, has Thoreau’s admonition rung so true: “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Now, though, the quiet desperation has chorused into a thunderous cry for help. Simply looking through the morning paper we see these cries evidenced in stories of alienation, depression, cynicism, and hopelessness. And rather than attempting to solve these crisis by taking individual responsibility and embracing the ideals of helping others, our society resorts to drug prescriptions and engages in useless finger-pointing.

Ultimately, it will fall upon the shoulders of our societies’ leaders to help solve these problems. Leadership is not the cure of all ills, but it can help. We must start somewhere, and that somewhere can be a place where we assume leadership roles to help others achieve their aspirations. A place where we serve common visions which help others achieve higher senses of self. We can, person by person, and leader by leader, turn the cries of alienation, heartache, and fear into the laughter and song of hope and renewal.

What leadership means to you

I shouldn’t have walked away. It took nearly six months to realize it, but after the depression and final acceptance of what happened, I finally came to the conclusion I shouldn’t have been able to walk away from the car wreck . . . unless there was another plan for me. So many of us are blinded by the assumption that tomorrow is promised, and
that we’ll have time to accomplish our dreams next year. Some of us, though, are blessed
to realize that tomorrow may not come, and we’d best get living. Some of us, like Aaron,
are confronted with leaving an environment, and realize that we may not leave the legacy
we had dreamed of.

Your time to become a leader, to take hold of your dreams and rein them in, is
now. It’s time to awaken your ambitions from slumber and take the first steps to
achieving a destiny that you’ve constructed. I’ve been a peer-counselor for an intense
four years and this thought has been the center of my suggestions: We need to have a
dream, a vision of our ideal world, and we have to take responsible measures to move
towards its fulfillment. This is the stuff of personal leadership. When I’ve told people this
in the past, they’ve stared at me with void inspiration – they’re inspired but have no idea
how to begin. They ask me how, and I tell them through leadership. They ask me,
“Where do I begin,” and I answer with leadership.

And then something peculiar happens. They keep staring at me, still amiss of the
answer, awash in the ambiguity of the word “leadership.” With regular occurrence, I find
people willing to accept that assuming leadership, for themselves and for others, can help
them move towards their goals. At the same time, they have little to no idea what
leadership is, or at least can not articulate it.

Asking about leadership is somewhat unfair. Leadership is kind of like the
abominable snowman – you see the tracks, but never the thing itself. For those who want
to grasp leadership and its promise to stir the soul and chase down our dreams, though,
the question must be asked.
So now I ask you, “What is leadership?” Come on, answer the question. Think about it, really. If you should continue, if you wish to gather the fruit of leadership, you must first discover its roots.

I’ll bet you can’t answer the question. My guess is that you’ve picked up this guide in hopes of discovering more about leadership, broaden your own philosophies, and hone them in practice. This can’t happen, though, until you’ve reached inside, looking for deeper meanings and truths. Truly, there is no singular answer to the question – there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people who study it.

If you don’t begin with some concept of what leadership is, then this guide will be of no benefit to you. For, in the end, it will be a culmination of your genius and actions, hopefully coupled with a few concepts from this guide, which lead you to leading. So you must answer, “What is leadership?”

To help others address this daunting question, I often ask a set of questions to guide them to a more definitive answer. These questions are posed in the next few pages. Leadership is a mystical thing to many, esoteric and ungraspable. Only through beginning to define it will you be able to understand it. And only with some form of understanding will you ever be able to practice it. That is why you must take significant time to answer the following questions.

Don’t be the typical reader and breeze over these questions, believing them to be trite and unproductive. These questions will help you understand the magic of leadership in your life, and hopefully inspire you to reciprocate. The questions are easy and short. Your answers shouldn’t be. Not if you want to really get this leadership stuff. Not if you’re really going to take on leadership roles.
So lock your door now. Unplug the phone. Relax and really think about these questions. They will help you and may inspire the boldness of heart it will take for you to complete this guide. Grab your pen. Take time filling out the answer to each question, attempting to choose the most inspiring and heartwarming examples you can. Make this an effort that counts, and your understanding of the dream of leadership may begin to form the reality of tomorrow.
Leadership Questions

1. What do you think leadership is?

2. Who was a memorable leader in your life?

3. What were some of their personal characteristics?

4. What did this person do?

5. How did they make you feel?
6. How did they motivate you?

7. How do you feel about them now?

8. What kind of leader would you like to be?
Principles of Leadership

Understanding the role and function of leadership is the single most important intellectual task of this generation, and leading is the most needed skill.

- G.W. Fairholm, *Perspectives on Leadership*, p. 1

Leadership, by itself, will not change the world. It does have the potential to change its people by helping them achieve higher purposes through serving and guiding others. As you spent some time answering the questions above, I imagine you felt a heartwarming, and possibly inspiring presence in the room. That presence was the residue of the leader and his/her actions you wrote about, and the leader within you aspiring to come out. What you wrote about was leadership in your own terms. The rest of this guide will be a journey for you with many concepts to consider – but they will essentially have to be checked against your references, against your understanding of this thing called leadership.

I have a guiding philosophy about leadership based on three principles that I have developed from intense research, a questioning mindset, and applied practice in leadership roles over the last 10 years. It’s important to know my mindset, for it frames the process which I’ll describe shortly. I believe that the process of leadership described in this guide is strengthened by the well-grounded roots of these three principles.
Principle 1: Leadership is a collective, not singular, activity

In *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Ronald Heifetz noted, “The myth of leadership is the myth of the lone warrior: the solitary individual whose heroism and brilliance enable him to lead the way.” Unfortunately, this myth has pierced the American consciousness. We look to the lone warrior and cast our fate unto his hands. We shed our responsibilities and fail to be accountable because “the leader will take care of us.” This lone warrior, this commander of our fate, becomes our projection of hope and life. And, if the commander should lose the battle, we cast our stones at him, all the while forgetting we did not step onto the battlefield ourselves.

Slowly, trustingly, society is moving away from this myth of one heroic leader who is in charge of our fate. We are learning that we must be involved in planning the strategy, we must fight the fight, we must win our victories with our own efforts, because we are all in this together. “Followers,” in this sense, have as much influence in leadership as leaders. In his outstanding, landmark book entitled *Leadership*, James MacGregor Burns said, “Leaders and followers are engaged in a common enterprise; they are dependent on each other, their fortunes rise and fall together.” This new leadership will not look upon a sole individual to command, it will look to many to collaborate. It will see followers as active in the leadership process, rather than passive people who are merely having something done to them by leaders. We will move from the word followers to the word collaborators. We will no longer look to singular commanders, then, but rather to communities of shared responsibility and accountability. Communities that we have shaped, encouraged, and emboldened with common values and aspirations.
As you will see as you read ahead, this guide is centered in the principle of you working with others, not as a commander, but as a leader. It is my hope that you will feel empowered and educated after finishing this guide, and thus more able to help build the community of leadership.

**Principle II: Leadership is not management**

As students, we often believe leadership is the same as management. Indeed, many of the leaders in our lives were those who employed or supervised us. Unfortunately, most of leadership studies have focused on leadership as good management. It doesn’t matter, though, if you’re a person in an authority relationship – a person assigned power through your position – or someone with no formal influencing power, you can be a leader. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi didn’t have formal powers as a supervisor or boss. Being “boss” does not by default make a person a “leader.”

The belief that you have to hold a high position – in society, organization, family, community – to assume leadership is disempowering. With this belief, we begin to think of ourselves as helpless if we’re not an insider, someone who has power and has been around for a while. The promise, though, is that outsiders are the most likely people to change paradigms, often because those in the current paradigm are stuck in their old patterns. So if you fall prey to the idea that you can only assume leadership with positional power, it’s time to for you to change your mindset.
Understanding this, leadership must be separated from management.\textsuperscript{12} Leadership and management are two separate and distinct \textit{roles}, though managers and leaders can be the same \textit{people}.\textsuperscript{13}

Let me give you a better picture of the difference between leadership and management by looking at two generalized areas: \textit{authority}, and \textit{status quo}. First, leaders' authority rests in influence. You influence others via your knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, and relationship with them. If others deem you worthy, they will grant you authority and, hopefully, respect and collaboration. Leaders' authority is maintained through transformational influence – the empowerment of collaborators.

Managers' authority, on the other hand, rest in contractual agreements and formal hierarchically arranged positions. Managers' authority is granted by their position and the power it ascribes them. Managers maintain authority through transactional influence – rewards and sanctions that result in compliance.\textsuperscript{14} You’ve probably seen the difference between the two in your work experience. You did something for a manager because you felt you had to otherwise you’d get fired or reprimanded. Alternatively, you’ve done something for a leader because you respected and trusted them and knew it would benefit you.

Second, leaders seek to change and improve the status quo through envisioning the future, managers seek to maintain standards. Leaders look at the long-term possibilities and objectives seeking to innovate and adapt. Managers work with the day-to-day operations and distributions of resources hoping to become efficient and better control systems, procedures, and policies.
With these distinctions in mind, you must see that leadership is not one person directing others or doing something to others so they do what he wants them to do. That is management, headship, coercion, authority wielding. Leadership is based on influence through respect, not power. This principle is grounded on a new paradigm of leadership which moves away from the desire to direct, control, and manipulate towards influential acts of encouragement, empowerment, support, facilitation, and service.

Principle III: Leadership is rooted in service

If someone were to ask me what leadership theories I believe in and practice, I would tell them it was a culmination of Robert Greenleaf’s ideas of servant leadership and James MacGregor Burns’ transformational leadership. The two ideas are very similar, and you would greatly benefit to read Greenleaf’s books Servant Leadership, The Servant as Leader, and On Becoming a Servant Leader and Burns’ book entitled Leadership. Both theories have one common thread throughout them, that service is the root of leadership. The idea of service is explicit in Greenleaf’s writings, and implicit in Burn’s. Indeed, transformational leadership is all about serving collaborators by helping transform them into better individuals.

If you seek enlightenment for yourself simply to enhance yourself and your position, you miss the purpose; if you seek enlightenment for yourself to enable you to serve others, you are with purpose.

- Dalai Lama

To better understand the idea of service in leadership, let me first discuss 1) what servant-leadership is about, and 2) what and who is served in this type of leadership.
Servant-leadership puts others first – collaborators, employees, customers, community – in hopes of promoting a sense of community and shared power in decision making. Greenleaf wrote:

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?

Larry Spears, editor of Insights on Leadership, further explains:

As we near the end of the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that traditional, autocratic, and hierarchical modes of leadership are yielding to a newer model – one based on teamwork and community, one that seeks to involve others in decision making, one strongly based in ethical and caring behavior, and one that is attempting to enhance the personal growth of workers [collaborators] while improving the caring and quality of our many institutions [communities]. This emerging approach to leadership and service is called servant-leadership.

Servant leadership reminds us that leaders are first people who serve the needs of others. Indeed, if collaborators didn’t believe leaders were serving them, they would walk. This principle, I believe, should be paramount in all your thoughts about leadership. You, as a leader, have the obligation to serve others. As Greenleaf notes, “The choices any of us can make, no matter how intolerable our lot, is to use the freedom and resources we possess to make others’ lives more significant.” Servant leaders find out what other people need and what they aspire to achieve, and help them do so. Servant leaders consistently and honestly ask themselves and collaborators, “How can I help?”

Servant leaders believe in the fact that one person can make a difference and that their identities and behavior are geared toward serving others. Greenleaf also believed that leaders must live what they preach and focus on who they really are, not what they
do. In this sense, servant leaders don’t seek to use the latest “how to” fads, they don’t seek to reduce leadership to a check-list. Instead, they focus on becoming people of integrity and accountability. Peter Drucker recalls that when a seminar participant approached Greenleaf and asked, “What do I do?” Greenleaf immediately answered, “That comes later. First, what do you want to be?”

In sum, servant leaders seek to help others become healthier, wiser, and more autonomous by asking “How can I help?” and embodying the ideals of responsibility and accountability.

Servant leadership, in effect, dedicates service for two things: service for a vision and service to collaborators.

**Service for a vision.** Leadership is about coming together and seeking important ends, ideals, and values. If there was not something for which leaders and collaborators hoped to achieve, they would never come together under this thing we call leadership. The relationship created by leadership among leaders and collaborators serves to attain a valued end, a vision of a better tomorrow. That vision, and the dedicated pursuit for its attainment, is what leadership is all about. Indeed, possibly the most important factor in leadership is the answer to the question, “What are we here to do?”

**Service to collaborators.** Leadership is a relationship, and servant leadership recognizes the absolute necessity of enhancing and transforming the members of that relationship. In recognizing this, service to collaborators becomes the second main factor to servant leadership. Collaborators are “served” by servant leaders through the transforming effect of helping them become wiser, healthier, freer, and more
autonomous. In this sense, serving collaborators closely parallels Burn’s transformational leadership.

In *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, Joseph Rost writes, “Leadership is about transformation.” Transformational leadership, according to its founder James MacGregor Burns, occurs when people “engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.” Citing Gandhi as an example, Burns reminds us that leadership “becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both the leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both.”

Transformational leadership’s grandest statement is that it fuses the purposes of leaders and collaborators together. Burns saw that leaders and followers together make leadership happen, and in doing so, become better people. He felt this potential for the transformation of people through leadership so strongly he ended his book with this sentence: “That people can be lifted into their better selves is the secret of transforming leadership and the moral and practical theme of this work.”

When people identify their ideal type of leadership transformational leadership is most often described. You’ve probably been impacted by a transformational leader who made you want to achieve your best and helped you do it in a way that made you a better person. Transformational leadership, in sum, is a way for leaders to provide a service to their collaborators. By helping people reach “higher levels of motivation and morality” leadership provides a service to them. That is why I emphasize that leadership is rooted in service and advocate servant leadership as the theme throughout this guide.
Because servant leadership is about service to collaborators through transformational leadership, I don’t believe there is such a thing as “bad” leaders. For example, many people would argue that Hitler was a leader. Coming from a transformational leadership viewpoint which helps leaders serve their collaborators, though, he cannot be considered one. I doubt anyone would call him a person who raised others to “higher levels of morality.” You cannot be moral if you do immoral things to others. Further, since Burns tells us “transformational leadership is more concerned with end-values such as liberty, justice, equality,” one would be amiss to call Hitler a leader in this sense. He certainly didn’t champion liberty or equality.

Similarly, if someone “guides” (the root word of “lead”) you to steal a car and kill someone, I wouldn’t call him or her a leader. If a manager leads you to do something that ultimately hurts someone else, I wouldn’t call that manager a leader. Under the ideals of servant leadership, collaborators must become wiser and healthier, and I doubt that can happen by stealing a car or hurting someone else. Ethics and morals are a large part of servant leadership, so if someone guides you to being immoral or unethical, I would never call that person a leader. I believe servant leaders are “real” or “true” leaders. As a matter of fact, I don’t believe there needs to be a distinction between “true” leaders and other kinds. You don’t say, “This is a true bicycle.” It is or it isn’t. A leader is a leader or not. A person is either enacting leadership, or not. If a person is not leading, he or she is doing something else. In the following section you’ll see what I define a leader to be. For now, it’s important to realize that because service to collaborators (and thus transformation) is at the heart of my concept of leadership, I believe that if someone makes you do something that prevents you from being your best by guiding you to do
something immoral or unethical, or prevents you from growing, becoming more autonomous, freer, or healthier, that person is not a leader.

In sum, servant leadership provides service to achieve a vision and service to collaborators. Leaders serve others rather than looking to be served, they give rather than receive. Servant leaders hope to attain important ends, and at the same time, transform their collaborators so they are more likely to grow as persons, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants themselves.

I believe servant leadership to be the most enduring, powerful, and realistic philosophy of leadership today and will help us realize the world-wide benefits of service to our homes, workplaces, and greater communities as we begin the new millennium.

What, then, is leadership?

I’ve been withholding something from you, the reader, for some time now. Hoping that you would begin to form an idea of leadership in your mind through the previous sections, I purposely left out a discussion of exactly what I believe to be leadership. I’ve told you the principles guiding leadership in this text, but I haven’t told you what I believe leadership is. To better get at what I believe leadership is, it’s helpful to look at what we call a leader.

First, a leader is not simply someone with specific traits. Just because you may have traits common to leaders like being driven, self-confident, honest, possessing integrity, having strong cognitive ability, and an in-depth knowledge of your subject, does not by default qualify you as a leader. Though having these traits may enhance the
perception that you have the ability to lead, you can have all these traits and be in a room alone – does that still make you a leader? No.

Further, a leader is not simply someone who displays specific behaviors. Just because someone focuses on getting tasks and goals accomplished, seeks to maintain group and interpersonal functions, and makes lots of decisions (all of which is the heart of behavioral studies), does not make them a leader. You can do all these things and be a manager, but not necessarily a leader.

So what is a leader? Many theorists argue “for a definition of leaders as those who consistently contribute certain kinds of acts to leadership processes” and “the only sure means of identifying leaders is through the analysis of leadership processes.” Drawing from these statements and for the purposes of this guide, a leader will be defined as a person engaged in, and who intends to consistently engage in, the leadership process.

From that statement, we must assume that leadership is a process. If you think about it, for leadership to occur, a process must take place where leaders and collaborators somehow come together agreeing to do something, work with one another, and seek to do it.

Understanding this, leadership is the process of leaders and collaborators coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes. This definition is an extension of Joseph Rost’s phenomenal work Leadership for the Twenty-First Century. He defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose.” (Rost later stopped using the term followers and began using the term collaborators for the same reasons I discussed earlier). For Rost, leadership was the
relationship, for me leadership is the *process*. And the process looks like the definition: a relationship of influence is built between leaders and collaborators, an envisioned change is conceptualized, and they actively seek to make it a reality.

All the elements of this definition must be present for leadership to be happening. To better understand this definition, let me outline its elements for you:

I. *Leadership is a process*. Leaders don’t just randomly become leaders, nor do collaborators. A process occurs where that relationship is created, maintained, negotiated, strengthened, or ended. Also, a process occurs where leaders and collaborators envision changes and seek to accomplish them.

II. *Leaders and Collaborators are in an influence relationship*. Both leaders and collaborators are influencing one another throughout leadership. Leaders are not just doing something to passive followers. An influence relationship means that behaviors of either party are not coercive or based on power *over* another person (power wielding). Rather, the relationship is based on power *with* others formed by collaboration and non-coercive persuasion. This point is important because it shows that collaborators do not *have* to do what leaders suggest, but must *want* to because they have helped shape those suggestions and believe they are desirable.

The idea of leadership as a relationship is not novel. Nonetheless, we must constantly remind ourselves, as leaders, that we are in a relationship with people, not a hierarchy. We are in a community or family, not an organizational flow chart. We are in a relationship based on mutual needs and interests—not a relationship based on a self-interest.
III. *Leaders and Collaborators are seeking changes.* "Seeking" means they are actively pursuing changes. They don't have to accomplish them, or succeed, they just have to presently engage in behavior which attempts to accomplish changes. Seeking is in the present tense, which is important. Leaders and collaborators are not intending or hoping to seek change. If they just wish to, leadership is not happening, dreaming is. Leadership is happening when leaders and collaborators are *presently* and *actively* seeking changes.

"Change" means that leaders and collaborators seek to alter the status quo. While this may seem obvious, change is really substantive. Joseph Rost used the term "real" to describe changes. He believed "real means that leaders and followers intend changes in people’s lives, attitudes, behaviors, and basic assumptions, as well as in the groups, organizations, societies, and civilizations they are trying to lead." He felt that change must be meaningful and "transforming." Thus, simplistic goals don't necessarily count as changes, "real" changes are deemed those that have meaningful impact and transform our lives.

IV. *Envisioned changes reflect mutual purposes.* Leaders and collaborators must envision changes together and agree to seek them because they believe those changes are beneficial for those in the influence relationship. According to Joseph Rost, changes "must reflect what the leaders and followers have come to understand from numerous interactions as the mutual purposes of the leaders and followers." Rost purposely doesn't say that the changes must reflect the mutual purposes of all the leaders and followers. That, he realizes, would be too high a standard. Nonetheless, to the extent
possible, envisioned changes should be representative of the common direction and purposes of the leaders and collaborators.

This point is significant in that though leaders typically envision changes, it reminds us that leadership does not happen if the changes only reflect the leader’s ideas for change. The leader must communicate the vision with the collaborators, and the collaborators must agree that the vision reflects their ideas for change as well. If not, the collaborators must be able to influence, and work with, the leader so that the vision reflects mutual purposes. In sum, leaders and collaborators must somehow work together to come up with a vision that is mutually desired.

The word “purposes” is also important. Leaders and collaborators must envision mutual purposes, and those purposes are generally broader than goals. Purposes are the overarching reasons goals are typically pursued. For example, a goal in an organization may be to get 500 more customers by the end of the month, but its purpose would be to gain a greater force in the market and position itself to be an industry leader. Purposes, then, are more like missions than goals.

So now you know what leadership is: the process of leaders and collaborators coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes. But how does that help you? You know what leadership is, but how do you do it?
E$^6$ – The Framework of Leadership

Well, you wanted to become a leader right? Since a leader is a person engaged in, and who intends to consistently engage in, a leadership process, you need to engage in leadership. To help you do so, I've created a framework which I believe helps bring leadership into reality.

The framework is called E$^6$. It stands for the six “E-words” I believe make leadership come into fruition: envision, enlist, embody, empower, evaluate, and encourage. Certainly, these are not the only words which could describe leadership. It just so happens that taken together, they create a framework which is memorable and can aid you in conceptualizing and practicing leadership.

To see how this framework operates, let's look at an example. Let's say you want to lead your coworkers to be better workers so you can help your organization better achieve its mission. Here's how that leadership process would work with E$^6$.

To lead others to become better coworkers, you have to:

1) envision ways in which they could better perform (envision);
2) enlist their support in shaping and pursuing the vision,
3) work to embody the principles and behavior you wish others to model;
4) help them understand how to be better workers and empower them with the authority to do so;
5) *evaluate* the vision, your ethics and performance, and their progress; and

6) constantly and consistently *encourage* them to sustain the journey and become wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and more likely to become servants themselves.

The same process could apply to starting a new student group or club, enhancing an organization in your community, strengthening the bonds of your family members, or raising money for a local charity.

$E^6$ in this light is a process to enact leadership. Each “E-word” in the framework is not necessarily chronological nor mutually exclusive. With this in mind, you should not assess your leaders by what “stage” of $E^6$ they’re in, or if they’re faithfully following the framework. It is not my intention to give you *the* framework of leadership, just *a* framework which is memorable and representative of what I believe happens in leadership. Thus, this framework can serve as a guide to those wishing to navigate the waters of leadership, particularly emerging student leaders.

The rest of this guide elaborates on this framework with ideas rooted in the principles described above. Chapter One focuses on *envisioning* – how to create a personal vision and form a “rough draft” vision for you and your collaborators. Chapter Two seeks to address how you *enlist* support of collaborators by refining your vision to meet the mutual purposes, and how to communicate the final vision. Chapter Three looks at the leader’s *embodiment* of their messages. *Empowerment*, the subject of Chapter Four, outlines how to include participative processes in sharing authority and how to create a conducive environment for your collaborators to become leaders themselves. Chapter Five helps you understand how to *evaluate* the vision you’re pursuing, your ethics and performance, and the progress of your collaborators. Finally, Chapter Six
provides examples to raise collaborators’ self-esteem and self-efficacy through
charismatic and supportive encouragement.

Each chapter is short and succinct, providing ideas that are user-friendly because they follow a workbook format. Each idea will be discussed, then you can formulate your own action plan based off the ideas (supposing you find them useful). Since the chapters follow a workbook format, they can also be used as a step-by-step guide to each topic. At the end of each chapter you will find a list of “Leadership Self-Check Questions” which will help you examine your purpose and progress.

The framework of E⁶ – like leadership itself – must ultimately lead to those you serve being wiser, empowered, cared for, and most importantly, leaders in their own right. This is incredibly difficult as these are high ideals to achieve.

Unfortunately, when someone describes higher ideals – particularly in leadership discussions – the cynics come out of their corners. They cry, “It’s too hard, it won’t work, you can’t expect people to be superheroes, people won’t reach for such things.” Their frenzied cries and pessimistic outpours can overpower us, and often prevent us from trying. I ask, though, “What would happen if we all just tried?” What would society look like if we ducked the cynics blows and struck back with full effort? What would society look like if we really did serve others and seek to transform one another?

Sure, it is relatively easy to assume that it takes a superhero to enact servant and transformational leadership. But we know differently. We’ve all had these types of leaders in our lives. They may have been our parents, neighbors, teachers, friends, or colleagues. They were just people, not superheroes. Their actions, though, could be
described as heroic. Look at what they did for us. They guided us, inspired us, embraced us, and helped us reach for Something More.

With all my heart I believe you can do the same for others. Let’s get started.
There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.

- Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership*, p. 3.

As the dawn of the twenty-first century is just rising, we face a time of significant social, economic, and political change. The dilemmas and opportunities presented by these changes will need to be noted and addressed by the next generation of leaders. As students we are in a position of immense influence. As we prepare to enter the "real world" and study the issues that will affect our future, we have the opportunity and responsibility to assess the direction of our society and to begin envisioning its further positive development. We have to begin asking ourselves important questions about the direction of our families, communities, organizations, society, and global relationships.

Asking such questions is where leadership begins. "Where are we now?" and "Where could we go?" are the inquiries of great leaders. These two questions are the underlying components of leaders' visions. Leadership is about visions of the future and
seeking to make those visions reality. Without a vision to guide us, we have no reasons to come together and no direction once we are together. Thus, you can’t have goals, objectives, or strategies unless you first have a vision of what you want to achieve. The vision is the reason we develop goals and plan strategies. The vision is the answer to the question, “Leadership for what?” You lead to seek a vision.

So, if as a leader you encourage, “Let’s go forward!” you’d better know where you’re going. Having a vision gives people something to rally around, a dream to achieve, a reason to act, and a common purpose to pursue. A vision provides a sense of direction and a context for decision making, reflects organizational values and culture, recognizes and responds to a pressing need, and creates a strong future by providing direction for everyday actions towards its attainment. In doing so, it creates meaning for everyone in the organization, provides a worthwhile challenge, is energizing, brings the future into the present, and creates a common identity. Thus, visions “accomplish multiple aims such as motivating and garnering commitment, aligning the organization, and building group identity.”

If leadership is rooted in service for a vision, then your first and most daunting task as a leader is to develop a vision. This chapter helps you begin this endeavor by discussing what a vision is, who develops it, and how you can take the first steps to creating one.

**What is a vision?**

Many theorists have wrestled with how to define a vision. A vision has been defined as:
• a set of idealized future goals established by the leader that represent a perspective shared by followers

• cherished end values shared by leaders and followers

• a mental model of an idealistic future or future perfect state, which sets standards of excellence and clarifies purpose and direction . . . inspirational possibilities that are value centered and realizable, with superior imagery and articulation

• a realistic credible, attractive future for your organization

As you can see, a common belief about visions is that they are about the future. A vision is typically a statement about where we are ultimately traveling to. It's the overarching description or explanation of what we are seeking. In reviewing the literature on developing visions, Gary Yukl, author of *Leadership in Organizations* found the following:

A vision should be simple and idealistic, a picture of a desirable future, not a complex plan with quantitative objectives and detailed action steps. The vision should appeal to the values, hopes, and ideals of organizational members and other stakeholders whose support is needed. The vision should emphasize distant ideological objectives rather than immediate tangible benefits. The vision should be challenging but realistic. To be meaningful and credible, it should not be wishful fantasy, but rather an attainable future grounded in the present reality. The vision should address basic assumptions about what is important for the organization, how it relate to the environment, and how people should be treated. The vision should be focused enough to guide decisions and actions, but general enough to allow initiative and creativity in the strategies for attaining it.

This description is drawn primarily from organizational/business literature, and many leadership theorists remind us that leadership is not only confined to organizations. When these theorists say “organizations,” they mean traditional companies, firms, bureaucracies, etc. It’s important to note, however, that you and your collaborators are an organization by definition. An organization can be defined as “two or more individuals
who recognize that important goals can be more readily achieved through interdependent cooperative efforts than through individual action." So, if I say “your organization” throughout this guide it can mean the organization created by you and your collaborators teaming up, or a more formalized organization like a company, firm, or bureaucracy you’re working with or hoping to create.

Nonetheless, Yukl’s description cited above gives a good overview of what a vision is and what it should do. You can see that a vision is not simply a goal, value statement, slogan, or strategic objective. Goals serve as stepping stones to a vision. Value statements remind us what is important to us as we seek a vision (e.g. how people should be treated, standards of excellence). Slogans are short statements that remind us of a few values (e.g. quality is job 1) as we seek a broader vision. And finally, strategic objectives are tangible results with deadlines that seek to bring us closer to the vision.

A vision is the ideal state you hope to achieve, the desirable future you hope to one day live in. To better understand what a vision is, it’s helpful to look at a few examples.

1. **Disney.** As Walt Disney developed his idea for the world’s greatest playplace, he realized he would need a vision that could inspire the commitment of investors, the media, and the American people. He described his vision this way:

   The idea of Disneyland is a simple one. It will be a place for people to find happiness and knowledge. It will be a place for parents and children to spend pleasant times in one another’s company: a place for teachers and pupils to discover greater ways of understanding and education. Here the older generation can recapture the nostalgia of days gone by, and the younger generation can savor the challenge of the future. Here will be the wonders of Nature and Man for all to see and understand. Disneyland will be based upon and dedicated to the ideals, the dreams and hard facts that
have created America. And it will be uniquely equipped to dramatize these
dreams and facts and send them forth as a source of courage and
inspiration to the world.

Disneyland will be something of a fair, an exhibition, a
playground, a community center, a museum of living facts, and a
showplace of beauty and magic. It will be filled with the
accomplishments, the joys and hopes of the world we live in. And it will
remind us and show us how to make those wonders part of our own
lives.¹⁰

Disney’s inspiring and utopian vision was obviously well received, and many theorists
have cited this example as an exemplary one.¹¹ Though many theorists and consultants
feel vision statements should be briefer than this example, the quality of the themes
represented are often more important than length. As Jon Katzenbach notes in Real
Change Leaders, “Keeping it short helps make it memorable, but expressing a clear
theme is more important.”¹²

Disney’s leadership brilliance stemmed from his ability to create a compelling
vision. This vision served as an inspiring future for his collaborators, aligned
organizational strategies to serve its tenets, and ultimately helped shape one of the most
wondrous “dreams come true” of our last century.

2. **The automotive company.** An automotive company, whose mission is to make and
sell cars, may have a vision like this:

We will create an empowered organization to unleash our creativity and
focus our energies in cooperative effort, and it will enable us to develop
and build the best personal vehicles in the world, vehicles that people will
treasure owning because they are fun to use, they are reliable, they keep
people comfortable and safe, and they enable people to have freedom of
movement in their environment without harming it.¹³

This vision is exceptional for a few reasons. First, it is simple and idealistic – it doesn’t
confuse the reader with the myriad of action steps it would take to achieve this vision.
Second, it arouses emotions which inspire enthusiasm and commitment. Third, it addresses organizational members desires to be empowered and serve others. Fourth, it is broad and flexible enough to allow organizational members discretion on what steps to take to achieve it. Fifth, it sets a standard of excellence and stresses important values like comfort and safety. All in all, this vision statement is vivid, succinct, appropriate, and ambitious.

3. *Texas Commerce Bank (TCB).* When TCB decided to massively redesign its banking processes, they needed a vision that would encapsulate why they were changing their organization. At first, they attempted to motivate collaborators by citing the $50 million savings and potential earnings. A few within the organization recognized this fallacy and instead created this simple vision: “Eliminate what annoys our bankers and our customers.” From this guiding vision two important things happened. First, members of TCB deeply identified with the need to redesign to better serve its customers, and the vision was immediately accepted and championed. Second, it formed the guiding philosophies to all the change strategies implemented in the organization.

Though this vision statement seems simplistic, it served as an effective vision because it was incredibly meaningful to the employees of the bank. They were all aware of their customers annoyances and recognized they were in need of significant changes. This simple vision, which sounds very much like a slogan, gave them the guiding ideal they were seeking. They called it their vision, rather than their slogan, because they knew it would never be fully accomplished – it was to be a perpetually chased vision.
end, TCB’s restructuring was incredibly effective and returned more than the $50 million they had originally planned to make the heart of their vision statement.\textsuperscript{15}

4. \textit{A student senate.} The previous examples were given to show you how large businesses and organizations describe their visions. Student organizations and their leaders must also commit to developing vision statements. Again, the vision tells us the ideal state you hope to achieve, the underlying reasons/purposes we come together. What if student organizations began to form concrete visions that every member was committed to and strived daily to achieve? For example, what if a student senate adopted the following vision:

\begin{quote}
We will be a powerful force in the campus community avidly and loyally representing student interests and seeking to make those interests a reality. Through cooperative effort and collective action, we will obtain and distribute the resources students need to be successful in their college careers so that they can grow mentally, socially, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. We are servants to the students and will fight for them untiringly.
\end{quote}

This vision if properly communicated and shared among collaborators, could be an invaluable guiding force in the actions of the student senate. Of course, some people, particularly students, can be very cynical and doubtful when a leader approaches with a vision statement. We will address these concerns in the next two chapters. Nonetheless, we know that visions and vision statements are vital in order for successful leadership to occur.

It’s important to note that the preceding examples were examples of vision \textit{statements} and that visions do not always appear in such forms. For example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech served as a vision for his leadership.
Gandhi’s everyday actions and teachings centered on a vision of pacifism and nonviolent symbolic statements. The examples used above were chosen because I believe they give you concrete examples of how visions can be articulated. Nonetheless, it’s important for you to realize that the vision you ultimately develop may not need to be made into a vision statement – though I highly recommend forming formal vision statements for your organization so that it can be distributed and communicated succinctly.

Who comes up with a vision?

Many of us believe that leaders are like fortune tellers, they can easily “see” the future and are blessed with some kind of gift. These amazing people single-handedly develop mutual purposes for themselves and their collaborators. Well, if you still feel this way, turn back to page one. Leaders don’t develop mutual visions in a vacuum. Remember the definition of leadership includes the idea of leaders and collaborators seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes.

At the same time, it is important to note that leaders often come up with preliminary visions. In a sense, they develop a “rough draft” of the vision to come. “The leader’s search for opportunity” helps them begin to visualize the future and form a personal vision. Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline, argues that creating a personal vision must precede creating a shared vision. You have to have an idea of what you want if you are going to create mutual purposes – you develop your purposes, then discern collaborators’ purposes, then make them mutual. But you start with yours.

Thus, leader’s initial visions are often formed even before taking into account collaborators needs and values. This is because leaders often see shortcomings in the
status quo and begin dreaming of a better future. After the leader conceptualizes a possible vision, he or she enlists collaborator input in order to develop mutual purposes. In this sense, leaders come up with a rough draft vision and later enhance it with information from the collaborators to ensure they are being served. This idea led to Conger & Kanungo, authors of *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations*, to call leaders “principal assemblers of the vision.”¹⁹

As a student leader, you will most likely be a “principal assembler of the vision.” I say this because student leaders often start from scratch. They have to come up with a rough draft vision, bounce it off others, reshape it, and then share it in hopes of gaining collaborator insight and participation in defining mutual purposes. Again, though, leaders don’t create visions, even rough draft visions, without input from others. Bennis and Nanus, authors of *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, noted that leaders seek input from others to define a vision and expend a substantial portion of their time interacting with advisors, consultants, other leaders, scholars, planners, and a wide variety of other people both inside and outside of their own organizations in this search. Successful leaders, we have found, are great askers, and they do pay attention.²⁰

Leaders pound the pavement to come up with ideas. They talk to people. They ask what’s missing. They do their homework and begin to see what people want. James Kouzes and Barry Posner, authors of the phenomenal book *The Leadership Challenge*, say this:

Leaders find the common thread that weaves together the fabric of human needs into a collective tapestry. They seek out the brewing consensus among those they would lead. In order to do this, they develop a deep understanding of the collective yearnings. They listen carefully for quiet whisperings in dark corners. They attend to the subtle cues. They sniff the air to get the scent. They watch the faces. They get a sense of what people want, what they value, what they dream about.²¹
So you can see that you'll be instrumental in creating a vision, particularly a rough draft vision. And doing so comes from spending ample time investigating what your potential collaborators want. The leader indeed does play a large role in shaping the vision, maybe the largest. It's important to remember though, that the final draft vision will need to reflect mutual purposes. As Bennis & Nanus remind us:

In the end, the leader may be the one who articulates the vision and gives it legitimacy, who expresses the vision in captivating rhetoric that fires the imagination and emotions of followers, who – through the vision – empowers others to make decisions that get things done. But if the organization is to be successful, the image must grow out of the needs of the entire organization and must be 'claimed' or 'owned' by all the important actors.22

In sum, you will be instrumental in developing a vision. Leaders typically form a rough draft of a vision and approach collaborators with that vision. They are the principle assemblers of a vision. Collaborators often look to leaders for some kind of vision. Indeed, “followers, who are often partners in an endeavor, look to leaders to interpret reality, explain the present, and paint a picture of the future.”23 Thus, the next section will help you begin to form a rough draft vision you will be able to enhance later with collaborators' input and needs. If you are able, asking others for their input along the way would be incredibly beneficial.

Developing a vision

As Burt Nanus notes in his impressive book Visionary Leadership, “Every leader develops vision in his or her own way, sometimes rationally and objectively, often intuitively and subjectively.”24 There is no magic formula for developing a vision of the future. This section poses questions for you to consider and explore in order to help you
get the ball rolling. Of course, you won’t be able to create a definitive vision just by reading this section. Indeed, “a successful vision is seldom created in a single moment of revelation, but instead it takes shape during a lengthy process of exploration, discussion, and refinement of ideas.” Once a vision begins to take shape, remember that visions are not static – they are dynamic and must constantly be assessed and developed over time. Hopefully, though, you will be able to generate a few ideas and begin the process of envisioning a better tomorrow.

Visioning is a combination of reality-checking, dreaming, and brainstorming. And to do these things, leaders use the power of questions to assess their past and present, and anticipate the future. Thus, broad questions leaders use to help them develop a vision are of two sorts: 1) questions about the present – “Where are we now?” – and 2) questions about the future – “Where could we go?” The following sections will help you to assess the present, look to the future, and remind you what your vision should ultimately do. You may want to do this alone initially, then involve more people or stakeholders as you progress.

I. **Assess the present**

Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline*, reminds us that “an accurate picture of current reality is just as important as a compelling picture of a desired future.” Before you can paint a picture of tomorrow, you have to understand what today looks like. You have to study the current environment you’re in. An active assessment of the environment is crucial to leaders’ activities. You have to look at the overall picture of the context you hope to lead. Is there an organization you wish to lead in? If so,

To develop a compelling vision, it is essential to have a good understanding of the organization (its operations, products, services,
markets, competitors, and social-political environment), its culture (shared beliefs and assumptions about the world and the organization’s place in it), and the underlying needs and values of employees and other stakeholders.²⁸

Here are some questions to further consider if you wish to lead in an existing organization and are seeking to assess its present purpose and direction:

- What is the mission or purpose of your organization?
- What value does your organization serve?
- Who does it serve?
- Who are the stakeholders in and out of the organization?
- What is unique about your organization?
- What does your organization need to succeed?
- What values make up the organization?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your organization?
- What are the reasons your organization does what it does?
- Where is your organization heading currently?
- Do the organization’s members agree to where they are headed?

Spend some time considering the previous questions. You need a very definite understanding about what your organization currently does, how it does it, and why it does it before you can begin to imagine what it should do in the future.

If an organization does not yet exist, and you’re hoping to create one and lead it, you should still ponder on the above questions and imagine what your answers would be. Also, you have to assess the current environment in which you live or work to see whether or not there is a need for your potential organization (remember, I will use the
word organization to mean either you and your collaborators as a team or a more formal entity like a company, firm, etc.). Since leaders “actively search out shortcomings in the status quo,” you may find that there is no current organization of people who do what you want to do. In this case, you’re lucky in that you can begin to brainstorm about the potential organization’s future.

II. *Look to the future*

The old Chinese Proverb reminds us to “Change your direction, or you’ll arrive where you’re headed.” If you’ve identified shortcomings in the status quo, this is where you begin to form ideas about how to take care of those problems. Maybe your organization is weak in several areas. Maybe there is no organization to do what you want to do. Whatever the case, your activities and thoughts need to become what Conger & Kanungo call “the leader’s search for opportunity.”

Questions to help you look to the future could include:

- What’s missing now?
- What could be done better?
- What do we really want to do here?
- Are their unexplored opportunities?
- What new ideas could benefit this organization?
- What haven’t we tried to do?
- What do we really want to improve?
- Are there changes we will have to make soon?
- What social, political, financial, technological, and environmental changes will we have to adjust to?
- What do we want to have accomplished in five years? Ten years? Twenty?
III. *The actual vision*

When you begin to actually develop the vision, or put it into words, remember that it should reflect a strong theme and should emotionally engage people. In essence, the vision should have two fundamental elements: provide the roadmap, and attach emotional appeal.\(^3\)

To get you further thinking, themes and motivations for visions often reflect a sense of pride, a desire for greatness, a competitive spirit, service to others, doing the right things, and overcoming odds.\(^2\) These themes often help create memorable, motivating, and relevant visions that are effective.

Here are a few questions to further explore once you've developed a rough draft vision:

- What must the vision end in or accomplish?
- Will everyone in your organization understand and support the vision?
- What values does it champion?
- How should the organization be best-shaped to achieve the vision?
- Do you need to develop new policies?
- Do people need to be further trained?
- What incentives are there for collaborators to seek to attain the vision?

In addition, consider Burt Nanus' questions from *Visionary Leadership*:

- To what extent is it *future oriented*?
- To what extent is it *utopian* – that is, is it likely to lead to a better future?

Quick Vision

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is our purpose?</th>
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<tr>
<td>What is our driving force?</td>
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<td>What are our core values?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do we do best?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do we want to accomplish?</td>
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<td>What do we want to change?</td>
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• To what extent is it *appropriate* for the organization – that is, does it fit with the organization’s history, culture, and values?

• To what extent does it set standards of excellence and *reflect high ideals*?

• To what extent does it *clarify purpose* and direction?

• To what extent is it likely to *inspire enthusiasm* and encourage commitment?

• To what extent does it *reflect the uniqueness* of the organization, its distinctive competence and what it stands for?

• Is it *ambitious* enough?

• Is it well articulated and easily understood?\(^3\)

These types of questions are crucial in developing an effective vision, so spend adequate time on each one.

**What now?**

Assuming you’ve developed an idea of what your vision will be, you need to do two things. First, start thinking about strategies to attain your vision and developing the “map” to the promised land. Though “leaders do not typically produce specific ‘plans’ for making a vision reality” and tend to “leave the more detailed planning to managers”\(^3\) you will need to have some initial ideas about “how to do” your vision. Once you start sharing your vision with others, they may love it and then ask, “How do we do this?”

You need to have a few ideas to share with them. Consider these questions:

• What will you have to do?

• What will your collaborators have to do?

• What alliances will you have to make?
• What resources will you need?

• What technology will need to be used or invented?

Second, you have to begin to think about 1) who you’re going to share your vision with, and 2) how you’re going to communicate it to them. You have to decide what stakeholders or possible collaborators you want to bounce this vision off of and how you’re going to do it. In the next chapter I’ll discuss in depth how to do this, and more importantly, how to enhance and finalize your vision based off of mutual purposes.

This chapter has been about envisioning the future and sets the groundwork for what you will be doing throughout the leadership process. Make sure you’ve spent time considering the questions I’ve posed and you have a good idea about what you want to do. Again, leadership is about seeking envisioned changes, and if you don’t have an idea about what those changes are going to be, you’re not leading.
Leadership Self-Check Questions

- What is the mission or purpose of your organization?
- What value does your organization serve?
- Who are the stakeholders in and out of the organization?
- What is unique about your organization?
- What does your organization need to succeed?
- What values make up the organization?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your organization?
- What are the reasons your organization does what it does?
- Where is your organization heading currently?
- Do the organization's members agree to where they are headed?
- What's missing now?
- What could be done better?
- What do we really want to do here?
- Are there unexplored opportunities?
- What new ideas could benefit this organization?
- What do we really want to improve?
- Are there changes we will have to make soon?
- What social, political, financial, technological, and environmental changes will we have to adjust to?
- What specifically will I have to do? And collaborators?
Deetz, Tracy, & Simpson, 2000, p. 56.
Nanus, 1996.
Ibid., p. 156.
House, 1995, p. 156.
Farace, Monge, & Russell, 1977, p. 16.
Thomas, 1976, pp. 246-247
Katzenbach, 1995, p. 68.
Ibid.
Senge, 1990b.
Ibid., p. 142.
Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 96.
Kouzes and Posner, 1987, p. 115
Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 109
Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997, p. 3
Nanus, 1992, p. xviii
Yukle, 1994, pp. 103-104.
Ibid., title of chapter 4, p. 121.
Tichy & Devanna, 1986
Katzenbach, 1995, p. 91.
Nanus, 1992, p. 21 (the last question is from p. 29).
Snyder & Graves, 1994.
Good leaders articulate what people really need, but only when they understand what that need is. Then the power comes from the people, not because the leader tells them what to do, but because you are describing what they want and filling a void.


This is the chapter that will help answer the question, "How do I go about getting collaborators?" A lot of ink has been spilt in the leadership literature about how leaders "get" followers. Leaders can enlist collaborators by using a combination of persuasion, charisma, power, creating a sense of urgency, or drawing an enticing picture of tomorrow. What we know for sure is that "followers are more likely to select as their leader an individual who espouses their core values, beliefs, and aspirations" and leaders who can articulate a vision reflective of those values, beliefs, and aspirations. In light of this fact, this chapter will help 1) enhance your vision to reflect the mutual purposes of you and your collaborators and 2) communicate that vision – all in hopes of enlisting collaborator support. Because the timeless truth of leadership is this: *If you enlist*
collaborators to help create a vision that they want to pursue, then enlisting their support in taking action to move towards that vision happens automatically.

Though you may now have an idea about what your vision is, leadership is not about your vision. Remember the definition of leadership is the process of leaders and collaborators coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes. Leadership, then, is about a vision coming from you and the collaborators. Their vision is just as important as yours and vice-versa. If the vision for tomorrow is not reflective of collaborators’ wants and dreams, then they will not join your quest for its accomplishment.

This is an important point because, unlike management, leadership does not have a captive audience. Collaborators don’t have to work with you. In management, because of hierarchical positions, people have to do what their managers want if they want to keep their job. Leadership, on the other hand, must seek to influence others through the sheer attractiveness of the end goal. As Peter Block, author of Stewardship, reminds us, collaborators enrollment in leadership is a choice. They can choose to follow and collaborate with you, or walk away. They’re commitment and decision to join is based off their desires to pursue mutual purposes with you. They will only stay if they feel you’re doing something worthy, something reflective of their desires. Thus, you need to make sure your vision is their vision and articulate that to them effectively.

To help you do so, the following section will make sure your vision is geared toward mutual purposes to the extent possible. In the final section of this chapter, I’ll show you a way to communicate the “final draft” vision to potential collaborators to help further enlist their support.
Reshape your vision

As President Woodrow Wilson once said, “The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.” Leaders spend tremendous amounts of time listening to the people around them and observing what they want. Remember, though, leadership is not just about what they want, it’s just as equally about what you want. Leadership is about mutual purposes. In the last chapter you should have come close to articulating the vision you want, now it’s time to make sure it is one they desire as well.

If you want your vision to reflect mutual purposes you have to 1) check the rough draft vision vis-à-vis their values and desires by listening and asking questions, 2) relate the vision to collaborators who have a pulse on collaborator needs, and 3) reshape the vision to reflect mutual purposes.

I. Check your vision by discovering theirs.

Is what I want what they want? This simple question will fundamentally effect leadership at every level. The problem with many would-be leaders is that they want others to follow them without ever asking this question. If would-be collaborators don’t want what you want, then they will not willingly and enthusiastically join you to seek its accomplishment. The authors of Charismatic Leadership point out, “Followers are more likely to select as their leader an individual who espouses their core values, beliefs, and aspirations, despite the fact that these may not always be clearly articulated by followers themselves.” Thus, though your collaborators may not have even articulated their desires, your job is to get a grasp of them. So, you ask, “How do I know what they want?”
The only way a leader can answer this question is to do a lot of listening and questioning. This sounds simplistic, and luckily for us, it is. Unfortunately, too many emergent leaders assume what others want without doing their homework. If you believe in seeking mutual purposes, then you’d better start to find out some collaborators’ purposes. You need to get their participation and input. To do so, I recommend these three ideas: 1) get to know people individually, 2) form small groups and 3) check the vision against what you learned.

First, spend some time getting to know your collaborators individually. Here, your role is to be an observer and interviewer. Spend time with them one-on-one. Observe what they talk about and start trying to form themes that commonly occur. Do they commonly talk about problems or potentials? Do they ever mention the future? Do they talk about changing things? John Gardner, former secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and advisor to six U.S. presidents, said, “A loyal constituency is won when the people, consciously or unconsciously, judge the leader to be capable of solving their problems and needs, when the leader is seen as symbolizing their norms...” A leader can not be judged capable if he or she can not first be seen as someone who knows what the constituencies problems and needs are, so start looking for common themes as an observer.

Then begin getting more specific information by taking on the role as an interviewer. You don’t have to do formal interviews, though that may work and you should consider it. You can have conversations where you try to get themes and answers about these types of questions:

- What do we value around here?
• What do you want to do in the future?
• What would you change around here if you could?
• What’s missing?
• Where could we make a difference?
• What ideas do you have about making things better?
• What could we do together?
• What are some things you value?

Second, form some small groups to discuss the future. Your role here will be one of a facilitator. The groups should ideally be relatively small: four to ten people. These groups should be fun, creative, brainstorming sessions where you get people talking about what excites them and where they want to go. You’re not trying to come up with a consensus about what to do. You’re trying to come up with a bunch of ideas about what you could do. You don’t have to be an expert facilitator to do so. As a facilitator, though, you should try to:

• Encourage full participation and let everyone know every contribution is worthwhile.

• Focus on getting ideas out, not critiquing or judging them.

• Give everyone ample and equal “air time.”

• Make the meeting fun.

Ask similar questions to the ones you asked people individually. All you’re doing is trying to get themes and ideas that show people’s values, hopes, dreams, and ideas about the present and future. You won’t be able to do this in one day. You’ll have to spend some time here, but it will pay off. Take your time, pay attention, take notes.
Finally, after you’ve got the feel for what your potential collaborators are experiencing, what they value, hope for, dream of, and aspire to achieve, write down as many common themes as possible. Of course, not everyone will have the exact same values and aspirations. Find the common core values and aspirations, the broadest pervasive themes. Here, you want to begin comparing these themes to the themes of the vision. Your role here is as an analyst. You want to see if the vision is in any way reflective of what people are thinking of and want to achieve. Ask yourself, “Do these people want what I want?” and maybe more importantly, “Do I want what they want?”

Remember, leadership is rooted in service to collaborators. You’re not in the leadership business to get solely what you want. You’re here to serve others. So ask, “Now that I know what they seem to want, have I created, or could I create a vision that would serve them?” If your rough draft vision is reflective of the themes you’ve discovered, congratulations. If not, it may be time to ask if your vision really serves your collaborators at all. If it doesn’t, it may be time to start the envisioning process over again.

II. *Relate your vision to a few who have the pulse of the collaborators’ needs.*

Supposing that you believe your vision is something that reflects mutual purposes, it’s time to run a test. This step is simple but crucial. You don’t want to stand in front of the masses and scream, “I’ve got it!” until you’re sure you’ve got it.

Try to get a group of people, again preferably a small group, together who you feel understand or represent as many potential collaborators as possible. Sit down with them and simply begin, “I’ve got an idea.” Articulate your vision as best you can, not as
the vision but as an idea. Hold up your ideas and beliefs, not your arguments. The goal is to see what they think of the idea, that’s it.

Ask what they think, and listen. Ask them questions like this:

• What do you think of this vision?
• Does it reflect what people around here want?
• Would people get excited about it?
• What would you change in it?
• Is there anything missing?
• Do you think it encompasses peoples’ values and aspirations?

Let them punch holes in your vision, let them support or argue against it. Let go of control and see where you end up. Release possession of your vision and let them shape it with theirs. Either they will want to change it or keep the general idea the same. This is the litmus test for your vision. And, this is the transformational point where your vision must become their vision; not because you’ve persuaded them, but because they know the vision is reflective of mutual purposes.

III. Reshape the vision.

Finally, reshape the vision to reflect mutual purposes. This can be done at the same meeting, or later on. After all you’ve done – created a vision, listened to others’ desires, related your ideas to others – you should be able to answer this crucial question:

Does this vision for the future reflect mutual purposes?

If it does, you’re on your way. By creating a shared vision that reflects mutual purposes, you’re creating a shared identity among you and your collaborators. And once
people have a collective shared identity they will avidly work together in pursuit of the shared goals.⁷

In sum, leaders have to discover collaborators’ pervasive desires and aspirations, check them against their vision, and appropriately reshape the vision to reflect mutual purposes. This should help enlist supporters, because people support what they create. Now, it’s time to further gain collaborator support by articulating the vision.

Communicate the vision

We know that collaborators enlist in common endeavors with leaders for many reasons. Primarily, though, collaborators join leaders because an attractive outcome offered by the leader’s vision motivates them to be part of a group.⁸ If having an attractive vision that reflects mutual purposes is important, being able to communicate that vision is vital.

The credible leader learns how to discover and communicate the shared values and visions that can form a common ground on which all can stand.


In Charismatic Leadership, Congo & Kanungo tell us that leaders effectively articulate their visions by discussing 1) the nature of the status quo and its shortcomings, 2) a future vision, 3) how the vision will remove the shortcomings, and 4) a plan for realizing the vision. Let’s look at each of these steps individually.
1. *The nature of the status quo and its shortcomings*

In the last chapter, I asked you specific questions to help you assess the current environment or organization you’re in. Now you need to take that information about the status quo and organize it into an effective persuasive argument about why the status quo is insufficient. Presenting the status quo as unattractive, or even threatening, will create disenchantment and will lower resistance to the vision you will be advocating. More importantly, it will make collaborators aware that what should be done is not being done. It will help them get a sense that things need to be changed, and your articulation of this fact will begin to garner their support.

Leaders not only must articulate what is problematic with the present, they must also create a sense of *urgency* that things need to change. For example, look at Martin Luther King, Jr.’s masterful presentation of the present and the feeling of urgency for change he articulated in his famed “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”:

> I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown you sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos: “Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?”; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you . . . when you are forever fighting a degenerating
sense of “nobodiness” – then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

Spend time articulating what state the present is in and begin to make an urgent and reasonable call for change.

2. A future vision

This second step to articulating the vision, and why collaborators should enlist, is what leadership is about. This is the reason you’ve been working so hard to assess the present and dream of a better tomorrow. If the vision is attractive, exciting and reflects the hopes and dreams of your collaborators they will likely join your cause.

You should passionately present the future as an ideal, wonderful place. As Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, says, “We communicate with passion – and passion persuades.” You should use vivid ideas, language, symbols, metaphors, and stories. In describing the shortcomings of the status quo (step 1), president Ronald Reagan once called Washington D.C. a “tarnished city.” By the end of that particular speech, he presented a future vision (step 2) where D.C would become “a shining city on a hill.”

Also, remind your audience that the vision is a mutual vision built on shared values, that it will benefit everyone involved, and that it may even benefit greater society. Several organizational theorists have noted that shared values greatly increase personal and collective effectiveness,\(^1\) so stress that the vision reflects shared values to help achieve these results.
3. Removing existing deficiencies and fulfilling the hopes of collaborators

This step involves showing how the vision will be better than the past. This is where you make some comparisons between the past and your future vision. You essentially talk about the “tarnished city” and the “shining city.”

In doing so, remind collaborators that creating the “shining city” will fulfill their hopes and relate to their inner desires and self-concepts. Leaders must tie the self-concepts of their collaborators to the missions they hope to engage. If collaborators believe that your vision is their vision, they are more likely to join you.

4. The leader’s plan of action for realizing the vision

To make ideas effective, we must be able to fire them off.
We must put them into action

- Virginia Woolf, British author

When people hear about promises of a better future, they are often skeptical unless they know there are clear and doable actions they can take to achieve the vision. You need to discuss some of the initial “steps” you believe will be necessary to move towards the vision. Even if you don’t know all the details of how to accomplish the envisioned changes, you can provide them with macro-ideas about what needs to be done. For example, if a new student organization needs to be started, you don’t have to know all the details for registering, getting funding, or what exactly the day-to-day operations of the new organization will be. You do need to tell them that they’re going to have to figure
out these things, that some footwork will need to be done to discover how to start a student organization. Simply, leaders need to have some idea of what comes next, and what people will need to start doing to accomplish their vision.

These four steps are useful because, in effect, "the status quo is presented as intolerable, and the vision is presented in clear, specific terms as the most attractive and attainable alternative." Collaborators will likely become disenfranchised by the status quo, inspired by the future, and encouraged to take the beginning steps towards the fulfillment of the vision. Howard Gardner, who the *New York Book Review* called "one of America’s most interesting psychologists," found that leaders are particularly skillful at developing and communicating stories about the past, present, and future. In his book *Leading Minds*, he noted, "They told stories — in so many words — about themselves and their groups, about where they were coming from and where they were headed, about what was to be feared, struggled against, and dreamed about." These stories — which can be narratives, visions, dreams, embodiments — are what Gardner calls "stories of identity" and "constitute the single most powerful weapon in the leader’s literary arsenal."

In summary, if you’ve included mutual purposes in your vision and communicated your vision, collaborators will likely enlist in a common endeavor with you. They will do so because they want what you want, and you’ve made that clear. You’ve articulated all the shortcomings of the status quo and articulated a compelling, attractive future. Now you can begin the collective actions needed to attain collective goals.
Leadership Self-Check Questions

Ask Yourself:
Have I asked enough questions?
Have I observed and listened to their values and dreams?
Do I understand what they want?
How well do I know them?
What would they change if they could?
What do my collaborators expect from me?
Have I found the strengths and shortcomings in the status quo and communicated them?
Have I made a vision that reflects mutual purposes?
Have I told them why the vision is attractive and what it will accomplish?
Do I have a few ideas for what I can do to accomplish this vision?
Do we all know the game-plan?

Ask Collaborators:
Does the vision reflect ideals that you believe in?
What can I do to better get "in touch" with the way people feel around here?
Would you say that people believe I want what they want?
Do people around here know why we're doing what we are?
Would you say most people around here feel that we're doing something that is worthwhile and inspiring?

Check out these texts if you’re interested in facilitation, running better meetings, or creative processes in small groups:


c.f. Shamir et al., 1993


See Cheney, 1999; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; O’Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991;

McDonald & Gandz, 1992.

Shamir et al., 1993


Ibid., p. 43.
Let him who would move the world, first move himself.

- Socrates

In the last chapter, I stated that to enlist collaborators you need to know what they want and articulate an attractive, mutual vision. But that’s not all there is to enlisting support. Of more importance is how credible your collaborators perceive you to be. You can have a great vision, adorned with all the bells and whistles of collaborators’ values and needs. You can be a dynamic, persuasive communicator who articulates the vision with fervor and commitment. But, in the end, if your collaborators do not believe you’re credible – they don’t trust you and your capabilities – they will not join you. This is why I’ve dedicated this entire chapter to the necessity of you embodying the ideals, values, expertise and commitment needed to seek and attain a common vision. If you don’t stand for what you want others to seek, they will not stand for you.

By embodying the ideals of your vision, not for show, but because those ideals are a real part of you, collaborators perceive you to be trustworthy. They see that you “walk your talk” and “practice what you preach.” They know you won’t ask them to do what
you don’t do already. They know you believe, practice, and live the ideals you’re asking them to champion. They see you as a role-model and a vivid image that reflects your message.

James Kouzes, co-author of the best-selling books *The Leadership Challenge* and *Credibility*, reminds us, “People won’t believe the message if they don’t believe the messenger. People don’t follow your technique. They follow you – your message and your embodiment of that message.”

Your messages, communicated verbally, and your embodiment of those messages, communicated by who you are and your actions, are the two main ways that you will influence your collaborators. Leaders communicate stories and must embody those stories through their traits and behaviors. You have to talk and you have to walk. If your stories and your traits and behaviors are inconsistent, you won’t be credible. Consider Richard Nixon, and more recently Bill Clinton. Both championed law and order – Clinton even had a law degree – and yet their actions violated those themes. Contrast these two with Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, who were willing to make personal sacrifices, like going to jail, for their causes. Their actions were consistent with what they championed in their stories.

Leaders who communicate stories and embody those stories build trust and loyalty, and ultimately become synonymous with those stories. When you think Martin Luther King Jr., you think of the struggle for Civil Rights. When you think of Einstein, you think of the pursuit of genius and science. When you think of Mother Teresa, you think of the story to spread the care for humanity. When you think of Lee Iaccoca, you think of innovation. When you think of Bill Gates, you think of the story of the computer
age. When you think of General Norman Schwartzkopf, you think of the composure and strength of soldiers. These leaders not only championed their causes and beliefs through the stories and messages they related, they became the champions and embodiment of those causes and beliefs.

These types of leaders are credible. They enlist support effectively because they communicate stories and visions, and embody those stories and visions through their traits and behaviors. The last chapter helped you see how you can communicate your stories and visions. This chapter’s sections will help you consider if you embody your message and discusses ways to do so. Specifically, each section talks about 1) getting to know yourself, 2) gaining expertise, 3) being a role model, 4) the importance of passion, 5) the necessity of consistency, and 6) the need to be a servant leader. The sections are short, but their themes immensely powerful. These sections will help you become a beacon of example and commitment, and thus help you gain the credibility you need to enlist collaborator support.

First, know yourself

Leaders seem to have an uncanny sense of what they stand for, believe in, and hope for. If you look at leaders in your life, its easy to see that they have a sense of stability and strength of character. They know themselves and often through their strong self-concept, inspire us.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “People are often led to causes and become committed to great ideas through persons who personify those ideas.” People will ultimately join with you, and follow you, based on your ideas and your personification of
those ideas. In this sense, leadership is not a technique, or a strategy of persuasion. As James Kouzes notes, “All the techniques and all the tools that fill the pages of all the management and leadership books are not substitutes for who and what you are.”6 So who are you? What do you stand for? What about you would make others join in your endeavors?

These are questions you need to ask yourself. You need to do a self-assessment and self-inventory of skills so that you can better know your strengths and purposes.

Exceptional leaders often take personal reflection time as they’re leading.7 You should do the same before leading.

Take some time asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What are the three main beliefs you have about how people should be treated?
- Name four things you’re an expert in.
- What are the three most pivotal moments in your entire lifetime?
- What did you learn from these moments?
- If you only had one year to live, what would you work towards?
- What would you like people to say about you once you die?
- How do you want to feel on a consistent basis?
- What are your top three values in your everyday life?
- What do you enjoy most about your life right now?
- What do you dislike the most?
- What activities are you passionate about?
- What causes would you fight for?
- What career would you be in if you could do anything?
- What will you be ideally doing in five years?
- What do you believe makes a good work environment?
- What makes a good homelife?
- Name three lessons you would teach your children.
- Describe a time that you felt like you really accomplished something great.
- What were your two biggest failures, and what did you learn from them?
- What obstacles are preventing you from having what you want?
- Describe three people you greatly admire and why.
- When things go crazy in your life, how do you best get centered again?
- What could you do in the next year to make the most meaningful improvement in your life?
- What do you do that people really appreciate?
- What contributions to the world do you make?
• What have you stood for in the past, what has been important to you in the past?
• If you had to, would you make personal sacrifices for your vision?
• Why are you starting to do this “leadership stuff”?  

These types of questions can help begin the personal introspection needed to become a strong leader. Before you can embody ideals, you have to know what they are. So spend some time clarifying where you’ve been in life, where you are now, and where you hope to go. Doing so will help you gain the self-confidence that is nearly always noted as a trait of leaders.  

Collaborators ask themselves questions about leaders’ trustworthiness, ability to inspire, and expertise when they assess if you’re credible. While you’re assessing your current state, ask yourself themes related to these inquiries:

• What makes me trustworthy?
• Have I developed a trusting relationship with my collaborators?
• How so?
• Do I have the ability to inspire others? How do I usually do it?
• What have I done lately to inspire and motivate others?
• What expertise do I have that your collaborators know about?
• Have I shown expertise to my collaborators?
• Is my expertise relevant to collaborators’ needs?
• What prior successes show my credibility?

In sum, you need to spend time assessing yourself and how your collaborators perceive you. This is an important task, maybe one of the most important and difficult a leader must take. At the same time, we know through examples from history that people who were self-assured, had a developed self-concept, and had collaborators who perceived
them as trustworthy, competent, and inspiring truly accomplished great feats (think Martin Luther King, Jr., Winston Churchill, Lee Iaccoca, Pope John XXIII, Margaret Thatcher, and Mahatma Gandhi).

Gain expertise

You don’t always have to be an expert in a certain area to lead, but it helps. Having the capacity, expertise, or competence in the area leaders are leading is at the top of the reasons people decide to follow others. Having the mental capacity, or intelligence, needed to lead is almost always listed as a trait of leaders.

I would venture to say that one of the biggest mistakes leaders make is to promise what they can’t deliver. They claim that they have this knowledge, that skill, or this exceptional ability. Simply, if you don’t have the knowledge, skills, or ability to do something, don’t promise you do. Be honest about your current level. Don’t be frightened to say, “I don’t know how yet, but let’s figure out how.” Or, “I don’t know that yet, but I’ll figure it out and get back with you.”

When Robert Kelley, author of The Power of Followership, asked followers about their perceptions of their organizational leaders he found something startling: two out of five bosses have questionable abilities to lead. A large majority of these questions arise from the worry that leaders do not have appropriate knowledge, skill, or ability to lead. Here’s the question that arises from these types of findings:

- Will your collaborators believe you have the abilities to lead?
- Do you have sufficient knowledge in your field?
- Have you done your homework?
• Do you know the trends that are affecting your organization?
• Have you prepared enough to lead?
• Are your skills sufficient?
• Do you know what you’re talking about?
• What experiences have prepared you to lead in this context?

These types of questions are important for you to ponder because your collaborators will be asking them of you. If you don’t believe you have enough expertise, do some homework. Go to workshops and seminars. Read trade magazines relevant to your field. Seek knowledge about your field any way you can.

Be a role model

Conviction is worthless unless it is converted into conduct.

- Thomas Carlyle

Leaders translate their values and visions into behavior and actions. They don’t just simply communicate the vision, they take everyday steps to achieve it. They serve as vivid examples of the values and purposes they propose. Simply, leaders serve as role models to their collaborators.

Unfortunately, only one in seven organizational leaders is someone that collaborators see as a potential role model to emulate. This statistic is frightening, but believable. Look at your current work environment and judge your “leaders.” Do they set
examples, do they walk their talk, do they serve as someone you would want to emulate? When I ask this question around campus, I get just about the same statistic: one in seven.

Would you want your collaborators to say, “You know, my leader just isn’t a role model for us?” Probably not. So you need to focus on setting an example. Collaborators need to see that you will go first, they need to see that it is possible, they need to see what they can and should do.

Along these lines, being a role model helps people to 1) see leaders are committed to the vision and trustworthy, 2) understand the beliefs, values, and behaviors that will help realize the vision, and 3) become empowered by observing the leader’s behavior and thus develop a sense of self-efficacy (a can-do, accountable, and optimistic attitude).\(^{14}\)

When Gandhi stood before his enemies nearly naked, when Churchill created powerful speeches to verbalize defiance and courage, when Mother Teresa traveled the world to care for others, they set an example. When Martin Luther King Jr. went to jail without struggle, in a symbolic and nonviolent message, he became a role model. As Howard Gardner, author of *Leading Minds*, notes, these types of leaders’ “actions ‘spoke’ even more eloquently than their voices.”\(^{15}\) The examples they were setting helped their collaborators believe in them, helped them understand what they should do, and inspired them to do the same.

Many leaders break an important rule: to be a role-model, you have to be seen acting for the cause. You have to be around to serve as an example and build credibility. The executives in the upper offices and who are out of reach are those that become out of touch. These are the people that collaborators claim they will not emulate, because they’ve never seen anything to emulate. Leaders need to get down on the shop floors,
work the cubicles, join their collaborators in the trenches. They need to show the way by example.

You need to constantly seek to be a role model. The essential question all leaders must ask themselves if they want to embody the ideals they seek and want to be credible is: Am I setting the right example?

Be passionate

Your dedication and passion to your cause will have dramatic effects on your credibility. The collaborators you’re seeking to serve need to see you’re committed to seeking the envisioned changes. “The followers begin to trust their leader when they perceive, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that their leader is unflinchingly dedicated to the vision and is willing to work toward it even at the risk of personal cost and sacrifice.”¹⁶ As an example, Lee Iaccoca became a popular leader at Chrysler when he reduced his salary to just $1 in his first year at Chrysler to show his commitment to his vision.

Burt Nanus, author of Visionary Leadership, noted, “Leaders live the vision by making all their actions and behaviors consistent with it and by creating a sense of urgency and passion for its attainment.”¹⁷ The best leader I ever had was someone who was consistent and had absolute and unwavering passion for our endeavors. She came to the office early and left last – not because she was a work-a-holic, but because she loved what she was doing. She always acted like we had to do projects which inspired a sense of urgency and motivation.

You need to share your enthusiasm and excitement for what you’re doing with all of your collaborators. You need to share your stories and experiences with your
collaborators. Then, you become a real person to them. They see your excitement and you, in the words of the authors of *The Leadership Challenge*, “sustain hope.”

This simple premise – that you must be passionate about what you’re doing – is immensely important. As the Bible says, “For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle.” If you are uncertain or uninterested in your purposes, then why would collaborators prepare themselves to join you?

**Be consistent**

Collaborators look for consistency in their leader’s thoughts, words, and actions. If you believe with all your might for one day, but doubt for six; if you say one thing, then do another; if you act nobly in the morning, but corrupt in the afternoon, you’re not consistent, you’re not credible.

In the last decade, we’ve seen immeasurable damage done to our confidence in our elected leaders’ credibility because they were not consistent. When President Reagan, during the Iran-Contra affair, claimed, “We did not trade weapons, or anything else, for hostages” and it later turned out we did, he lost credibility. Leaders must be truthful in order to be consistent with their actions and words. When President George Bush proclaimed, “Read my lips: No new taxes,” and later raised taxes, his credibility was tarnished. Leaders need to fulfill promises in order to be consistent with their words. When President Clinton promised, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman,” and later said, “Indeed, I did have a relationship with Ms. Lewinski that was inappropriate,” he lost credibility. Leaders need to be honest about their actions in order to be consistent.
Leaders who say one thing then do or say another poison their credibility and commit one of the foulest violations of trust possible. Collaborators look to leaders, and join them, based off of the leaders’ promises. To break these promises, to abuse the relationship of leadership, is a disservice to your collaborators. Make sure you’re being consistent. If you say it, mean it, and do it.

Consistency is not only a measure of doing what you say you will, it is also a measure of your dedication to the vision. You’re going to have ups and downs. Sometimes you’ll find yourself full of doubt and despair, questioning your every move. Circumstances will not always rise to meet you. Things will go wrong. Your resolve to achieving your vision, and your consistent effort towards an envisioned purpose, will greatly contribute to your credibility.

Be a servant leader

Embodying your message ultimately comes back to embodying leadership itself. Leaders need to embody what their collaborators view as a leader. Your collaborators have to know you’re embodying ideals that will benefit them – that you are serving them. Leaders become leaders because collaborators believe that they can help guide them to a desired state or end. As Kouzes and Posner note in their excellent book *Credibility*, “The people’s choice [for a leader] is based not on authority, but upon the leader’s perceived capacity to serve a need.” Are you serving your collaborators needs? Are you helping them grow, become wiser, healthier, freer, more autonomous, and achieve higher levels of motivation and morality?
To be credible, you don’t have to be some kind of superhero. It’s easy to assume — after I’ve said you have to know yourself, be an expert, be a role model, be passionate, and be consistent — that you have to be some kind of saint or hero. Remember, you don’t have to be a hero. As Robert Kelley, author of *The Power of Followership*, says, “Be less of a hero and more of a hero maker.” The best leaders give other people the stage and seek to help them become better at what they do.

Ultimately, you’re a servant. You’re here to serve the needs and desires of your collaborators and help them become greater. This is the essential theme to this guide, and the most important idea in this section. For, at base, your collaborators must sense that you are here to serve them. All the ideas in this guide mean nothing if they’re being done for solely your advancement. So remember that your role as a leader is a servant — someone who helps others become greater at what they want to do, and someone who embodies the ideals which they hope others will seek in order to become leaders themselves.
Leadership Self-Check Questions

Ask Yourself:

What are my convictions about the way people should be treated and the way work should be done?

Is my conduct in line with those convictions?

Do people around here trust me?

What can I do to become an expert in this area?

Will my collaborators believe I have the ability to lead?

What prior success show my credibility?

Have I done my homework and gotten the information I need to lead?

Are my words and actions consistent?

Do I act like a role-model for my collaborators? How?

Do I really care for what I'm doing right now?

Have I been serving the best interests of my collaborators?

Ask Collaborators:

Does it seem like my words and actions are consistent?

Would you say people trust me around here?

What can I do to be a better role model?

What do you think about the way I treat people?

Would you say people think I work hard for what I want them to work hard for?

What else could I do around here to help serve others?
This is the main assertion to Kouzes & Posner’s book *Credibility*.

Ibid.

Gardner, 1995


Bennett, 1964, p. 127.


I've developed these questions from a life-time of reading personal improvement texts.


Kouzes & Posner, 1993

Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Kelley, 1992

c.f. Stogdill, 1948; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991;


Gardner, 1995, p. 293.

Conger & Kanungo, 1998, p. 61

Nanus, 1992, p. 139.


Empower

When [a good leader's] work is done,
His aim fulfilled,
They will say,
"We did it ourselves."

- Lao-Tze, Tao Te Ching

Empowering collaborators is a duty of servant leaders. Remember Greenleaf’s test of a servant leader? He asks: do collaborators grow as persons, do they become healthier, wiser, freer and more autonomous? The way to make these things happen is through empowerment. Empowering leaders let go of the need to control collaborators every move, encourage people to define their realities and future visions, and ask them to participate actively in common endeavors they’ve helped define. Remember, leadership is not management. Leadership is empowerment; management is often control. If as leaders, we don’t empower people and we control their every step, they don’t become more autonomous or wiser. They don’t become freer. They simply do not grow. If someone ties your shoelaces for you every day of your life, you’ll become dependent and you won’t learn. When leaders give up control, collaborators take responsibility and continually become wiser and more autonomous from their experiences.
Though the word "empowerment" may not have been specifically used, nearly all leadership theorists past and present talk about its ideals. Allowing people the right to make decisions and take actions that affect their lives and organizations is at the center of many leadership philosophies. Indeed, empowerment is a right of collaborators, it must not be thrust upon them. Some collaborators may simply not want to participate in some decision making. Others may want to be heavily involved. Regardless, collaborators – as mutual architects of the purposes in leadership – need to be given choices as to how involved they are in decision-making and which actions are taken to achieve those purposes.

These ideas led to the empowerment approaches of the last two decades in management and organizational theories. Empowerment has become the big buzz-word and is typically referred to as "efforts to enhance employee commitment and productivity through encouraging participation and involvement in organizational settings." Quality circles, total quality management, work teams, and self-directed work teams are all examples of efforts to allow the employees of organizations to learn and grow through participation in their work. "The concept is straightforward: Organizations push down decision-making responsibility to those close to internal and external customers, and employees take charge of their own jobs."

The move to empowerment was an obvious one. Some people, particularly the disempowered employee, wanted more of a say as to what was happening around them, how they were working, and for what purposes. Freeman and Rogers, authors of What Workers Want, found that
American workers want more of a say/influence/representation/participation/voice (call it what you will) at the workplace than they now have. Workers want greater say both because they think it will directly improve the quality of their working lives and because they think it will make their firm more productive and successful (which also enhances their work lives over the long run). Employees want greater workplace participation as individuals and as part of a group as well.5

As Reg Theriault, a social critic and author of How to Tell When You’re Tired, states some workers just want management to “get the hell out of the way.”6 Of course, employees can’t have all the say at work, and management can’t simply disappear. But, as George Cheney, author of Values At Work, notes:

Though we may decide it’s unrealistic in a particular case for all employees to have a shaping influence on corporate or organizational policy, we can say more confidently that everyone ought to have some capacity to affect the conditions and requirements of work.7

The idea of empowerment seemed natural as workers and management finally began to realize something: “Executives and managers are not responsible for knowing the solutions to all the company’s problems. That’s what the experts are for – and the experts are always the people who actually do the job for you on a daily basis.”8 Management may have realized that employees have significant input and need to contribute to decisions, and this realization has led to a vast amount of empowerment programs in the workplace in the last two decades. And these programs pay off. Employees who work in jobs that provide high levels of autonomy and information sharing (two foundational elements of empowerment) have higher levels of performance than other employees9 and report higher levels of satisfaction with their work.10

Howard & Wellins, authors of High-involvement Leadership: Changing Roles for Changing Times, found several benefits to empowerment. First, leaders who are
There are several benefits of empowering employees. First, empowered employees are more committed to the organization, have more job satisfaction, and have less role ambiguity and role overload. Second, organizations become better as empowerment improves upward communication, helps create speedier responses to requests and problems, and improves coordination across the organization. They found that there was significant improvement in customer focus and the quality of products. Finally, they found that empowered members of organizations are more motivated, believe they are more effective on the job, and rate improvements in the quality of worklife.

Empowerment in leadership is slightly different than the term is typically applied in management or organizational theory. In leadership, it is a right and responsibility of the members to make decisions together so they can seek mutual purposes. In management, it is typically a way that organizations can produce more and “get more out of” employees as they seek to control inputs and outputs. This view led one social critic to freely use “management” in one sentence and “Nazis” and “concentration camps” in the next.

Empowerment in leadership is not used to “get more out of people” or increase efficiency. Rather, it is simply a responsibility a leader has to allow collaborators the right to make decisions and take actions that affect their lives and organizations. Empowering collaborators allows them to be freer, more autonomous, and ultimately wiser as they learn through their experiences. It helps them achieve “higher senses of motivation” by letting them seek purposes they helped define.

As Robert Kelly notes in his book *The Power of Followership*, exemplary followers are not uncritical and passively engaged in their environments. They are
independent, critical thinkers who are actively engaged in the leadership process. They want to be part of the process. They want to make decisions and be involved because they are partners in the endeavor. Leadership, by definition, gives them “ownership” of mutual purposes, and they want to be able to effect the choices of how to reach those purposes.

As mentioned, your job as a servant leader is to empower others. Indeed, collaborators’ reports of the level of empowerment they feel is directly and significantly tied to how their leaders make them feel. Empowerment is not an overnight accomplishment. It is a day-to-day, progressive activity and requires fundamental changes in attitudes towards participation and control. You have to realize that your collaborators should – and have the right to – participate in decisions. You have to realize that to empower, you have to give power. The ideas that follow can’t be served to your collaborators in one day – they must be integrated slowly, steadily, and supportively.

To feel empowered, collaborators must feel they 1) have the proper knowledge, skills, and ability – which often come through training – to make decisions, 2) have the freedom and authority to do so, 3) are supported by, and trust, their leaders, and 4) will be rewarded and recognized for doing so. Of course, the perception and behaviors associated with empowerment ultimately reside in the individual, but leaders have a tremendous amount of influence in shaping those perceptions and behaviors.

To help you in the process of empowering your collaborators, this chapter is broken up into four sections based on these ideas: section one discusses education and training, section two looks at establishing participation, section three looks at shaping a supportive environment, and section four explores rewarding and recognizing collaborators’ efforts.
Inform and Educate

First and foremost in empowering collaborators, you must remember "the vital teaching role of leadership." Leaders often have to teach collaborators about concepts, ideals, values, skills, environments, and people that may affect them. Certainly, the leader is not some all-knowing presence, but leaders often do have information that is absolutely critical to collaborators. Thus, "Leaders teach the vision, its values and goals and specific techniques to operationalize the vision, values and results . . . so collaborators can lead themselves." Leaders don't just teach people to achieve a vision though. As Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline*, notes, leadership is also about fostering learning, offering choices, and building consensus.

A person's motivation to perform a task is directly linked to a person's belief that he or she has the ability to perform the task. If one of your collaborators doesn't believe he or she can do something, of course they will have little motivation to try. Since you're trying to help collaborators achieve "higher levels of motivation" you need to first make sure they have the information they need to do something.

Remember the following when focusing on empowerment through education:

1. *Keep them informed.*

People need to be constantly updated on what's happening and why. They need to know the rationale for the things they're doing. Keeping them informed means having necessary access to organizational documents and people in the organization – no matter how "high up the ladder." They need to be sufficiently alerted to changes, concerns, and
contexts that affect their lives. If groups are going to make good decisions and take responsible actions, they need good information.\textsuperscript{20}

2. \textit{Create educational opportunities.}

In any way possible, allow your members to further their education through programs, classes, seminars, and experiences. People need to know how to do their jobs and need to feel proficient at doing them. You can help them by creating as many educational opportunities as possible. One of the main reasons organizations fail is because people don’t have the knowledge or skills to do their jobs,\textsuperscript{21} so your job is to make sure they can do theirs.

Particularly relevant to empowerment ideals, education focusing on participation, negotiation, and collaboration are important. As Stanley Deetz, author of \textit{Transforming Communication, Transforming Business}, notes, “People are not born with the skills for effectively making decisions. Democratic skills, like any quality of civilization, must be learned.”\textsuperscript{22}

3. \textit{Encourage risk, experimentation, creativity.}

People don’t learn if they don’t try, and they don’t try if they’re scared of failing or being reprimanded. Let your collaborators know that experimentation and creativity is championed, that mistakes are fine as long as they learn from them.

The level to which collaborators will begin to be empowered through education can be measured by the degree to which they agree with these statements:

- “I feel competent to perform the tasks required for my position.”

- “I feel adequately prepared to perform my job.”

- “I have the skill to excel in my job.”\textsuperscript{23}
Champion Participation

Since leadership is about mutual purposes, then individuals who choose those purposes should have the ability to make decisions about how to attain or serve those purposes. We know from organizational literature that if people believe they have little control in their work environments they become strained.\(^2^{14}\) This strain reduces motivation and ultimately affects whether or not the person wants to be involved in the organization. Knowing this, it is vital that you allow participation in your organization. Again, a leader has to allow collaborators the right to make decisions and take actions that affect their lives and organizations.

This guide does not seek to propose which sort of structure you should form within your organization. There’s certainly a variety of structures for promoting and enacting participation and workplace democracy programs.\(^2^{15}\) In organizations, job enrichment programs, quality circles, quality of worklife programs, and self-directed work teams are implemented to encourage and support employee involvement and/or participation.\(^2^{16}\)

Though I don’t advocate one particular structure because different purposes call for different structures, it is my belief that you should give adequate attention to what type of organization may be created once you and your collaborators come together. Indeed, as I previously mentioned, you and your collaborators do become an organization. Because leadership is about seeking mutual purposes, I believe that you need to give ample thought to participation and involvement within your organization. The degree to which your collaborators have input and control over what happens in the
organization needs to be considered. As one theorist puts it, the "depth" of control members have can range from "No right to any say; or right to make suggestions only" to "Workers have a majority of votes (or more) in the decision-making (workers decide)." How much "say" will your collaborators have in making decisions?

Certainly, participation by many members of organizations can create challenges. It may take longer to make decisions, insist on more emotional involvement and vulnerability, and may be difficult simply because members have different backgrounds and knowledge.

Nonetheless, if you really believe in mutual purposes it's necessary to not just champion participation, but promote democracy. "Democracy extends simple participation in the workplace by ensuring that the individual has a voice, may express an opinion, that means something and has the potential for 'making a difference' in the larger organizational context." If possible, I believe we should approach a more ideal communication structure by creating democratic organizations in which:

Every member should adopt the perspective of an owner, information should be readily accessible, structures should be shaped by those at the bottom of the organization, and interactive discussions and negotiations of values and ends should occur on a regular basis.

Of course, the number of your collaborators, and the resulting size of the organization, may become so large that "true" democracy in which everyone has a voice becomes difficult. Nevertheless, leadership is by definition seeking changes that reflect mutual purposes, and you owe it to your collaborators to ensure they have a voice that can "make a difference" in what happens to them. As expressed in Chapter One, you should seek to include as many collaborators, or representatives of those collaborators, as possible in creating a vision. Collaborators also need to be included in, and participate in, decision making.
making processes. Of course, before asking others to make decisions or participate, you need to take into account how much information and education collaborators have, your relationship with them, their ability to perform a given task, and how motivated they are to perform it.

Simply, if collaborators aren’t involved in some level of decision-making and participating in their endeavors, we forgo the idea of mutual purposes, forget who we’re serving, and forget who the experts are.

When I was a supervisor in a university residence hall, I once witnessed a custodial supervisor arriving at a work site and finding a truck full of new floor cleaner liquids. He brought the first case into the break room and asked the custodians to help him unload the supplies. As they unloaded, one of the custodians approached the supervisor and said, “I don’t think we should unload this stuff, boss.”

The supervisor questioned, “What’ya mean?”

“This doesn’t look like good stuff to me,” the custodian replied.

“What? You’re always complaining about something, this is top-quality stuff!”

The custodian hesitantly responded, “But . . .”

“We’ve got 120 gallons of this stuff! And we got a good price, so get back to unloading,” the supervisor said, cutting off the custodian through clenched teeth.

“You don’t understand . . .” breathed out the custodian.

Again, cutting him off, the supervisor said in a threatening voice, “Knock it off. Get back to unloading. And I want to come in tomorrow and see the floors shining with this stuff!”
The next day the supervisor returned to the work site. As he walked into a hallway he nearly fainted. The white, glossy-marbled floor tiles, he was so proud of and sought to polish, had turned to a pale orange. The ingredients in the floor cleaner adversely reacted with the tiles. The custodian, knowing the floor's finish and the ingredients of the cleaner would not mix well, had attempted to tell the supervisor, but obviously to no avail. The "leader" forgot to allow his "followers" to be included in decision making. He forgot that workers, the people actually doing the tasks, are the experts.33

Empowerment means giving people a say, a voice. It also means giving them authority and discretion to do what they believe needs to be done. Empowerment means that collaborators don't ever have to say, "I know it's a dumb policy. But there's nothing I can do. It's my job and I have to follow the policy. Sorry, I can't help you."

One promising way in which organizations are enacting such ideas of empowerment is by creating self-managed, or self-directed work teams. Self-managing teams are peer groups (10-15 people) that make all the decisions, do all the coordination, and perform all the work required to build items or perform tasks under their responsibility.34 The team supervises itself – there is no first-line supervisor. It hires, fires, disciplines its own members; coordinates directly with other departments; sets its own work schedule. The team has much autonomy and is basically guided by the organization's vision.

Some possible benefits of such teams include increased employee motivation, productivity, commitment, identification with the group, and more participation where members play a larger role in day-to-day operations of the organization.35
Negative consequences of self-managed work teams include members needing to commit more time and energy, the need for members to strongly identify with the goals of the organization, the pressure for members to learn how to collaborate effectively with other members, and the peer pressure of working with others in that capacity. To move away from these negative consequences, teams need to make sure that all voices are heard and respected, and a safe environment is created and maintained where members are able to constantly refine and improve their conditions.

Whether or not you include teams in your organization is not the point. The point is that team ideals like democracy and participation can help you achieve mutual, collective purposes through mutual and collective action. Many organizations question whether or not democratic ideals can work in their environments, but as Deetz notes, "The bottom line is: Meaningful democratic participation creates better citizens and better social choices, and provides important economic benefits." When championing participation and its democratic roots, you become a facilitator, steward, coach, and teacher rather than a dictator, or autocratic, leader. Other people have authority and control and a beneficial, less hierarchical organization is built. And many theorists believe successful organizations of the future will eliminate traditional hierarchical systems and move to work teams or other participatory systems.

In sum, empowerment is about allowing people to make decisions that affect their lives and the authority to make the decisions. Each member of your organization should take the perspective as an owner since they’ve helped shape the purposes you’re pursuing. Is this simple? No. Is it worthwhile and empowering for everyone involved? Absolutely.
The level to which collaborators will begin to be empowered can be measured by the degree to which they agree with these statements:

- "I have the authority to make decisions that need to be made . . ."
- "Management [insert leadership] trusts me to make the appropriate decision."

### Help Shape the Environment

If the environment, or the culture, of your organization is viewed as positive, members will likely feel more empowered. Shaping a conducive environment for empowerment is critical for leaders because "empowerment may be more of an organizational issue than a personal/interpersonal issue." It would be a mistake to assume that you can just "shape" the environment by sheer will, and in a limited amount of time. Culture is developed and evolves over time and through the reciprocal influence of communication with everyone in the culture. The culture of the organization – its environment – is shaped by everyone.

Yet leaders make a significant difference. I’ve been a member of many organizations which had the potential to be empowering, but a sole leader stifled and choked any concepts of empowerment. Peter Senge, author of the best-selling *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization*, notes that leaders bear “an almost sacred duty” of creating conditions that allow people to grow and have productive lives. Leaders can begin to help shape these conditions by 1) stressing a community metaphor, 2) building a high trust culture, and 3) promoting open communication at all levels of the organization.
Jim Autry, author of *Love and Profit*, shows us what community at work is all about:

By invoking the metaphor of community, we imply that we in business are bound by a fellowship of endeavor in which we commit to mutual goals, in which we contribute to the best of our abilities, in which each contribution is recognized and credited, in which there is a forum for all voices to be heard, in which our success contributes to the success of the common enterprise and to the success of others, in which we can disagree and hold differing viewpoints without withdrawing from the community, in which we are free to express how we feel as well as what we think, in which our value to society is directly related to the quality of our commitment and effort, and in which we take care of each other.44

You need to invoke this community metaphor as much as possible, not for show or just to use the metaphor, but to really create this type of environment. Poor leaders throw around these types of metaphors to cover up inequalities and abuses. Great leaders, on the other hand, champion and practice these types of metaphors in order to create their ideals. Your collaborators need to know they are heard, trusted, supported, and cared for. They need to often hear that they are fellows in an endeavor, that one person’s gain or loss is another’s. That together, standing side-by-side, they are stronger than they could ever be apart. As a group, inexplicably tied together in common interest, people believe they can tackle the realities of the world and forge the frontiers of tomorrow. As one prominent psychologist notes, “The stronger the beliefs people hold about their collective capabilities, the more they achieve.”45 Your job is to help people build these beliefs by stressing that they are a capable community, united in mutual purpose, and through collective will and action can achieve those purposes.
Build a High Trust Culture

In a climate of trust, individuals can give open, candid reactions to what they see as right or wrong. In trust cultures there is little manipulation, few hidden agendas, no unreasonable controls, no saccharine sweetness that discounts real problems.

- G.W. Fairholm, Perspectives on Leadership, p. 77.

Not only is being trustworthy the key to your credibility as a leader, it is also the key to the success of your organization. If people don’t trust one another, they don’t work with one another in a way in which the best results can be achieved. They hold information and feedback. They question each others’ intentions. They, in their effort to protect themselves, cast doubtful eyes upon the other members and the organization as a whole.

The authors of The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America say that a great place to work is one where you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do, and enjoy the people you work with. Looking at this list, it’s easy to see how the second and third ideas can’t happen without the first. You probably won’t have much pride in your job if your always fearful of, and don’t trust, your coworkers. Similarly, it’s hard, if not impossible, to enjoy our coworkers if we’re constantly questioning their intentions and fearful of what’s “behind their backs.”

To create an environment of trust, leaders have to give collaborators trust and allow them to experiment and fail without fear of punishment. Collaborators need to know that, even if they really mess up, they’re accepted as individuals. Leaders need to create real relationships with their collaborators and listen to their concerns and ideas. In this sense, successful leadership will be measured by “the degree to which the leader’s
behavior towards group members is characterized by mutual trust, development of good relations, sensitivities to the feelings of group members, and openness to their suggestions."

When people feel that there is trust in organizations, "they're encouraged to look horizontally across the organization for influences and collaboration, rather than upward to their bosses."

Synergy happens at all levels of the organization as members believe they can be creative and responsible without being choked and ridiculed.

Trust environments will be the result of a new paradigm of leadership rooted in service. "Making it safe for teammates to be honest and being accountable to change, grow, communicate, and resolve differences in a spirit of mutual respect is the foundation of this new paradigm." Creating a trusting environment can only begin with you. You have to embody the ideals of that which you want others to seek. If you want your members to trust one another, you have to first trust them.

Promote Open Communication

Maintaining a "full, open, and decentralized communication system" is absolutely imperative to empowered organizations. The way to promote open communication is to stress the previous ideas: the creation of a community environment and the presence of a high trust culture. I say this because we know the perceptions people feel about emotional support, trust, and friendship dramatically effects their communication with other people. If people don’t feel they’re supported by their environment, if they don’t feel they can trust the people in the environment, it’s highly likely they will not openly communicate in that environment.
Communication is the central way through which leadership happens. Leaders spend 80 percent of their time communicating with others. The more careful you can be about your communication, the more you create two-way communication, and the more you listen, the more your collaborators will understand their roles, believe you’re trustworthy, be satisfied, and be part of effective groups.

It is through communication that a community is built and trust garnered. So you need to promote open communication in every way that you can. Ask people to talk to one another about different ideas. Form discussion groups. Make the rounds in the organization talking about more than just work. You want multiplexity in communication – the idea that people talk to each other about more than one thing, like work. People with multiplex relationships might share “information about work, personal issues, and innovative ideas.” They tend to communicate more frequently and have a more “intense, supportive, intimate, and influential” relationship than people who merely discuss work. Further, these relationships tend to reduce uncertainty and spur innovation. The more people feel free to openly discuss ideas, the more the organization will thrive.

The members must also be comfortable enough to gripe, complain, or raise concerns. This can’t happen if power and fear stifle discussion. We know that there is a high reluctance for subordinates to communicate negative information to their superiors. But in open communication environments – built by trust – they are willing to gripe because they know they’ll be heard. In The Human Touch, Arnold and Plas remind us that gripes “need to be tracked down and brought into the open rather than stifled, contained, or ignored” and that when a gripe is discovered, “you’ve located
that aspect of the job or the corporation that an individual has energy and commitment for improving.\textsuperscript{61} If you don't listen to peoples' gripes and concerns, they will become disenfranchised, feel they don't count, and decrease their commitment to your organization.

The ideals of community, trust, and open communication can and will dramatically influence your organization. They can inspire people to come together in common endeavors, take collective action, and positively steer themselves in useful directions.

Recognize and Reward Participation

Members who are empowered want to feel rewarded for their involvement, and when they are not they become discouraged.\textsuperscript{62} On the other hand, people report higher satisfaction when their leaders provide them with positive feedback.\textsuperscript{63} I'm sure that you've been part of a project before where you were not recognized for your contributions. It hurts, you feel cheated, and you question other's involvement. Has a leader ever not recognized you? When I ask students that, they always say "yes" and take no time at all to remember a time when they were not appreciated.

When you empower others, you're asking them to take on increased responsibilities. And, as Albert Bandura, the famed psychologist from Stanford University, points out, "People are not too eager to shoulder the burdens of responsibility."\textsuperscript{64} So if you've given them a choice (which you should), and they shoulder the responsibility and seek to make decisions that affect themselves, you should recognize them. If they feel like they're "going out on a limb" and are frightened by
repercussions rather than inspired by recognitions, their performance will be dampered. A simple, “I appreciate your involvement and contribution” goes a long way. In their best selling book *In Search of Excellence*, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman found that excellent leaders exert a tremendous amount of effort to provide positive reinforcement for those that took action that was valuable to the organization.

Organizational rewards – monetary or otherwise – should also be set up to recognize those who put full effort into affecting their environments. I was once part of a team which was asked to come up with the best way to redesign the main floor of an art museum. The four of us had worked there for a while, and our manager empowered us to make all of the decisions. After nearly three weeks of intense work, we finished the bold plans. When we took them to our manager, he looked at them and said this: “Folks, I knew you could do something that would blow me out of the water. I never doubted you. I did want to give you input and show you my way at first, but realized you could come together and change this place because you knew this place. I'm proud of you.” Two days later, at a public banquet, we all received donated artwork as gifts. The manager had not only said incredibly meaningful words of recognition, but unknown to us, had set up “organizational rewards” (donated artwork) for any projects that teams came up with and designed on their own. I still talk about it to this day as one of the most meaningful moments in my career.
Putting it all together

There are two ways to exert strength:
one is pushing down,
the other is pulling up.

- Booker T. Washington, civil rights activist and educator

Why would you want to empower your collaborators? For one, it is a powerful, and
maybe the most significant way to enlist collaborators. As the authors of Enlightened
Leadership note:

Enlightened Leaders know that the hearts and minds of their people can be won when they are working toward a purpose they find worthwhile, are involved in planning and decision-making, and feel appreciated by leadership.65

Another reason you want to empower your collaborators is because its your duty as a servant leader to help them become wiser and more autonomous, to help them grow, to help them achieve higher levels of motivation, to support them, to pull them up rather than push them down.

From organizational studies, we know that if members feel they have positive communication with their supervisors, receive specific recognition from those supervisors, and have access to those supervisors they are more likely to feel empowered.66 So work on creating open communication, recognizing peoples efforts, and building trust by being available. Empowerment must be something you are completely dedicated to. If it seems like "the flavor of the month" or a "technique" rather
than a frame of mind, collaborators will be skeptical. You have to show that empowerment is a foundational mindset in the organization by consistently applying its ideals and building structures which support those ideals.

For your collaborators to be empowered, they have to know what to do and how to do it, they have to know they have authority, they have to know they are trusted and supported by their leaders, they have to have a safe environment, they have to be able to communicate openly, and they have to feel like they'll be recognized for their work. These are not complex ideas, but unfortunately how many leaders seek to make them reality consistently? How many times have you felt truly empowered in organizations, where you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that you could make important decisions, or participate in those decisions? How many times have you felt that you could be open with your communication, good or bad? How many times have you felt like you trusted everyone in your environment? If you’ve experienced this, you know why I’m championing empowerment

As a leader, you must inspire your members to feel empowered, inject as much positive emotions as possible, and dispel fears of failure. The more positive emotions you inject within your collaborators the more likely they’ll have a sense of self-efficacy, the kind of “can-do” attitude that marks many successful organizations. Empowered members of organization often feel a high sense of self efficacy which can be described this way:

People with high perceived self-efficacy . . . approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. They develop interest in what they do, set challenges for themselves, and sustain strong commitments to them. They concentrate on how to perform successfully rather than on disruptive personal concerns when they encounter problems. They attribute their failures to lack of knowledge or skill, faulty
strategies, or insufficient effort, all of which are remediable. They redouble their efforts in the face of obstacles and soon recover their self-assurance after setbacks. This outlook sustains motivation, reduces stress, and lowers vulnerability to depression.  

Leaders who help others achieve these kinds of states are truly transformational. They do what they do, which is transform others, because they are servants to others. What more inspiring act can a person do than help others achieve a sense of self-efficacy as described above? As a leader, that’s exactly what you do when you empower others.
**Leadership Self-Check Questions**

**Ask Yourself:**

- Are the decisions and changes I'm making helping others to be wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and to achieve higher levels of motivation?
- Am I being overly controlling?
- Are collaborators able to make decisions and take actions that affect their lives and organization?
- Do they have the proper knowledge, skills, abilities, and information to be able to make informed decisions and effectively complete tasks?
- Do they have access to information and educational opportunities?
- Are they encouraged to experiment and participate?
- Do they take the perspective of owners?
- Do they feel they can trust me?
- Do they feel they are supported by me and organizational structures?
- Are they rewarded for all of their contributions?

**Ask Others:**

- Do I give you enough leeway for you to make important decisions on your own?
- Do you feel you have the authority to be like a "owner."
- Do you feel like I trust and support you in making decisions on your own?
- What can I do to increase the sense of a community around here?
- What can I do to help build a culture of trust, experimentation, and open communication?
Chile & Zorn, 1995.
Freeman & Rogers, 1999, p. 4.
Theriault, 1995, p. 175.
Arnold & Plas, p. 22.
Theriault, 1995, pp. 95-96.
These first two conditions are consistent with Chile & Zorn’s (1995) concept of “the dual nature of empowerment as perceived competence and perceived control” (p. 3).
See Block, 1993 for organizational advice on distributing quality information.
Gilley, Boughton, & Maycunich, 1999
These statements are from Chile & Zorn’s (1995) Empowerment Instrument used for college students.
Karasek & Thorell, 1990.
(Pacanowsky, 1988).
See Cheney, et al., 1998 for a good discussion.
Ibid., p. 66.
For a spirited discussion on this view, see Arnold & Plas, 1993 and Theriault, 1995.
Barker, 1999. I highly recommend reading this text if you’re interested in the social consequences of working in participative, team-based organizations.
Barker, 1999.
Ibid.
Deetz, 1995, p. 3.
Senge, 1990b.
These statements are from Chile & Zorn’s (1995) Empowerment Instrument used for college students.
Chile & Zorn, 1995.
Ibid., p. 21.


Bandura, 1999.


Snyder & Graves, 1994;

Andriessen & Drent, 1984, p. 489.


McGee-Cooper, 1998, p. 78.


Hackman & Johnson, 1996

See Bass, 1990, p. 341 for review of such results.


Communication in Complex Organizations, 242.

Ibid., 243.


Ibid., p. 32.


See Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985, for a comprehensive review.

Bandura, 1999, p. 184.


Chile & Zorn, 1995.

This is based off of Bandura’s (1986) concept of self-efficacy and the necessity to receive “emotional arousal.”

Bandura, 1999, p. 184.
Evaluate

Today’s solutions may well become tomorrow’s problems and effective leaders and organizations are constantly engaged in reflection and self-evaluation.


If the word “lead” means “to guide,” then one of your primary responsibilities as a leader is to make sure you’re on the right path. You have to make sure you’re going in the right direction and helping others make the journey in good health. Evaluating your journey – which includes the direction, your ways of doing things, and the people on the trip – is a fundamental responsibility of your role as a leader. This chapter is meant to help you ask important questions along the leadership journey to make sure you arrive where you want to go. The following sections will help you evaluate 1) your vision, 2) your ethics and performance, and 3) your collaborators’ progress.

Evaluate the Vision

Leaders constantly need to evaluate the vision that has been created. You’re responsible for caring for your collaborators and where they end up. If you, as a servant leader, hope to help them achieve a state where they are freer, wiser, more autonomous,
and more likely to be servants themselves, you need to be very careful where and how you’re leading them. This can only be done by evaluating the fundamental reason you’ve come together – to seek envisioned changes that reflect mutual purposes. The envisioned changes, or vision, needs to be assessed by both parties in the leadership relationship.

Take ample time to answer the questions below by yourself. Then, after you’ve reflected and evaluated the vision, bring in some of your collaborators. You can conduct a survey, interview, or focus group. Whatever your method, be sure to get a strong feeling about whether or not people know about the vision, believe in it, and take actions to accomplish them on a regular basis by asking the following questions posed by Burt Nanus in his book *Visionary Leadership*:\textsuperscript{2}

- How well is the organization doing in moving in the desired direction? Are there enough changes being made, and is the rate of progress satisfactory?

- Are people committed to the vision, acting as if it were their own, and willing to take the initiative and incur prudent risks to achieve the vision?

- Are the goals and priorities of organizational units, as well as of new projects and program proposals, consistent with the vision? Have new options opened up?

- Are the organization’s structures, processes, plans, reward systems, and policies consistent with the vision?

- Do people feel they are pushing the boundaries of their field, that they are “where the action is?” Are they optimistic and enthusiastic about the prospects of the organization?

- Are people communicating and cooperating with each other in the accomplishment of the vision, and are they being recognized for their participation in such activities?

- Are influential managers championing the vision, and is there evidence of confidence in leadership?

- Is the culture supportive of the vision or moving in that direction?
Has the organization been innovative enough in implementing the vision?

After you have evaluated the concerns from these questions, you may or may not have to alter the vision. In some cases you may have to start from scratch. For example, if you've been chasing a vision for two years, and find that the vision is no longer representative of mutual purposes, you may have to reformulate a new vision. Indeed, visions change over time because so do interests, needs, purposes, and environments. As a leader, you have to be aware of these changes and adapt appropriately.

**Evaluate your Ethics and Performance**

Leaders and followers have the responsibility and the duty to make ethical judgments concerning the changes they intend for organizations and societies.

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A survey of 1,500 top executives in twenty countries found that “ethics are rated most highly among the personal characteristics needed by the ideal CEO,” yet more than half of the American public believe that our corporate executives are dishonest and that our business leaders' ethical practices merit at best a C grade. Our political landscape is scattered with the boulders of corruption and deceit. The many problems facing our businesses and politics in the twenty-first century will either be amplified or dampered based upon how ethical our leaders are.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., once said, “I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty.” Similarly,
leaders have the responsibility, obligation, and duty to be ethical. The challenge with this statement is brought to light by this commonly asked question: “What is ethics?”

Some theorists assert that ethics is defined by “how we treat each other, every day, person to person.” This observation may be the most useful conceptualization of ethics when applying the term to leadership. This view takes into account the human side of ethics in leadership by asking, “Do we treat each other ethically?” At the same time, we must consider the purpose side of ethics in leadership by asking, “Is what we are striving for ethical?” These two considerations of ethics in leadership, human and purpose, are of vital importance and discussed below.

*The Human Side of Ethics in Leadership*

To ethically treat our fellow human beings while in the process of leadership, we need to make sure we’re 1) serving their interests and 2) not abusing power.

The first idea reminds us that, as servants to others, leaders need to be honest, fair, and acting in their collaborators’ best interests. According to ethicist Norman E. Bowie, actors (leaders) are required to take into account the impact of their actions on others. How will what you do affect others? If it is negative, should you do it? “If and when the interests of the actor and those affected by the action conflict, the actor should at least consider suspending or modifying his/her action, and by so doing recognize the interests of the other.” In other words, if what you’re doing is separate from your collaborators’ interests, pause. Think about what you’re doing. Think about what people want, remember mutual purposes. Then, align your actions with others interests in hopes of serving them.
The second idea reminds us that we should not think of leadership as "power over" but instead "power with." As Joseph Rost, author of *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, proposes, "When coercive and authoritarian processes are characteristic of a relationship, we can no longer call it leadership." This is because leadership is an influence relationship, not a forced one. People choose to be in the relationship because of their belief that it reflects mutual purposes and that important ends will be achieved, not because you make them. Collaborators must have the ability to choose to be in the relationship, and the choice to influence the relationship's purposes. The bottom line is: "Do people in the relationship (leaders and followers) have freedom of choice or is it, for all practical purposes, taken away?"

In sum, these two ideas about ethics on the human side of leadership can be set to a standard in which leaders can answer "yes" to these questions:

- Are we acting in the best interests of collaborators? and
- Do they have the choice to agree on what they're doing?

*The Ethics in the Purposes of Leadership*

While the human side of ethics *may* be able to be simplified to the previous two questions, the ethics concerning the purposes of leadership is not that easy. The purposes of leadership deal with what the leaders and collaborators are trying to achieve, the end result. It may be a change in policy, attitudes, performance, or the greater society. The difficulty in dealing with the ethics of purposes in leadership can be seen in this question: What decisions and changes are ethical? Everyone has their own idea of what is ethical. Think about the issue of abortion. If leaders and collaborators seek to make it legal (the content), is that ethical? The truth is, ethics are different for everyone.
The only ideas I have about ethics in leadership are rooted in the belief that we must act on behalf of the common good. Ethics in leadership isn’t about individual ethics—simply the leader’s or collaborators’ ethics. It isn’t about the leader’s and collaborators’ mutually developed ethics either. These are components, but not the whole. To me, ethics in leadership has to be thought of as a concept of civic virtue, “the elemental notion that all of our goods as individuals and groups are bound up in the common good, or, to put it another way, that all of our self- and group interests are bound up in the public interest.”

Ethics in leadership is thus about the ethics of the greater community and society we live in.

It’s not my intention to develop a framework for ethics or describe what ethics should be in society. It is my intention, though, to get you thinking about ethics at a broader level than your personal beliefs. By serving a common good, that of a larger public interest, I believe leaders are ethical. Indeed, I believe if a person is called a “leader” then they must be ethical. In this sense, I don’t believe leaders can be unethical. For example, as I discussed earlier, many authors describe Hitler as a leader. Under this guides conceptualization of leadership and its emphasis on evaluating ethics, though, Hitler was not a leader. He did not serve the greater good. He did not ethically question what he was doing. A leader cannot simply ask, “is this good for me, and some of my collaborators.” A leader must ask, “Is this right for the public interest, society and humanity at large?”

In sum, the question of the ethics relating to the purposes of leadership is difficult to wrestle with. Coming from a servant leader standpoint I believe it’s important to stick to a few values derived from servant leadership when considering the purposes of
leadership. I ask simply, "Are the decisions and changes you're making helping others (the public interest, society, humanity at large) to be wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and able to achieve a higher sense of motivation and morality?" This may or may not be a measure of ethics. Nonetheless, I feel it is an important consideration if you subscribe to the ideals of servant leadership.

In order to help you bring the ethical considerations in leadership together in practice, let's take a look at a review of the ethics of charismatic leaders. This review found that leaders could be ethical or unethical in five areas: exercising powers, creating visions, communicating with followers, intellectually stimulating followers, developing followers, and moral standards.12

Exercising Power

Ethical leaders exercise power in "socially constructive ways to serve others" not to serve themselves, manipulate others, or "win at all costs."13 As discussed above, the human side of ethics reminds us that we must exercise power with instead of power over. Leaders need to give their collaborators choices and exercise influence, not overt dictator-styled power.

Creating Visions

Ethical leaders create visions that are responsive to collaborators needs and interests and allow collaborators to "actively contribute to and develop the vision further so that it is shared."14 This ideal was discussed in Chapter One – that leaders need to
include the voices and purposes of their collaborators. They need to allow others to shape, alter, and act upon purposes they believe in.

Communicating with Collaborators

Ethical leaders ask a lot of questions and avidly seek collaborators' input and ideas. They “listen to the ideas, needs, aspirations, and wishes of followers” in hopes of figuring out how to best serve them. They ask for open communication in which people readily give feedback. Indeed, most leaders don’t get sufficient feedback, partially because they don’t ask and partially because their followers fear giving it. Ethical leaders, though, accept and promote an open feedback environment, where their decisions can be challenged and questioned and they can learn from their mistakes. Also, ethical leaders never leave collaborators in the dark – collaborators are well informed and have an on-going, two-way communicative relationship with leaders. A heavy responsibility of leaders is to communicate with collaborators openly in order to create shared realities and mutual purposes, and ethical leaders do just that.

Stimulating Followers Intellectually

Ethical leaders encourage different ways of thinking. It’s not “my way or the highway.” They promote an environment open to diverse ideas and new ways of thinking. Collaborators are asked to consider diverse viewpoints and opinions. They are asked to challenge basic assumptions in the status quo as well as the norms of interaction amongst leaders and themselves. Intellectual stimulation – the degree to which leaders
promote new ways of viewing situations or problems and conducting deeper analysis of those problems – is highly related to what transformational leaders do.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Developing Followers}

Ethical leaders "express confidence in their followers' capabilities to achieve the vision" and "focus on developing people with whom they interact to higher levels of ability, motivation, and morality."\textsuperscript{18} This point mirrors James McGregor Burns' ideas about transformational leadership. Leaders are responsible for helping collaborators grow, become wiser and more autonomous, and closer to their ideal selves by empowering and encouraging them.

\textit{Using Moral Standards}

Ethical leaders have a well-grounded sense of what is right and what is wrong, and they always favor the right. "They promote a vision that inspires followers to accomplish objectives that are constructive for both the organization \textit{and} society."\textsuperscript{19} Leaders have to ask tough questions about what is appropriate for the common good, the public interest, and society at large. Leaders use the moral standards of taking care of others, rather than hurting or manipulating them. They are truthful and seek to help others, rather than deceitful in an attempt to help themselves. In all, leaders actions and decisions can be said to be centered on the moral standard of "do no harm."
Evaluate collaborators’ progress

Why do we monitor people rather than mentor people?


A vital role of leaders is to evaluate their collaborators’ progress in hopes of helping them grow. People look to their leaders to see how they’re doing, and it is a leader’s obligation to let them know.

Evaluating collaborators comes as close to management as leadership gets, but is fundamentally different. Management’s purposes in evaluation can be said to be a tool to make employees more efficient, more controllable, more aligned to a framework of “what works” so that the organization can benefit and grow. Leader’s purposes in evaluation have to do with helping benefit the individual so that they can grow. Managers evaluate people because they are their subordinates, it is their duty to control them. Leaders evaluate people because they are their collaborators, it is their duty to serve them.

These distinctions are important, because they dictate a fundamental shift in evaluating others. In leadership, there is a realistic and uplifting move from criticism and judgment to embracing, supporting, and encouraging all those you attempt to influence. Leaders support, encourage, and praise their collaborators more often than they criticize and give negative feedback because they know positive feedback is generally more productive and effective than negative feedback.20
It is not my intention to prescribe a set of criteria on how to evaluate collaborators’ progress. Criteria must be specific to the context you’re leading in. It would be difficult to set up the same criteria for members’ success in a church as members’ success in the military. The only common criteria theme I can distinguish would result in questions that revolve around the themes of servant leadership: Are collaborators growing, becoming wiser and more autonomous, achieving higher senses of motivation and morality, and themselves becoming leaders?

This section, instead, focuses more on how to engage others as you evaluate them. While the criteria to evaluating progress can change from context to context, as can the methods of evaluation, leaders know that they must engage collaborators in a way that helps them change or grow.

Leaders realize that evaluations don’t change people, relationships do. Carl Rogers, the humanistic psychologist who founded client-centered therapy, understood this concept well. He found that to effect change in people and help them grow as individuals, the relationship between therapist and client would be based on 1) unconditional positive regard, 2) genuineness, and 3) empathy.21 These ideals are important in the leader-collaborator relationship. Collaborators must feel that leaders view them with unconditional positive regard, that they see collaborators as inherently valuable no matter what condition they are in or what behaviors they are enacting. Collaborators need to feel that leaders are genuine with them, that they are honest and forthright with their communication and observations. Finally, collaborators must sense that leaders are empathetic, that leaders can sense what they’re feeling and understand them in their current reality.
Leaders recognize that people are not problems, they’re priorities. If a collaborator is having difficulties, they don’t seek to punish them. Look at what one author wrote about punishment:

The quickest and simplest way to reduce the frequency of an undesired behavior is to apply some form of punishing consequence. But the reduction in the frequency of misbehavior is the short-term consequence. The use of punishment produces side effects and long-term consequences – anger, apathy, resentment, frustration – that end up being far more costly than whatever the original misbehavior might have been.22 Leaders seek to help collaborators grow, to support them, and to guide them, not punish them. Sometimes, of course, this means “getting real” and giving negative feedback. Supervisors are often reluctant to give negative feedback, though, and when they do, “they distort their feedback and make it more positive than it should be.”23 This is where Rogers’ ideas about genuineness come into play. Leaders have to give feedback, both positive and negative. They have to be honest with their observations. If this honesty is coming from a supportive standpoint, it most likely won’t be received as negative or insulting. With this genuineness, Roger’s recommends being empathetic. Robert Greenleaf would seem to agree as he reminds us, “Individuals grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing.”24 Leaders need to be careful with their assumptions about poor performance, though. Many employee “problems” happen because 1) they don’t have the knowledge or skill to do their job, 2) they don’t understand their responsibilities, and 3) they haven’t received feedback and think they’re doing their jobs correctly.25 Though collaborators are not employees, this observation is important. Leaders need to make sure that, as
discussed in the last chapter, people have the education, information, and skills they need to do a job and receive feedback consistently.

Feedback should be frequent, timely, specific, and include praise and/or developmental direction (an action plan). If a collaborator does something you disagree with, let them know as soon as possible, be specific about what they did, listen to their comments, praise them, and if necessary, offer them ideas about what they could do differently in the future. With these ideas in mind, I believe the purpose of feedback is to help people 1) become aware of what is happening, 2) realize they are accountable for their behavior and role within the organization, and 3) decide on a course of action to take in the future.

All of this is done only in an effort to help others grow and become wiser, and must be done with unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy. Feedback can cause people to become resentful, defensive, and less committed, so be sure to champion these supportive and attentive ideals.

If you hurt someone with evaluative and critical statements, stop. Apologize. Don’t make excuses for doing it, make promises that you won’t do it again. Say, “I’m sorry I hurt you, I won’t do that again. There’s no excuse, I’m sorry.” If someone pushes against you or seeks reasons for your critical words, say, “I just wasn’t acting responsibly, I wasn’t in the right frame of mind. But that’s not an excuse for what I did. I’m sorry and it won’t happen again.”

Again, you need to focus on your relationship with your collaborators while evaluating their progress. You need to be a caregiver, not a caretaker. Evaluating
collaborators' progress must be handled from the viewpoint of the servant who helps them grow and achieve higher senses of motivation and morality.

The evaluative role of a leader is a challenging one. Assessing the vision, ethics, and progress of collaborators is taxing but absolutely crucial. If your vision is not representative of mutual purposes and does not gain collaborator commitment, the leadership process stops. If your ethics are self-serving, dishonest, coercive, and damaging to humanity, the leadership process should stop. And finally, if your collaborators' progress is not positive and they do not grow as individuals, they will make the leadership process stop. Leaders are skillful evaluators, and those that believe in servant leadership are able to not only evaluate, but to build stronger visions, ethical standards, and collaborators from those assessments.
Leadership Self-Check Questions

Ask Yourself:

Are people committed to the vision, acting as if it were their own, and willing to take the initiative and incur prudent risks to achieve the vision?

Am I treating people, and doing things, that are ethical?

Are the decisions and changes you’re making helping others to be wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and to achieve higher levels of morality?

Are you giving unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy?

Have they made progress?

Did they know what they were supposed to do and how to do it?

Have they had enough feedback?

Am I being supportive?

Is this the way I would like to be treated?

Am I being open and direct?

Am I tactful?

Have I asked for their point of view?

What were the conditions they were working under?

Have I been available to help?

Ask Others:

What am I not doing that you want me to so you can succeed?

Do I listen enough?

Am I helping?

Am I clear?

Do I support you enough?
5 Quoted from his July 8, 1941 radio address and in Safire, 1997, p. 526.
6 Freeman, 1992.
7 These two considerations parallel what Rost, 1993, calls "the ethics of the leadership process" and "the ethics of leadership content."
9 Rost, 1993, p. 156.
10 Ibid., p. 158.
11 Ibid., p. 176.
13 Ibid., p. 168.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 169.
16 Kelley, 1992, p. 526
18 Ibid., p. 170.
19 Ibid. Emphasis added.
20 See Bass, 1990 for a discussion.
23 Bass, 1990, p. 369. See this source for a review on reluctance to give feedback and use of distortion.
26 Ibid., p. 73.
Leaders we admire do not place themselves at the center; they place others there. They do not seek the attention of people; they give it to others.

- James Kouzes & Barry Posner, *Credibility*, p. 31

The previous chapters had many tips and step-by-step considerations leaders can use to become more effective servants. This chapter has no step-by-step ideas. It can’t. There is no simplified way to make others feel encouraged, lifted, supported, or loved. Somehow, though, this is what leaders do. As Kouzes and Posner point out, when you ask people about how their leaders make them feel, you hear words like motivated, inspired, supported, respected, proud, and valued. You don’t hear words like stupid, sad, or intimidated. This observation leads me to ask, “Where did we ever get the idea that we can help people become more by making them feel bad?”

Indeed, under some old ideas of leadership (i.e. management), human traits like uniqueness, free will, and creativity are seen as “enormous problems” because they meant people could not be controlled. In servant leadership, however, these traits are not seen as problems, they are championed as priorities. Servant leaders seek to prioritize and
encourage collaborator’s uniqueness in the quest of helping them grow into healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous human beings.

Encouraging collaborators in their quests to achieve goals and become better human beings is the central activity leaders must commit to. And evidence shows it is necessary. “Without the leader’s affirmation, subordinates can feel that they are underperforming and even failing.” Not encouraging or affirming collaborators can leave them feeling powerless, unappreciated, disrespected, used, lost, and unmotivated. On the other hand, encouraging collaborators has tremendous and vital benefits. Leaders achieve high collaborator motivation by raising their self-esteem and self-worth. Credibility, respect, and loyalty “are earned by appreciating others, affirming others, and developing others.” The more positive feedback people receive from their leaders, the more satisfied they are and the better they perform. When followers feel like they’re encouraged, appreciated, and supported, they’re more likely to be proud of what they’re doing, work hard, feel like they are a member of the team, link their identities to their endeavors, gain commitment, and grow as individuals.

Your role as a leader is to take every opportunity available to encourage, support, and affirm your collaborators. As discussed in Chapter Four, you need to recognize and reward their efforts. You need to publicly praise them, and affirm them in private conversations. You need to lift them up when they’ve fallen, when they’ve lost hope and direction. When people stumble, leaders bend over and help them up. Leaders encourage collaborators to keep forging ahead despite small tumbles. Sometimes they just point out the way. Sometimes they walk with them.
As I said above, there is no step-by-step process for encouraging others. It is a human activity that is, and should be, without a manual. The best I can do is offer you a glimpse into two profound personal experiences, one when I was a student, and the other when I was a teacher.

A student's leader

When I was in high school, I was a misguided missile. I was running around in twenty-four directions at a time, with no focus whatsoever for the incredible energy I had. And, like many people with energy and no focus, I ran into trouble. Lots of it. I bet I still hold the all-time record for detention hours served and number of suspensions. It’s not that I was disrespectful of others or got bad grades. I was just loud, always pushing the limits, and constantly questioning the rules.

As a sophomore, all of these traits converged in one incident. My parents had just decided we were going to France for a month-long family reunion so we could meet my mother’s side of the family for the first time. They picked the month of March to go, the dead middle of the school semester, because it was the only time both sides of the family could conveniently meet. When I asked my school counselor and my teachers if it would be possible to get the time off, they said “yes.” They knew I was a good student and could make up the homework. Several teachers would even make accommodations for such an experience. My French teacher would let me skip workbook assignments as long as I gave a presentation to all her classes on my trip. My art teacher would allow me to miss the days as long as I brought back photographs of the historic museums and several pieces of famed artwork and gave a presentation on each.
This was the first semester of a new 10-day absence policy, though, and as soon as the administration found out about the trip, they were up in arms to “set an example” about how important this policy was. I was going to miss 21 days of school, and that was unacceptable for me to get an “appropriate” education. The principal told my parents I couldn’t go. So they went to the Assistant Superintendent and then the Superintendent of Public Schools. They said no. So my parents decided to appealed to the School Board.

The Board met, then met with my dad and said no. Then I got loud.

I wrote a blasting commentary to my local newspaper and they made it a featured Guest Column in the front section. After discussing how I could have made up the classes and the process of how the school board said the trip was a no-go, I wrote:

As Mark Twain said, “Never let school get in the way of an education.” I am going on the trip. I am willing to lose credit, take summer school, and sacrifice my junior year for make-up. After all, it’s France.

I feel that the school system and the school board failed to realize the educational aspects of the trip, and also failed one of its prominent students.

I believe the school board should get its head out of the clouds and accept the fact that education not only lies in a teacher’s oral presentation, reading, and book work, but also in seeing and experiencing.

Public outcry was immediate. People flooded the administration with phone calls, and students with their presence. Soon, the school board decided to have another meeting and decided to let their final decision be known at a public meeting two weeks later.

Anticipation for the decision was huge, the crowd at the meeting was said to be the largest in school board history.

For some reason I can’t remember now, my parents couldn’t make it there, but I was there. And so was half my school and the television cameras. In a dramatic 5-2 decision justified by the need to curb absence problems and maintain the integrity of the
new policy, the final answer was no. My first moment on television shows me sitting amid the roar of jeers for the decision, alone and crying.

The tears of sorrow soon turned to tears of joy as I met family in France. The trip forever changed me. When I got back home, I ended up presenting in both my art and French classes, though I was no longer a student at the school. Half of the teachers at the school saw one presentation or another. All the teachers came to see my slide show and talk, but none of them had come with me to fight the school board. I was dejected and ready to walk away from school forever.

And then a leader entered my life. Linda Ballew, an English teacher who also headed the school’s student newspaper, heard about my slides and photographs of France. She also remembered my article in the paper. Somehow we met and she told me what an amazing writer I was, and that with one article, I mobilized an entire community. She said my art teacher told her that my photographs were exquisite and captured the beauty of France. She told me I had potential. And then she asked me to join the student newspaper the next semester when I returned to school. I told her I might not come back. And with what would be the standard of all her interactions with students, she listened, comforted, and inspired me. I was too good not to come back, she said. I had too much potential and too many talents not to use them in a creative endeavor. The next semester I came back. I honestly don’t know if she even remembers the short conversation, but I do and always will.

That next year, Linda took a rag-tag team of students and flooded their hearts with hope and inspiration. She led us to being hopeful that we could be the best and inspired us to seek to achieve perfection. She guided us, but let us guide the direction of the paper.
Every weekend and every late night spent working on our paper, she was there. She helped us in every aspect of journalism because she had gained expertise in every aspect by avidly keeping up with the trends. She guided us to come together as a team, supporting one another and building of each others' strengths. In more than one way, Linda helped us become better human beings. That year we won *Best of Show* at the national Journalism Education Association convention. We were number one in the country. A small school from Montana beating the big boys because we were injected with hope, inspiration, and constant nourishing encouragement from the best leader I've met my entire life.

Over the next year and a half, Linda took me under her wing, as she did with everyone, and lifted me to become wiser, healthier, more autonomous, and more motivated. I won national and regional first and second place awards for photography, layout and design, news writing, and investigative reporting. I became a leader myself as I was named the Managing Editor. More importantly, I became a servant to others, just as Linda had taught me to – helping others achieve the best that they could, lifting them with hope, inspiration, support, love, and never-ending encouragement.

**Another student's leader?**

What Linda had taught me came full circle when I myself became a Public Speaking Instructor at the University of Montana. I was completely excited for the position and hoped to lift and educate students as much as I could. But, as I think is common with new teachers, toward the end of my first year I became worn out, feeling like I wasn't making
a difference anymore. And then a leadership opportunity bounced up through a shy, little
girl named Amanda.

Amanda had skipped her first two speeches, she just didn’t show up on her
assigned days, guaranteeing her failure from the course. Yet, even after missing these
days, she showed up on time everyday for class. I kept trying to chat with her after class,
but so many other students would be asking questions, and she always seemed to subtly
slip out of the classroom.

Three weeks before finals week I posted the speaking assignments for the class
which listed who would speak on which day. Amanda’s name was not on the list; she had
never given a speech and already failed the class. A few days later, as I was helping
another student during my office hours, I saw Amanda enter the office sheepishly. She
said she’d like to give the speech. Not understanding her intentions – and worse yet
forgetting to be encouraging – I said, “Why would you want to give the speech? You do
understand you have failed this course don’t you?”

She said, “I know I’ve messed up. But I’ve come to class everyday because you
inspire me and I knew if I kept coming you might help me actually get up there in front
of the class. I think I’m ready. I want to try this now, Brendon, you’ve led me this far,
please don’t leave me. I want to do this for you. I have to do this for me.”

When she said “led,” I thought about this guide. I thought about leadership. I
thought about Linda Ballew, the woman who led me to staying in school and becoming a
leader myself. I pulled a copy of the speaking schedule out of my binder, put it on the
desk, and scratched Amanda’s name on the last day of speeches. She cried and we spent
the next hour talking about what she wanted to accomplish and what I’d like to see her do
our mutual purposes. It would be a quick two weeks, but I told her I knew she could do it, without ever seeing her speak publicly before. For two weeks we met every other day. More than half of that time was spent reassuring her she could do it. When her faith stumbled, I did my best to pick her up with hope and encouragement. Whenever she ran out of faith, I told her this quote:

> When you come to the edge of all the light you know and are about to step into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things will happen: there will be something solid to stand on, or you’ll be taught to fly.9

I let her know that if she stumbled, she would find a place to stand, or be somehow, in that unbearable moment of uncertainty, taught to fly. After two weeks of personally coaching her, I honestly didn’t know if she would show up on her speech day.

But she did. When she approached the podium, nearly half the class turned to me with questioning looks on their face, “Is she really going to do it?” Amanda worked her way through a seemingly long 10 minutes. During the middle of her speech she seemed to lose her words for a painfully long time. Then, one of her classmates encouraged, “You’ve got it, Amanda!” She found her words and finished the speech.

If I had graded her speech formally, I imagine she would have gotten a “C-.” But, as she finished, the class responded with resounding applause as though she had given the most stirring speech in history. She walked back to her desk as people were still clapping, hooting, and giving her praise. Her best friend screamed, “You did it, Amanda!” and reached over and gave her a hug. The feeling in the class was exuberant and at the end of the day countless people walked past Amanda and praised her inspiring performance.

As the last of the class filtered out of the classroom and I was putting folders in my bag, I caught Amanda out of the corner of my eye standing at the doorway. I turned
and saw tears welling in her eyes. What she said to me next was the most wonderful words I’ve heard in my life and reaffirmed to me the reasons we do this thing called leadership. Struggling to hold back tears and the overwhelming emotions she must have felt, Amanda whispered to me as she turned and left, “Thank you, Brendon. You’re the only person who ever told me I had any potential.”

The Heart of Leadership

If leadership is rooted in service, as discussed in the introduction and throughout this guide, then service is rooted in encouragement. Like myself in the first story, and Amanda in the second, people need to be reminded they’re worthy and capable. They need to be encouraged by words of inspiration and conversations with hope as the theme. When they fall, or are about to, leaders need to help them find their footing and assure them they can take the next steps.

Dr. Jack Weber, Professor of Management at the University of Virginia, has said

The bottom line is that leadership shows up in the inspired actions of others. We traditionally have assessed leaders themselves. But maybe we should assess leadership by the degree to which people around leaders are inspired.10

Maybe it is time that leaders are judged on how inspired, or encouraged, their collaborators are. Maybe its time that leaders are judged by the level to which their collaborators are transformed into achieving higher levels of motivation and morality as Burns described with transformational leadership. Accomplishments may not be the best assessment of leaders. Because the truth is, all the awards I won in high school journalism aren’t a reflection of Linda Ballew’s leadership. And Amanda’s speech itself
is not the best reflection of my leadership. What it took for us to achieve those accomplishments was the encouragement provided by leaders who believed in us, transformed us, and inspired us. For if it wasn’t for the hope, inspiration, and dedicated and constant encouragement, those accomplishments would never have taken place.

Leaders are in essence masters of encouragement. They don’t encourage to accomplish, they encourage to bring out the best in people and to remind them they’re capable. Nobel laureate William Faulkner, author of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, once said the following about writers, which I believe applies directly to leaders:

> It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past.\(^1\)

And, I would add, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion which *could be the glory of his future.*
Leadership Self-Check Questions

Ask Yourself:

Am I giving attention to my collaborators, are they placed at the center?

Do I focus on their strengths and openly praise these strengths?

What do I do, or can I do, to give them hope and inspiration?

Are the decisions and changes I’m making helping others to be wiser, feel more autonomous, healthier, and to achieve higher levels of morality?

Are you giving unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy?

What have I said to them, or could say, to help them realize they have potential?

Is this the way I would like to be treated?

Have I been available to help, support, inspire, love, and encourage?

Ask Others:

What am I not doing that you want me to do so you can succeed?

Do I listen enough?

Am I helping?

What can I do to help you achieve your full potential?

Do I support you enough?
See Podsakoff & Schriesheim for a comprehensive review.
See Bass, 1990, p. 322 for a review.
This quote is from a speech in Stockholm on December 10, 1950 as quoted in Safire, 1997, 528.
Leadership, itself, “is not the answer to all the ills of our societies or their institutions and organizations.” Unfortunately, the term “leadership” has been thrown around by the media and society as the answer to all the challenges confronting us. We hear the echoing voices of people saying, “Our leaders will show us the way.” As I hope you found evident throughout this guide, the answer doesn’t lie just in our leaders. Like leadership itself, the answers to the challenges confronting us lie in our collective decisions and actions.

At the same time, leaders are tremendously powerful in helping us confront these challenges. It would be naïve to say that the leaders of our organizations, communities, and homes do not dramatically influence the direction of society. As the noted political leader and leadership theorist John Gardner has said:
Leaders have a significant role in creating the state of mind that is the society. They can serve as symbols of the moral unity of the society. They can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.2

Look again at the words Gardner uses. Leaders are “symbols” who can “express . . . conceive and articulate goals” in order to “lift,” “carry,” and “unite.” These words are poignant and inseparable from the concept of leadership.

This guide attempted to present other words that should be inseparable from the concept:

• service
• relationship
• mutual purposes
• collaborators
• empowerment
• ethics
• encouragement

These words and associated concepts can’t be separated from leadership. Leadership will always be the process of leaders and followers coming together through an influence relationship and seeking envisioned changes that reflect their mutual purposes. It will always be rooted in service and enacted by ethical leaders through empowerment and encouragement.

People will always look to leaders to face challenges. Hopefully, they will first look inward and to their sides. Then, if needed, they can look to leaders. It would be
wonderful if people took accountability and responsibility for themselves and somehow were able to come together and collectively move towards important purposes. As a society, I am optimistic we are coming closer to being able to do so. Even if we achieve this ideal, the authors of *Credibility* remind us:

> But people still want and need leadership. They just want leaders who hold to an ethic of service and are genuinely respectful of the intelligence and contributions of their constituents. They want leaders who will put principles ahead of politics and other people before self-interests.³

Indeed, people will look to their leaders and we hope those leaders will be like the ones described above. We hope they will serve us. We hope they will respect us. We hope they will stand for principles. These are the leaders who will be effective in the future. As Richard Beckhard, an editor of *The Leader of the Future*, believes:

> Truly effective leaders in the years ahead will have personas determined by strong values and belief in the capacity of individuals to grow. They will have an image of society in which they would like their organizations and themselves to live. They will be visionary, they will believe strongly that they can and should be shaping the future, and they will act on these beliefs through their personal behavior.⁴

This guide's intention was to help you see how to enact these beliefs of "personal behavior." The framework offered, E⁶, was meant to help you think of behavior focused on helping others grow, and envisioning and seeking to shape the future. To be truly effective, leaders in the future will have to follow these principles and a way to do so is by the E⁶ framework. By envisioning the future, enlisting others to help shape that vision, embodying the ideals you seek and preach, empowering others so they can seek to attain that future, evaluating progress and ethics, and encouraging others to sustain the journey and become stronger, leaders become effective.
The day will come – indeed it may already have – when others look to you to lead. How will you lead? What will you stand for? How will you treat others? These questions, and other important ones posed in previous chapters, and their answers will dictate your effectiveness and the level to which you serve your collaborators.

I believe that if we, as students, begin this century forging a stronger society built upon the ideals of service, collaboration, and empowerment we can address the important challenges of today and become the inspiring architects of our age. And I believe we need to start now so that in the latter years of our lives we won’t have look back upon missed opportunities and feel the dreaded emotions encompassed by the words, “We wait too long.”


Dachler, & C.A. Schriesheim (Eds.), *Emerging leadership vistas*, pp. 89-106. Lexington, MA: Lexington books.


